



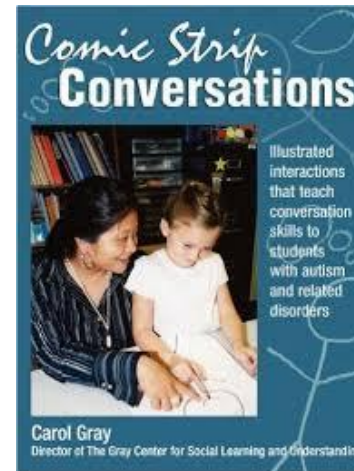
Comic Strip Conversations

Improving lives



What is a Comic Strip Conversation?

- A communication tool to **illustrate** and **simplify** conversations with simple drawings.
- Developed by Carol Gray (SLT)
- Resource “Comic Strip Conversations”
Publisher: Future Horizons



- An effective tool for parents and professionals working with children with ASD, social communication difficulties and other developmental disabilities.
- Emphasis placed on what people may be thinking – “theory of mind”



What is a Comic Strip Conversation?

- Helps child to “read between the lines”
 - infer
 - take the perspective of others
 - follow the quick exchange of information in a conversation
 - tune in to what they missed
- Uses simple drawings and symbols
- Colour used for emotions of statements, thoughts and questions
- Can be used with Social Stories or independently

Background & Rationale: Why use Comic Strip Conversations?

- Based on communicative drawings of 10 year old child who would draw to communicate frustrating situations to her mother who would draw in return.
- Evidence shows that visualisation and visual supports help children with ASD and social communication difficulties.
- Students with ASD and social communication difficulties have difficulties identifying the beliefs and motivations of others (Baron-Cohen).
- Perspective-taking is often difficult for students with social communication difficulties (“walking in your shoes” / seeing situations from the other person’s perspective)

What do we need?

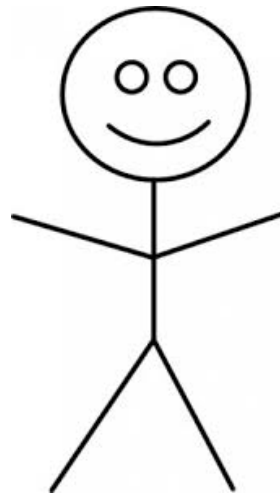
- Key person & child (SENCo; Teacher; Teaching Assistant; Learning Mentor; Parent)
- Quiet room/area of school/ at home
- Sit side by side or at right angles work best
- Selection of drawing and writing materials e.g. white board, paper, chalkboard/ ipad
- Paper you can save for review & discuss conversations at a later time.

Principles

- Demonstrate that drawing while talking is an ok way to communicate
- Practise before to feel comfortable with the method
- Student takes the lead – adult guides without *taking* the lead
- Both have access to writing materials **but** the student is encouraged to write/draw/talk the majority of the time.
- *Initially* may have more “interview format” ; adult asks/writes the questions
→ student draws/writes/talks in return
- **Aim over time: less like an interview more like a conversation!**

Introducing Symbols

- “We’re going to draw while we talk today”
- Write and draw symbols at the same time

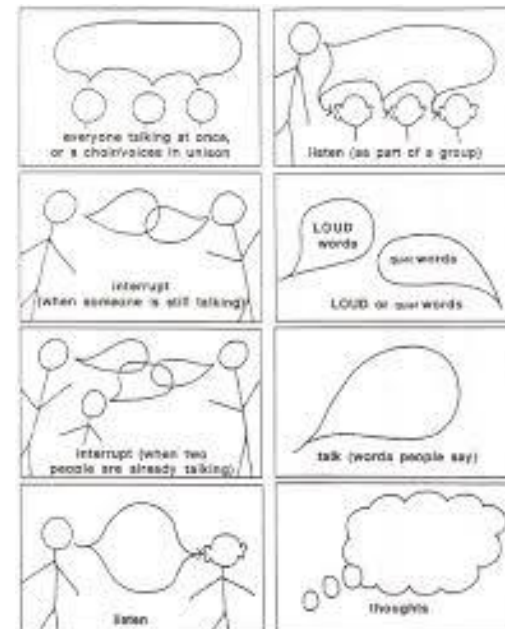


- Ask them what they would like to talk about or pick something you know they’ll be interested in e.g. trip to Disneyland; weekend activities
- Remember to include “small talk” in your drawings (e.g. talk about weather)

