

November 9, 2016
Floral Park-Bellerose School District

Practical Application of Evidence-Based Social Skills Training



Alyson H. Sheehan, PhD
Clinical Coordinator
Licensed Psychologist
ASPIRE Center for Learning and Development
Melville, NY

<http://www.aspirecenterforlearning.com>

A little bit about me...

- Background in range of mental health concerns, specialty in complex diagnosis and treatment (e.g., co-occurring medical and neurodevelopmental conditions)
- Currently focused primarily in ADHD, ASD, and social learning disorders
- ASPIRE Center for Learning Development (Melville, NY)
 - Provide consultation, comprehensive diagnostic evaluation, individual and family therapy
 - Offer social coping groups, therapeutic recreation programs, events and outings, and half-day summer program



A little bit about you...



- ▣ Parents? Others?
- ▣ Age ranges of children?
- ▣ Primary areas of concern?
- ▣ Particular subtopics of interest?

Topic Overview

- ▣ The Social World
- ▣ Socializing Skillfully
- ▣ Social Spheres and Inevitable Shifts
- ▣ Constructing Your Child's Social Profile
- ▣ Bumps in the Road
- ▣ ...and Getting Over Them
- ▣ Q & A

The Social World What It Means to be “Social”



- ▣ Defining **Social Skills**
 - ▣ “The ability to express feelings or communicate interests and desires to others” (Lieberman et al., 1975)
 - ▣ “Sharing space with others effectively” or “Adapting to others effectively across contexts” (Michelle Garcia Winner, 2007)
- ▣ Role of **Social Intelligence**
 - ▣ “Being intelligent not just about our relationships, but also in them” (Goleman, 2006)

The Social World Applying Social Skills



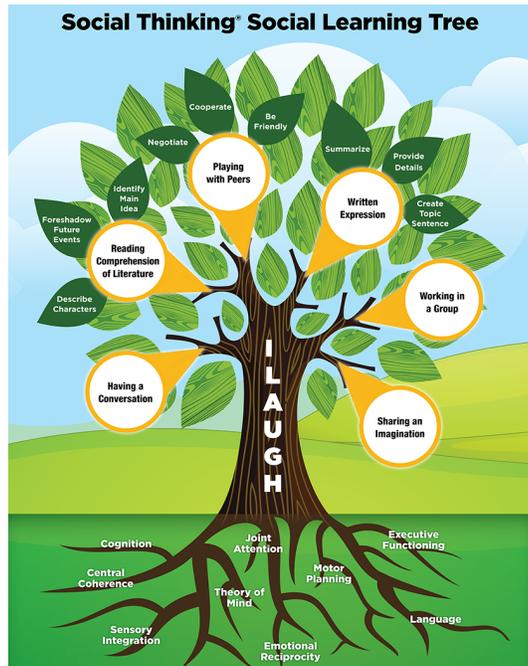
- ▣ When do we need to use social skills?
 - ▣ **Whenever we interact with others!**
 - ▣ At school
 - ▣ Teachers
 - ▣ Group work
 - ▣ Unstructured time (lunch, recess)
 - ▣ Reading and writing assignments
 - ▣ Clubs/extra-curricular activities
 - ▣ At home
 - ▣ Immediate family
 - ▣ Gatherings and holidays
 - ▣ Responsibility/chores
 - ▣ Phone calls
 - ▣ **COMPUTER SAFETY**
 - ▣ In community
 - ▣ Stores and restaurants
 - ▣ Religious/cultural groups
 - ▣ **PERSONAL SAFETY**
 - ▣ Community events
 - ▣ At work (eventually!)

Socializing Skillfully More Complicated Than We Realize!

- ▣ **What are the demands, characteristics, and processes that are involved in social interactions?**
 - ▣ Communication
 - ▣ Understanding others' verbal and non-verbal messages
 - ▣ Expressing oneself clearly and assertively
 - ▣ Emotions and coping
 - ▣ Detecting others' emotional responses
 - ▣ Distinguishing and monitoring own emotions
 - ▣ Self-awareness
 - ▣ Boundaries
 - ▣ Respect for self and others
 - ▣ Safety
 - ▣ Relationships
 - ▣ Varying degrees – acquaintance, potential friend, friend, best friend, romantic, etc.



