Advance TAFE
Dream · Study · Achieve

Social Stories

CHCEDS434A: Supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

N. Sharrock

Social stories

- Social stories are a way of teaching and sharing social understanding with accurate, specific information
- Benefits both sides of social interaction
- It is a process that allows you to consider the situation of the child with autism

Social Story goal

- To give accurate, factual information
- It is NOT to change behaviour however this is often a positive result of the social story
- To describe situations NOT direct the student to what to do

Guidelines for Social stories

1. What to write?
   - Topic refers to the child's needs
   - Focus of the story refers to the child's perspective

Example: Joshua won't stand in line or complains that others are hitting him while in line.
You may write a social story on the following;
a) Why children stand in lines.
b) Describe the tactile experiences of standing in line
c) How children know when its time to stand in line.

Tailor text

- All stories must contain;
  a) Introduction
  b) Body
  c) Conclusion

  - Social stories answer 'WH.' questions
    - Who, why, where, what
    - This can be achieved in one sentence, so they don't have to be long.
    - 'My family is going to the beach to play today.'

Write

- Use first person perspective (using 'I' statements)
  - For example: 'I will try to walk inside.'

OR

- Third person – like factual information
  - For example: 'Most people like to say 'hello' when they meet you.'

Positive language

- You should write the social stories positively.
- Describe the positive typical responses.

"I will try to walk" instead of the negative response of; " I will try not to run."

Negative information

Negative information in writing gives more weight to the negative behaviour.

- "I can sometimes hurt others" – negative
- "Sometimes people make mistakes" –positive

- "I am afraid of air hand dryers in public toilets." – negative
- "Sometimes air hand dryers make a noise" – positive

Alternate vocabulary

- It is best to replace some words with others to alleviate confusion and anxiety in the student

Word	Change to
different	Another
change	Replace
new	Better or another

'I may have a **differen**t teacher' becomes
'I may have **anothe**r teacher'

Title

- The title gives the student the overall gist or goal of the story.
- Sometimes it is best to state as questions

'What will we do at the beach?'

What does my babysitter know? **Too broad**	What might my babysitter know about me? **More suitable**

Sentences

- There are different types of sentences to use in social stories (Carol Gray)

1. Descriptive
2. Perspective
3. Affirmative
4. Directive
5. Partial
6. Control
7. Cooperative

Descriptive sentences

- Accurate
- Assumption free
- Statements of fact – observable statement of fact

Perspective

- Describe thoughts and feelings, motivation beliefs of other people

- 'Mum knows when to wash my clothes.'
- 'Many children enjoy playing on the playground.'

- Avoid referring to the person with ASD's feelings. They are usually used to refer to others.

Affirmative sentences

- Enhance the meaning of the surrounding sentences
- Express a commonly shared value or opinion
- Role is to;
- Stress an important point
- Refer to a law or rule
- Reassure a student
- Usually they follow another sentence

Example; 'Most people eat dinner before dessert. *This is a good idea*.'

Directive sentences

- These gently direct behaviours.
- Special attention must be given to the possibility of literal interpretation.
- Sentences can start with;
- 'I will try…', ' I will work on…', 'One thing I may try to say (do) is…'

Literal: 'I will sit quietly in class.'

'I will try to sit quietly in class when Mrs S is speaking.'

Choices to directives

- When I'm on the playground I may;
  - Play alone
  - Play in the sandpit
  - Play on the climbing frame

- 'If I need to leave the room, I have 2 choices:
Choice 1: I may ask Mrs S if I may leave the room. If she says 'Yes' I can walk out.
Choice 2: I may wait for the next break.

Make sure the sentences are accurate and true

- Don't write sentences that are not true because you are trying to write them as if the student has already achieved them.
- This confuses the student and you may lose their respect and cooperation.
- '*Sometimes I eat vegetables.*
- *Sometimes I eat meat.*
- *Sometimes I eat many different types of food.'* These are VERY BAD sentences.

Partial sentences

- Encourage a person with ASD to make guesses regarding the next step in a situation, or response.

Example: *My teacher will probably feel _____*

- Students read their social story. Then after sometime gaps may be left for them to fill in.
- Example:
- *'When it is time for lunch, my teacher usually _____.*

Control sentences

- Written by the student.
- You may say; 'Do you have any statements that will remind you of the story?'
- For example;
- Social story understanding meaning of the saying 'changed my mind'.

Student's sentence;

'*It is an idea becoming better,*
like a caterpillar changing into a butterfly.'

Cooperative sentences

- Identify what others will do while student is learning.
- For example:

'Mum and dad will try to stay calm while I am learning to use the toilet.'

Changes in routine

- Use the words 'usually' or 'sometimes' rather than a definite time or place.
- Things can change so prepare the ASD student.
- For example:

Sentence	Preferable sentence
We have art class on Tuesdays at 2:00pm	We usually have art class at about 2 pm.
I ride the bus each day to school.	I usually ride the bus on school days.
Mum makes dinner each night	Mum usually makes dinner each night.

Other hints

- Match the story to the cognitive ability of the student.
  1. Keep stories short, especially if young.
  2. No commas in sentences.
  3. You may need 2 or 3 stories to cover one skill.
  4. Single illustration on each page, usually black and white only.
  5. Photographs –

Activity: Social Story

1. Read '*The Lunch Line*' by Carol Gray.

This is not a social story yet.

- Discuss with your group: What's wrong with this story?

2. Read; '*Kimberley's Story' by Carol Gray*
   - *Write a Social story that would suit Peter.*

DISCUSS
Was this an easy process? Why?

Social Stories

Teaching 'appropriate social responses' holds little meaning;

- if others do not understand the student's perspective
- or the student does not understand what is occurring around him, and why

Gray, Carol. 'Writing Social stories '. Future Horizons Inc.2000.