Symbols Dictionary

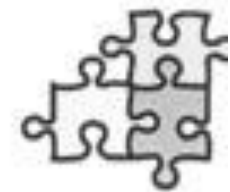
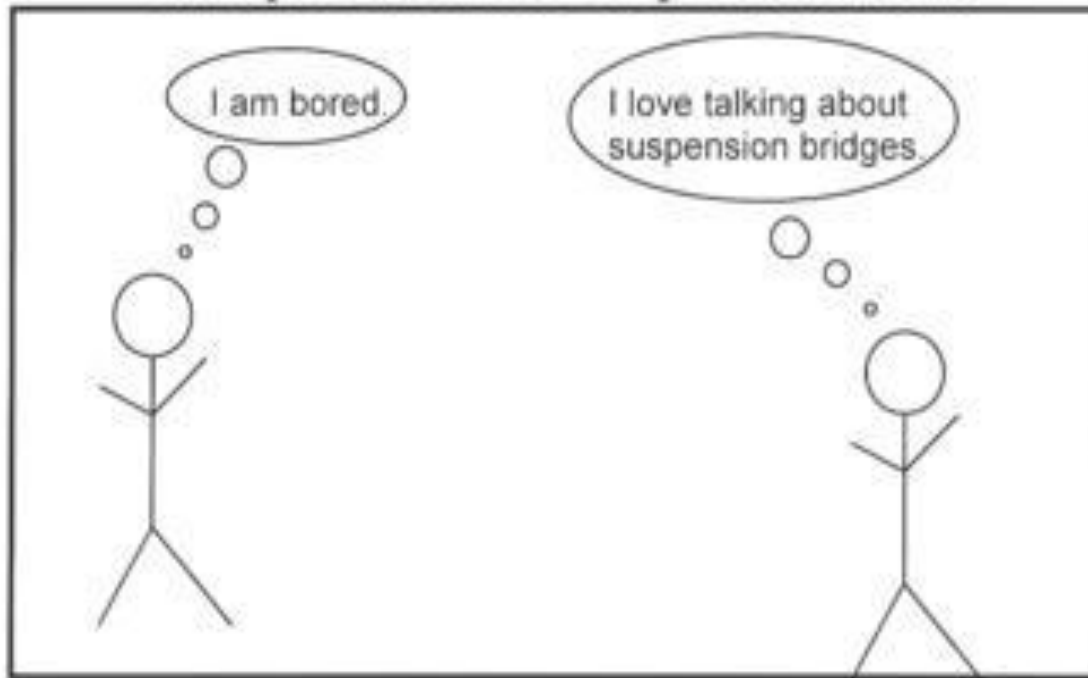
- Conversations Symbols Dictionary – eight symbols
- Introduce gradually (talking, thoughts, listening)
- Symbols represent basic conversation concepts

- Everyone talking at once
- Listening (as a group)
- Interrupting
- LOUD & Quiet Words
- Talking (several people)
- Talking (one person)
- Listening (one person)
- Thoughts



Example using one symbol: thoughts

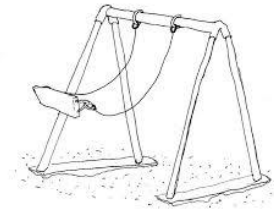
Example of a Comic Strip Conversation



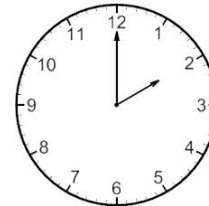
Personal Symbols Dictionary

- Collection of symbols frequently used by the students
- Includes symbols for specific, places and concepts that are important to the student & frequent part of their lives

Places e.g. home, the park



Concepts e.g. time, first



People e.g. Mum, teacher



Talking about a situation

- Comic Strip conversations can be used to talk through situations that are causing difficulty for the student e.g.
 - lunchtime dispute
 - not being first to line up for playtime
 - a social misunderstanding such as sharing vs. taking
- Can be used to talk about future situations (but be mindful of rigid thinking – allow for flexibility)
- Use **smaller cards** to help sequence the ‘conversation’ (place these onto a bigger sheet with location symbol in the corner).
- Start with a **location** symbol e.g. playground, classroom, lunch hall.
- Use questions to ‘complete the picture’

8 questions to ask

- 1) Where were you? (use symbol - student draws a person)
- 2) Who else was there? (student draws others)
- 3) What were you doing ?(student draws relevant items and actions)
- 4) What happened? What did others do? (student draws relevant items and actions)
- 5) What did you say? (use talk symbol)
- 6) What did others say? (use talk symbol)
- 7) What did you think when you said that? (use thought symbol)
- 8) What did others think when they said/did that? (use thought symbol)

Taking Perspectives & Concluding the Conversation

Perspective of the professional / parent is shared with the student – wait for natural opportunities to provide support. For example, if the student misreads a situation or makes errors in relation to others perspectives the adult can accept the answer as valid but introduce another idea.

- **Summarise**
- Identify **new** responses/solutions
- Pros and cons of different solutions could be considered.

Incorporating colours for feelings

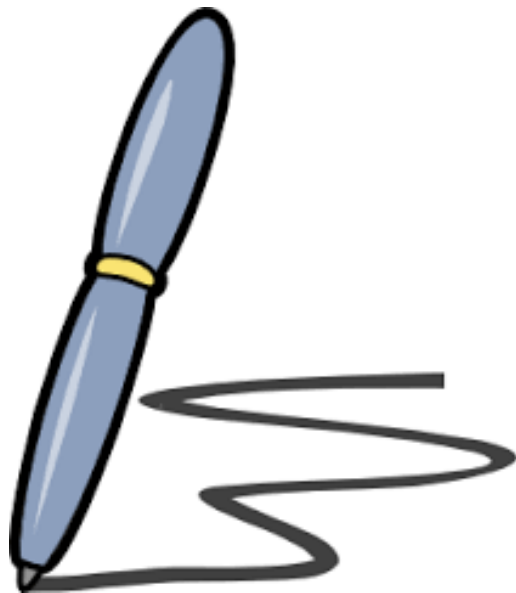
- Introduce gradually – one at a time
- Be mindful of other intervention approaches that use colours for emotions, e.g. Zones of Regulation
- If the child is used to a specific colour code, stick with that code – do not swap colours
- Be mindful of child’s language level/ understanding
- Start with **basic first** happy - green; sad – blue ; angry - red
- e.g. happy – green “ I was so happy at my party” .
- Consider offering the child a choice of colours – be consistent once chosen

Colours (suggestions)

- **Green** : good ideas ; happy ; friendly
- **Red** : Bad ideas ; anger ; unfriendly
- **Blue** : sad ; uncomfortable
- **Yellow** : frightened ; anxious ; scared

Additional colours

- **Brown** : comfortable ; cozy
- **Purple** : proud
- **Black** : facts
- **Orange** : questions
- **Combinations of colours** : confused



Comic Strip Conversations - YouTube

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Oxleas
NHS

Questions?

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