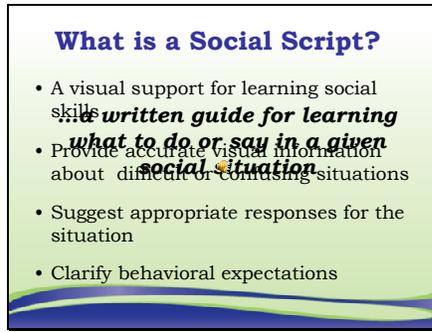


Slide 1

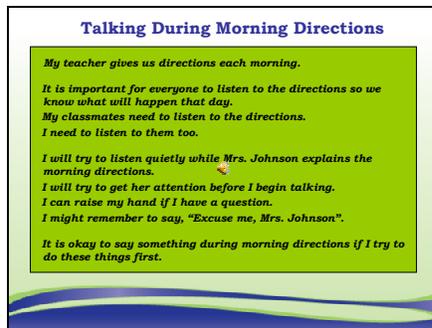


Hi, This is Mary Reed. Many time's using a social script for a difficult situation can be a great support for kids with Autism spectrum disorders. This tutorial will provide an explanation of what social scripts are, what they do, how they work and how to compose one.

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Slide 3



For instance, here's a very simple social story that was written for a student who was having difficulty interrupting his teacher during the morning's directions.

You'll notice some key features of this social script:

It's visual

It describes the situation the issue occurs in.

It's written from the student's perspective.

It share the perspective of another person also in the

Slide 4

Why are Social Scripts Helpful?

- Social deficits
- Theory of Mind
- Most social situations are fluid and fleeting
- Judgments about social context may be difficult
- Information is presented visually
- Allow practice of specific skills

situation.

It describes specific alternative behaviors the student can perform in the situation.

It clarifies the successful outcome of those behaviors.

So based on these things, let's talk a little bit about why social scripts can be such a useful support for kids with ASD.

As you probably already know, the defining features of autism spectrum disorders include marked deficits in social cognition, perceptive abilities and behaviors. One popular way to explain these deficits is through the term "Theory of Mind", which explains these social deficits as the individual's inability to interpret or respond to the feelings, perceptions or thoughts of another person. To them, everyone else perceives and reacts to situations the same way they do. This then leads to difficulty understanding or taking a different point of view. If you're interested in learning more about Theory of Mind, take a look at the materials listed in the Reference slides at the end of this tutorial. Given its premise, social stories provide the information about the social situation, the expectations and the perspectives of other people that the individual may not otherwise be able to perceive or interpret.

Most social situations are fluid. This means that how one reacts in them depends a great deal on what one knows about the other people involved, their roles, expectations and the unstated rules that are often be attached to the setting. They're also fleeting – they happen very quickly and are without permanency. They very rarely happen in exactly the same manner more than once. A social script can provide information about these puzzling dynamics in a permanent and consistent format. This can often reduce the number of on the spot social judgments required/ It can also better prepares the individual to make those social decisions that will still be

necessary.

Because a social script is a written and sometime illustrated document, information is presented visually. Often visual processing skills are a relative strength for learners with ASD, whereas spoken language abilities are an area of relative weakness.. The highly visual format of a social script presents the needed information through the learning modality that is many times an area of strength.

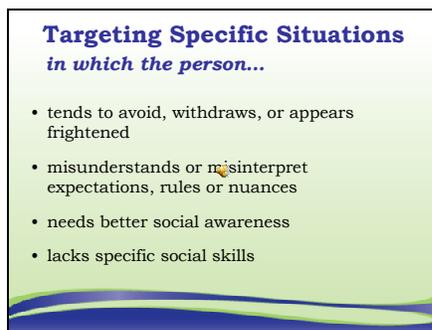
Since social scripts describe a situation and provide specific directions about what to do in it, they also provide a bit of distance in time for the individual to practice and learn the new response before the situation arises in which they will actually need to use it.

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Now that we've talked about what social scripts do and how they work, it's time to think about putting them together. Come on, lets get down to business.

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Slide 7

Providing Clarification

- Written from perspective of child – first person, present tense
- Individual can assist in writing story
- Some children require careful observation on the part of the author to obtain perspective
- Focus on the positive
- Clarify expected response

One important point of a social script is to clarify a situation that is misunderstood in some way. There are number things you can do to provide clarification.

Social scripts are always written from the child's point of view, so be sure to use first person reference terms - I or Me - and present tense wording.

Whenever it's possible, include the individual in the script writing process. Write the script together as soon as you can after an incident has occurred, and perhaps even have them read through or review it for approval of a final version. This strengthens the connection between what happened in the situation and the desired alternatives to it. It also promotes the person's ownership of the script.

Some children may not have the language capacities to participate in writing the social script, but this doesn't mean they can't benefit from the support of one. For those kids, you may have to do a little more investigating to make sure you've captured their perspective. Observe the situation closely as many times as necessary . You can also gather the perspectives of other observers or those involved in the situation with the child. What do they think is going on?