Social Thinking® Social Learning Tree



Socializing Skillfully More Complicated Than We Realize!

THE I-LAUGH MODEL

MICHELLE GARCIA WINNER, MA, CCC-CLP

- I = INITIATION OF COMMUNICATION
- L = LISTENING WITH EYES AND BRAIN
- A = ABSTRACT & INFERENCE LANGUAGE
- U = UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVE
- G = GESTALT PROCESSING: THE BIG PICTURE
- H = HUMOR AND HUMAN RELATEDNESS

Social Spheres and Inevitable Shifts Early Childhood

- ▣ Attachment to caregivers (adults as primary source of social interaction)
- ▣ Imitation
- ▣ Emotional detection and expression
- ▣ **Play** (*yes, it takes skills to play*)
 - ▣ Parallel
 - ▣ Cooperative
 - ▣ Symbolic
- ▣ Learning basic social rules (e.g., sharing) and roles (e.g., gender)



Social Spheres and Inevitable Shifts School-Aged

- ▣ Reliance upon “rules”
- ▣ Friendships situation-specific and **interest-based**
- ▣ Perspective taking
- ▣ Recognition of impact behavior has on others
- ▣ Critical period for natural development of coping skills
- ▣ Increased self awareness
- ▣ Emergence of social hierarchy (i.e., popularity)

Social Spheres and Inevitable Shifts Early Adolescence (Tweens)

- ▣ Sharp shift in social expectations and dynamics
 - ▣ Move away from clear “rules” for navigating social situations (e.g., always tell the truth)
 - ▣ Trends in clothing, language, perspectives
 - ▣ Constant flux – may be instability in close friendships (especially girls)
- ▣ Onset of puberty
 - ▣ Sexuality
- ▣ Cliques are prevalent within social structure
 - ▣ Bullying heightens – physical, relational, cyber
 - ▣ Awareness and implications of social status



Social Spheres and Inevitable Shifts Late Adolescence (Teens)

- ▣ Peers as primary source of social interaction
 - ▣ Pull for independence from parents
 - ▣ Susceptible to social influence and risky behavior
- ▣ Relationships emotion-based
 - ▣ Loyalty, trust, understanding
 - ▣ Emotional vulnerability
- ▣ Self-identity versus social identity
 - ▣ Conformity
 - ▣ Impending transition to adulthood
- ▣ Romantic relationships and sexuality



Constructing a Social Profile Distinct Factors for Consideration

- ▣ Social Motivation
 - ▣ What does a child's "ideal" social world look like?
 - ▣ Often different than our own
 - ▣ Differentiating between desire and skill deficit
- ▣ Social Awareness
 - ▣ Picking up on verbal and non-verbal cues
 - ▣ Recognizing impact of behavior on others (and vice versa)
- ▣ Social Cognition
 - ▣ Interpreting verbal and non-verbal cues
 - ▣ Understanding social scenarios and dilemmas
 - ▣ Problem-solving as needed
- ▣ Social Communication
 - ▣ Decoding and conveying messages to others

Bumps in the Road Topics in Troubleshooting



- ▣ What difficulties have you encountered?
- ▣ Most common reported to me by parents
 - ▣ "Does not have friends," "Cannot make friends," or "Cannot keep friends"
 - ▣ Quiet and introverted
 - ▣ Different interests than peers (more and/or less mature)
 - ▣ "Has no filter"
 - ▣ Passive or aggressive (not assertive) communication
 - ▣ Reading between the lines/non-verbal cues
 - ▣ Bullying
 - ▣ **Social Media**

Getting Over the Bumps Identifying Individual Strengths and Assets



- ▣ Sizeable subgroup of children require explicit teaching in social skills
 - ▣ Do not all learn incidentally/observationally
- ▣ Goes back to social profile (awareness, cognition, motivation, communication)
- ▣ Crucial balance of approaching constructively but directly
- ▣ Not just identifying *what* to do differently, but explaining *why* and *how*
- ▣ Recognizing strengths along with deficits is essential
 - ▣ Strengths are compensatory
 - ▣ Strengths may be used to develop areas of deficit

