



Strategy: Social Story

What is it?

Carol Gray defines a social story as a short story that “describes a situation, skill, or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives, and common responses in a specifically defined style and format.” The goal of a social story is to share appropriate social information so that it is easily understood by the target individual. Social stories are written in a way that affirms skills that the individual does well, while also introducing expected behaviors that will improve understanding of social and behavioral events that the individual struggles with. The story provides the student with information about what occurs in a situation and why.

How To:

In Carol Gray's , *The New Social Story Book*, she recommends that a social story have a title and introduction that clearly identify the topic, a body that adds details, and a conclusion that reinforces and summarizes the information. In the body of the story it is suggested that you use a pattern of sentences that include: Perspective, Descriptive and Directive/ Control sentences. Perspective sentences describe the internal states of people, their thoughts, feelings, and mood. Perspective sentences present others' reactions to a situation so that the individual can learn how others perceive various events. Descriptive sentences clearly define where a situation occurs, who is involved, what they are doing, and why. They are used to describe a social setting, using step-by-step directions for completing an activity. Directive sentences are always stated in positive terms and are individualized statements of desired responses. Directive sentences often follow descriptive sentences, sharing information about what is expected as a response to a given cue or situation. Directive sentences often begin with "I can try..." "I will try..." or "I will work on....". Control sentences identify strategies the individual can use to remember and apply the social story. A control sentence should be written or inspired by the student. Pictures can be added as desired.

Social stories can be written for routines, social behavior, social skills, transitions, and a variety of activities.

A simple “formula” for writing a social story is: 2-5 Perspective / Descriptive sentences + 0-1 Directive or Control sentences = Social Story. Directive and Control sentences are optional depending on the student and the situation.

To get started, determine the target behavior / social skill / social scenario.

Next, develop your Perspective / Descriptive sentences. Once you have these sentences decide if you will need a Directive / Control sentence. If so, develop that sentence.

After the sentences have been written, if appropriate, add pictures to the story.

Once the story is written you will want to make a plan for implementation. Introducing the story in a comfortable setting with a positive tone is important. How many times the story is reviewed is based on the individual's needs and comprehension / generalization abilities.

Resources:

Gray, C. (2010). *The New Social Story Book*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

Baker, J. (2001). *The Social Skills Picture Teaching Book: Teaching play, emotion, and communication to children with autism*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

Gray, C. (2000). *The New Social Story Book: Illustrated Edition*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons

Links:

<http://www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/strategies-and-approaches/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations/how-to-write-a-social-story.aspx>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjllYYbVlrl> - Carol Gray: What are Social Stories

<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2013/02/11/12-computer-programs-websites-and-apps-for-making-social-stories>

http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/mod_intro.php?mod_id=18 – Social Narratives