Another important aspect of good clarification involves

providing specific information about what the person should do in the situation, rather than what they should not to do. Even when a reason for creating the social script is because of a problem behavior, we have to assume the person resorts to that behavior because for whatever reasons, they are unable to demonstrate a better alternative to it. The point of the social script then becomes to clarify what to do, rather than what not to do.

So, a well written social script will emphasize a positive response and explain the successful outcomes of it, in terms the individual can easily understand and behaviors they can readily demonstrate.

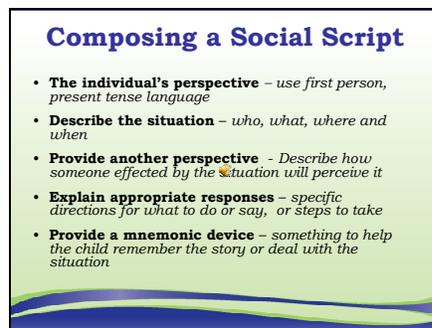
A well crafted social script will provide insight into the situation from a number of aspects. When composing one for your students, be sure that it reflects each of these:

The child's perspective – because the goal of the script is to shift the student's perceptions and responses to a situation, it has to be composed from their point of view. Don't forget to write it using first person, present tense language.

In order to guide the person about what to do, you'll first have to establish the setting first. This is where you'll describe the who, what where and when of the situation

Since one of the reasons you may be composing the social script is to help the individual understand the situation and its impact on others, you'll also need to interpret the situation for them from another person's point of view, or describe their perceptions of it.

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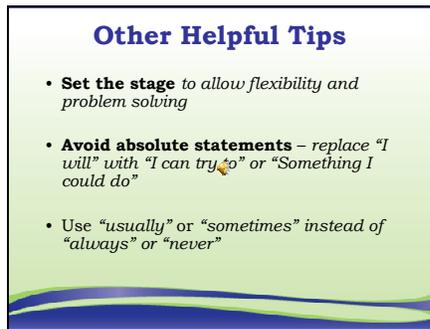
Composing a Social Script

- **The individual's perspective** – use first person, present tense language
- **Describe the situation** – who, what, where and when
- **Provide another perspective** – Describe how someone effected by the situation will perceive it
- **Explain appropriate responses** – specific directions for what to do or say, or steps to take
- **Provide a mnemonic device** – something to help the child remember the story or deal with the situation

As we have discussed previously, your script will also need to explain what the person should do or say in the situation. Be sure these directions are stated clearly and are well within their capacity to perform.

Sometimes it's helpful to end the story with a statement that summarizes the situation or provides an easy means of remembering what to do. It's not always possible or even necessary to do this, but a mnemonic device can be helpful.

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Other Helpful Tips

- **Set the stage** to allow flexibility and problem solving
- **Avoid absolute statements** – replace “I will” with “I can try” or “Something I could do”
- Use “usually” or “sometimes” instead of “always” or “never”

Here are a few other helpful things to keep in mind while composing a social script.

For some children, the difficulty may arise when they are unable to cope with uncertainty or to figure out what to do if an unexpected event happens. For them, try to frame the script in a way that promotes flexible thinking and problem solving.

Because so many of our kids interpret what they read or learn in a very literal way, you'll want to avoid making absolute statements in your scripts. Rather than starting statements with “I will...” or “I must...”, begin with “I can try to...” or “Something I could do is...”.

Along the same lines, using the words “usually” and “sometimes” instead of the more definite “always” or “never” establishes a tolerance for uncertainty in the social script.

Lastly, consider how and where the script will be used. Will it be needed in more than one setting, and if so, will portability be necessary? Will referring to the script be considered an embarrassment? If that's a possibility, you'll need to make sure it's presented in a discreet manner and referred to in a way that doesn't call undue attention to it.

The point of the social script is to clarify expectations and guide the person through an alternative response in a difficult situation. Because of this, it will be much more effective to provide directive statements about what to do, rather than what not to do.

You'll also need to consider the age, language abilities and learning style of the person the script is intended for. Write the script with vocabulary, illustrations length and font style that are appropriate for their ability levels.

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More Helpful Tips

- **Consider context and appropriateness**
– *should the story be portable, discreet, unobtrusive*
- **Encourage successful behaviors, rather than discourage problem behaviors**
- **Use appropriate vocabulary, length and font for the individual's ability level**

Slide 11

Presentation and Format

- Illustrations or drawings
- Symbolic representation
- Promoting symbolic generalization
- Audio recordings
- PowerPoint and Movie Maker
- Video

Using the Library

The library is a quiet place.



It's easier for everyone to read when it's quiet.



People in the library like it when I whisper.



I can try to whisper when I check out books or videos...