Getting Over the Bumps Overarching Approach



- ▣ Keep it simple, especially at the start
- ▣ Be concrete and specific – lists, visual references, or catchy phrases are a bonus!
- ▣ Make it fun!
 - ▣ Incorporate child's interests
- ▣ Break concepts and tasks into smallest components
- ▣ Repeat often
 - ▣ Practice, practice, practice – provide opportunities
 - ▣ Maintain consistency
- ▣ Be proactive
- ▣ Natural and planned reinforcement

Getting Over the Bumps Communication



- ▣ Social Scripts
 - ▣ Prompts (verbal, written, illustrated) for what to do or say in specific social situations
 - ▣ Examples: answering phone, ordering at restaurant, meeting someone for first time, recovering from embarrassing moment
- ▣ Social Stories®
 - ▣ Written stories with illustrations that focus on aspects of social scenarios and highlight relevant social cues.
 - ▣ Conducive to targeting multiple aspects of communicative difficulties without interference by self-consciousness
- ▣ Roleplaying
 - ▣ Often awkward for child, but important as stepping stone for generalization
- ▣ Social communication or pragmatic speech interventions
 - ▣ Depending on nature and severity of expressive and receptive difficulties, school or community-based individual or group therapy may be highly beneficial

Activity Example Social Comic

I've been to see the exhibit six times and let me tell you it's really something. In the first row there are historical documents that are the originals. I saw the...

There's no way you understand this so I'll explain it. . . .

I shouldn't have to do any history assignments because I already know that stuff.

Um...Jake and I were already having a conversation here.

Adrianna, we get it too and we all have to do the project. Let it go.

Talking in a group isn't about just telling your knowledge. Whether or not people want to hear it depends on the situation, what we say, and more importantly, how we say it.

Activity Example Social Mapping *(Michelle Garcia Winner)*

My behavior that is unexpected in the situation	Others' feelings about my behavior(s)	How others treat me based on how they feel about my behavior(s)	How I feel based on how I am treated in the situation
	→	→	

Getting Over the Bumps Shyness, Passivity, and Introversion

- ▣ First off, important to emphasize that he/she **does not** need to become “life of the party” – it is just about being able to get by and feel content
- ▣ Targeting self-esteem
 - ▣ Assessment for underlying or emerging depression/anxiety
 - ▣ Fostering self recognition of strengths
- ▣ Assertiveness training
 - ▣ High relevance in setting interpersonal and physical boundaries
- ▣ Promote development in strongest communicative or interest area (e.g., writing, art, music)
- ▣ Consider participation in formal or informal group of similar peers

Activity Example Assertive Communication

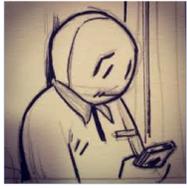


"Shy" style	"Best" style	"Mean" style
Does not speak his mind or share opinions	Speaks his mind kindly and shares opinions	Speaks his mind meanly and forces his opinions on others
Puts rights/needs of others in front of his own	Puts rights/needs of others equal with his own	Puts his rights/needs in front of everyone else's
Allows others to choose for him	Makes requests without insulting	Inconsiderate of other people
Can be used and disrespected	Is taken seriously and receives respect	Scares people
Does not communicate	Communicates effectively	Cuts off communication
May feel sad, lonely, and frustrated	Feels good about himself	May have few friends or act like a bully

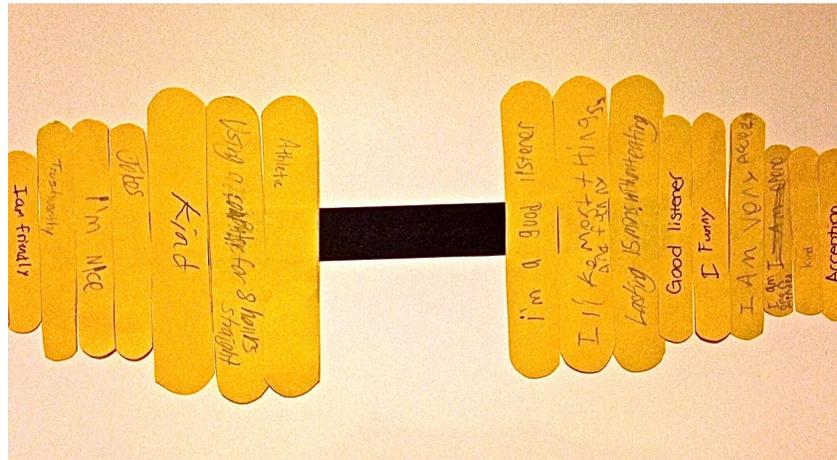
You have just enough money to buy yourself lunch in the cafeteria. One of the guys sitting at your table asks you for a dollar so that he can get some candy.



Your friend said that he was having a party on Friday night and would send you a text about when and where it is. It's Friday afternoon and you still haven't heard from him.



Activity Example Identifying Strengths and Goals

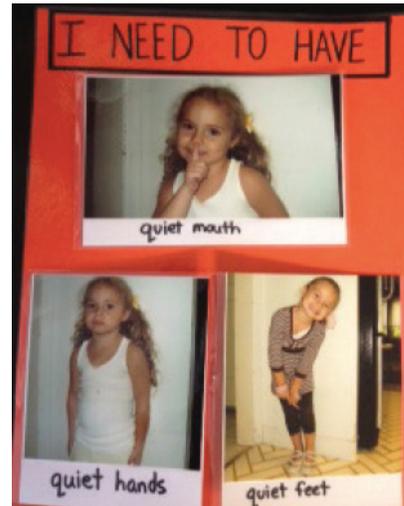


Getting Over the Bumps Manners and Social Filtering



- Modeling
 - Adults, peers, siblings exemplify behavior; detailed, explicit explanation of behavior follows
- Video Modeling
 - Strategically use segments of child's favorite television shows or movies to point out expected and unexpected social behavior
 - Pause and rewind as needed!
- Cue system
 - Gestures, references, or "clues" serve as real-time prompts
- Experiential learning
 - Duplicate effective and ineffective behaviors to direct at child
 - Engage in dialogue following child's response