Slide 12

Using the Script

- Share a draft of the script
- Have the individual present the script to others
- Refer to the script when the social situation approaches
- Schedule script reviews

Now that you've written your script, here are just a few tips to keep in mind while you're actually using it:

Be sure to share the script with all members of the student's support team. They may have other perspectives on the targeted situation that will allow you to fine tune the wording of the final script. Chances are they'll also want to use it too.

In some case, it could be a great idea to have the individual provide a copy of the script with anyone else who may happen to find themselves in the situation with them. These people, whether they are other kids, school staff or family members, can then read back the script as an affirmation of what may happen the next time the situation arises.

Don't hesitate to have the person refer to the social script as many times as they need to , especially as the targeted situation approaches

Even once the use of the script is faded, you may want to keep it on hand anyway. That way, it can be referred to anytime the need arises or it can serve as the starting point for developing a new social script for another situation.

It may be a good idea to routinely schedule points across the student's day to review social scripts. This builds the use of the script into a larger, more predictable daily sequence.

You'll want to keep a close eye on the effectiveness of the social script and monitor it's success.

If necessary, you may need to revise the script or write a new one if it doesn't seem to be effective. Try to analyze the discrepancies between what the script says and what actually happened in the situation. Does your perception of it match the individual's?

However, if the script is providing effective support, eventually you will want to fade it from use, or at least reduce the frequency it's being reviewed as the person acquires the more successful responses. Also, you can also rewrite the script to reduce the number of directive statements in it.

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Using the Script

- Monitor effectiveness of script
- Rework if needed
- Fade use of script – *decrease number of reviews; reduce directive statements*
- Keep the scripts on hand!

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Summing It Up

- It's all about perspective.
- Make things clear.
- Spell things out.
- Individualize for the reader.
- Choose the right format. 🍌
- Share the wealth.
- Practice, practice, practice!
- Now move on.

So on a final note, let's review the things that are most important to keep in mind while creating or using a social script..

Remember, it's all about perspective. Be sure to write your social script from the individual's point of view, but provide some insight into another person's perspective.

Make things clear – clarify any unstated rules, nuances or expectations that may otherwise be the source of misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

Spell things out – provide specific directions about what to do or say in the targeted situation if they are necessary.

Individualize for the reader – write the social script to suit the learning characteristics of the person it's written for.

Choose the right format – be sure to create the social script in the format that will maximize its benefit for the individual

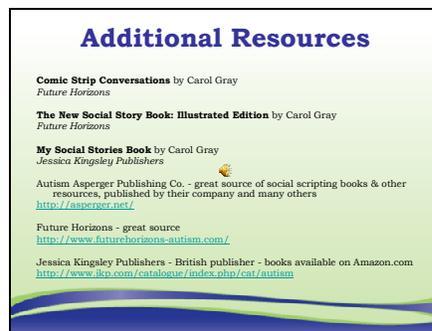
Share the wealth. Once your script is written, share with the individual and other support providers or anyone else that may be a part of the situation.

Now, move on. If your social script is well written and used consistently, you can eventually fade its use. Just keep

it handy for occasional reviews or writing new ones.

Practice, practice, practice! After sharing your social script with everyone, be sure to provide enough practice opportunities with it to maximize it's benefit.

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Additional Resources

Comic Strip Conversations by Carol Gray
Future Horizons

The New Social Story Book: Illustrated Edition by Carol Gray
Future Horizons

My Social Stories Book by Carol Gray
Jessica Kingsley Publishers

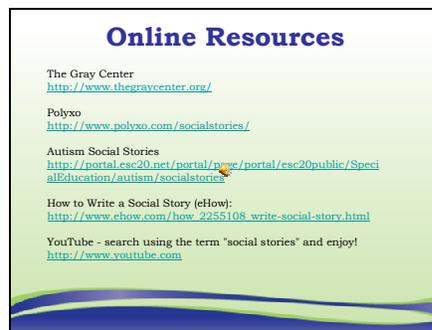
Autism Asperger Publishing Co. - great source of social scripting books & other resources, published by their company and many others
<http://asperger.net/>

Future Horizons - great source
<http://www.futurehorizons-autism.com/>

Jessica Kingsley Publishers - British publisher - books available on Amazon
<http://www.jkp.com/catalogue/index.php/cat/autism>

If you're interested in more information about social scripts, you might want to check out these additional printed resources.

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Online Resources

The Gray Center
<http://www.thegravcenter.org/>

Polyxo
<http://www.polyxo.com/socialstories/>

Autism Social Stories
<http://portal.esc20.net/portal/new/portal/esc20public/SpecialEducation/autism/socialstories>

How to Write a Social Story (eHow):
http://www.ehow.com/how_2252108_write-social-story.html

YouTube - search using the term "social stories" and enjoy!
<http://www.youtube.com>

Also, here are some great websites with lots of good information about social scripts.

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Contact CARD-USF

University of South Florida
Center for Autism & Related Disabilities

1-800-333-4530
(813) 974-2532
<http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu>



If you still have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact CARD-USF directly for additional support in this area.