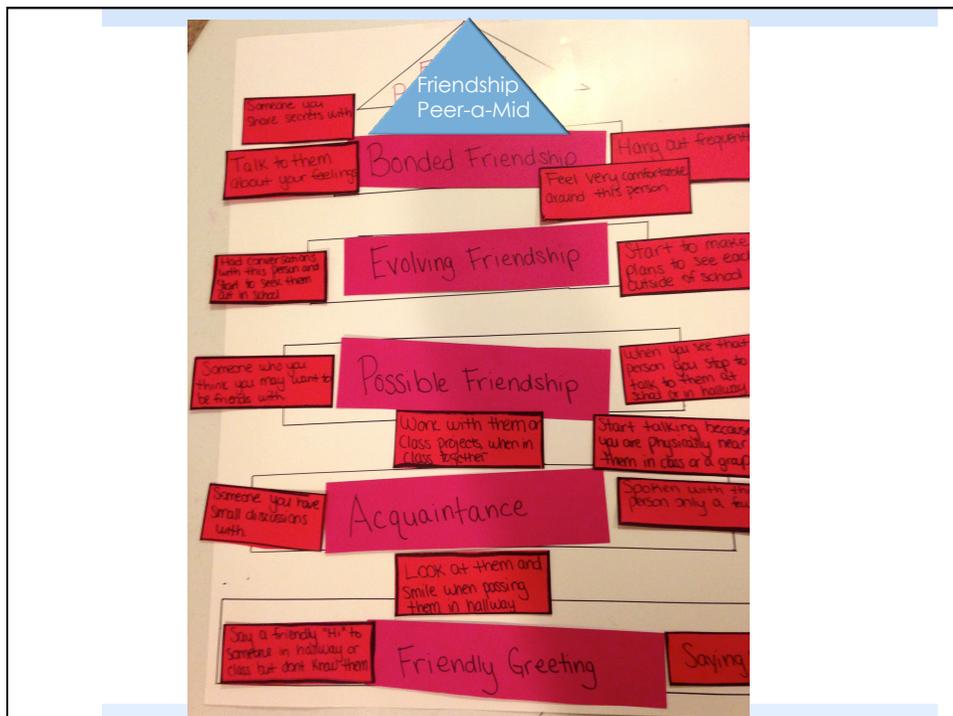
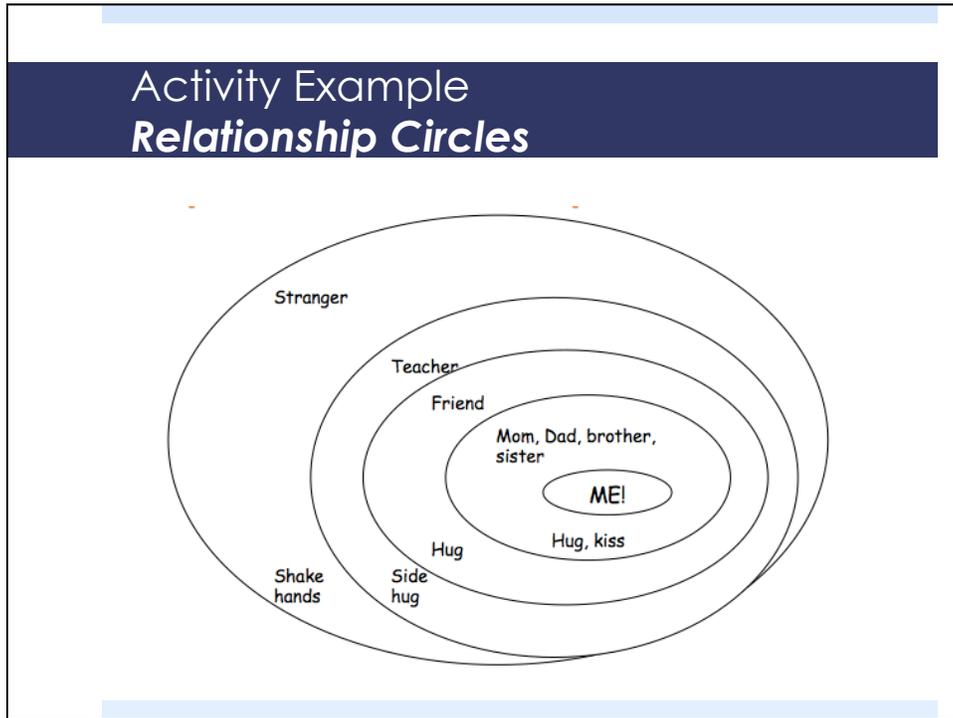
Activity Example Visual Cues and Reminders



Getting Over the Bumps Navigating Social Relationships

- ▣ Differentiating types and levels of relationships
 - ▣ Create a "relationship circle"
 - ▣ Identify corresponding characteristics and behaviors
- ▣ Learning social problem-solving
 - ▣ Reflecting on previous scenarios and brainstorming alternatives
 - ▣ Be honest!
 - ▣ Presenting "mock" social dilemmas
 - ▣ Discussing, role playing
- ▣ Request formal peer mentor at school
 - ▣ Serve as "informal model" for social understanding
- ▣ Participation in a social coping group may be highly beneficial for children and adolescents grappling with this area.





Activity Example Problem-Solving

When I get mad in gym I should.

- ~~Run out of the room~~
- ~~Put my pants down~~
- Take a deep Breathe
- Call a timeout

At recess, you go over to see what some of your friends are doing behind the big dumpster. They are smoking a cigarette and tell you to take a puff. You do not want to.



Your friend comes over and says he would like to spend the afternoon playing a one-person game on your DS. You don't think that sounds very fun.



Questions???



Recommended Resources Social Thinking®



Social Thinking®
Official Website
www.socialthinking.com



Pinterest
Thinksheets & Worksheets
<https://www.pinterest.com/SocialThink/>

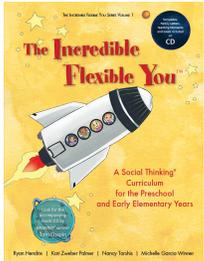


Social Thinking Channel
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtiY3nmlV2fDsh4F04FYtIQ>



Social Thinking Page
<https://www.facebook.com/socialthinking/>

Recommended Resources Children (Early Childhood – Elementary)

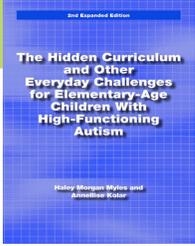


The Incredible Flexible You
A Social Thinking® Curriculum for the Preschool and Early Elementary Years
By Michelle Garcia Winner

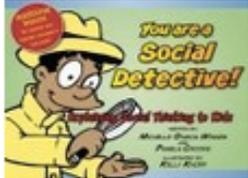
The Incredible 5-Point Scale



By Karen Dunn Barnes and Shari Swartz



The Hidden Curriculum and Other Everyday Challenges for Elementary-Age Children With High-Functioning Autism
By Henny Morgan Wylie and Jennifer Foster



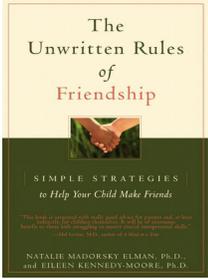
You are a Social Detective!
Michelle Garcia Winner



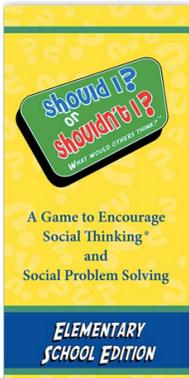
SUPERFLEX™
A Superhero Social Thinking Curriculum
Michelle Garcia Winner

The Hidden Curriculum

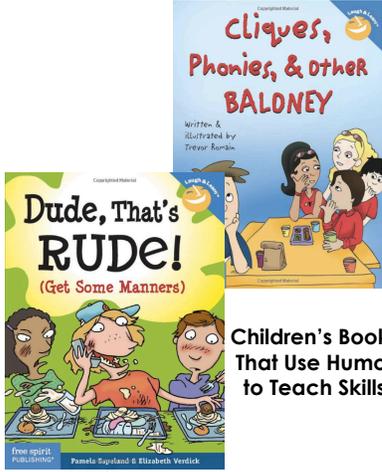
Recommended Resources Children (Early Childhood – Elementary)



Guide for Parents

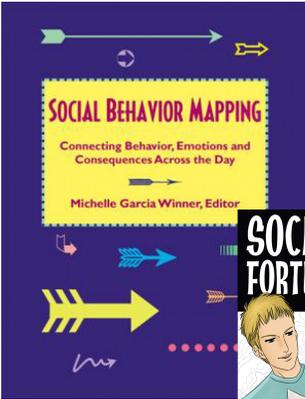


Card Game Incorporating Social Behavior



Children's Books That Use Humor to Teach Skills

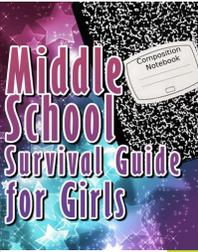
Recommended Resources Tweens



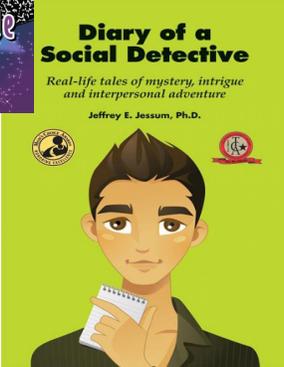
SOCIAL BEHAVIOR MAPPING
Connecting Behavior, Emotions and Consequences Across the Day
Michelle Garcia Winner, Editor



SOCIAL FORTUNE
A SOCIAL THINKING® GRAPHIC NOVEL MAP FOR SOCIAL GUEST SERVERS
PAMELA CROOKE AND MICHELLE GARCIA WINNER



Middle School Survival Guide for Girls
Composition Notebook



Diary of a Social Detective
Real-life tales of mystery, intrigue and interpersonal adventure
Jeffrey E. Jessum, Ph.D.



The Powerpoint presentation from today's workshop will be posted on the ASPIRE Center website listed below for further reference.

Thank you for attending!

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, feedback, or to obtain further information on resources discussed and programs available at ASPIRE Center.



ASPIRE Center for Learning and Development

Alyson H. Sheehan, PhD
Clinical Coordinator, Licensed Psychologist
ASPIRE Center for Learning and Development
63 Old East Neck Road, Melville, NY 11747
(631) 923-0923

info@aspirecenterforlearning.com
<http://www.aspirecenterforlearning.com>