



Social Stories

Improving lives



Aims of today...

- Introduce what a social story is
- Introduce how social stories are written
- Who social stories might be useful for

Social Stories – Carol Gray 1994

What is a Social Story?

- A short story written in a specific style and format.
- Short description of a specific social situation, event or activity that provides information about **what** might happen and **why**.
- A social story requires consideration of – and respect for – the perspective of the individual with Autism and is written from their perspective.
- Describes what may not be ‘obvious’ (unwritten rules)
- Evidence-based – developed by Carol Gray (1994) for use with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The aims and purpose of Social Stories


- Explain and provide information about a social situation or event.
- To provide information on the perspectives of others.
- To coach an individual re social skills and behaviour.

It is not the goal of the social story to change behaviour but to increase social understanding.

The goal of a Social Story™ is to share accurate information using a process, format, voice, and content that is descriptive, meaningful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the Audience. Every Social Story™ has an overall patient and reassuring tone.

Common Misconceptions

- 1. The goal of Social Stories™ is to get the Audience (i.e. child/student) to do what the Author/Team wants them to do
- 2. The goal of a Social Story™ is to change the Audience's (i.e. child/student) behaviour.

 Not understanding social events and expectations can result in frustration and/or maladaptive behaviour. We use the **Social Story™** to address the student's difficulty understanding social situations.

Therefore, while the end result of a social story may be a change in the responses of a the person with ASD, the first priority – the goal – is always to share relevant social information in a meaningful way.



Not understanding
social events and
expectations.



Frustration and/or
maladaptive
behaviours.

We use the Social Story™ to address the individual's difficulty understanding social situations.

The purpose of Social Stories™ is to support understanding of social situations so that children can make more informed decisions and have more of the same information about social situations as others do.

Social understanding

- Children and young people with ASD have difficulty mastering social skills.
- Social rules of behaviour and interaction are often confusing and overwhelming.

Carol Gray (1998) defines social understanding as:

“An understanding of the underlying, hidden messages that underpin social interaction a ‘hidden code’”

Social understanding depends on an understanding of explicit and implicit social rules that govern everyday social encounters; it requires an ability to make decisions about the social skills we have in terms of ‘when’ and ‘where’ to use them.

Two Part Discovery

- Keep the goal in mind and gather accurate information.
- Try to understand the situation from the child/young person's point of view e.g. You could use drawings, comic strips, observations to discuss the situation before writing a Social Story™ .



- In this way, each Social Story™ addresses the needs and improves the social understanding of people on *both sides* of the social equation.

Consider Age & Language Level

- Use short sentences
- Less sentences for younger age children or language levels
- Use visuals
- Rhythm and Repetition
 - On the playground , I may play on the swings, I may play on the slide , I may play on the monkey bars , or I may play something else
- Social stories should be used/read when the child/young person is calm and receptive and repeated regularly.

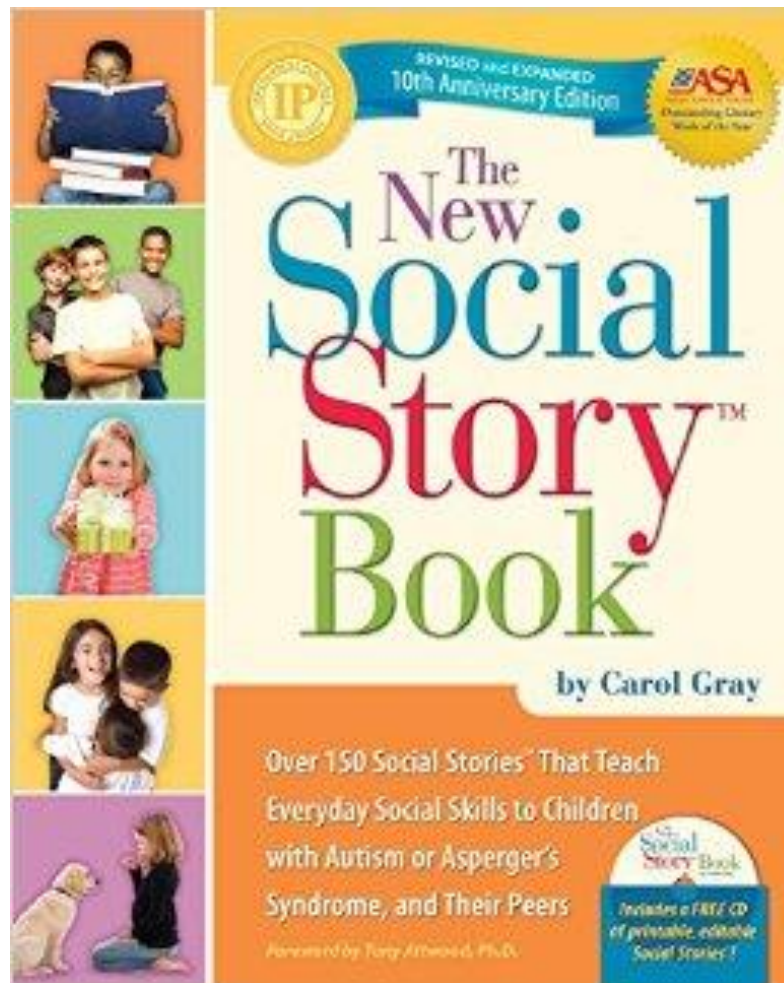
Positive & Patient Tone

- A Social Story™ uses positive language. A person with ASD is far more likely to be challenged, corrected, and re directed far more frequently than his or her peers.
- A Social Story™ keeps the self-esteem of the child/young person safe.
- Positive verbs are preferable to negative counterparts.
 - “I will try not to run in the hallway.”
 - “I will try to walk in the hallway.”

Examples:

Instead of...	Try...
I shouldn't run in the house	Sometimes it is important not to run in the house.
I will keep the paint on the paper.	I will try to keep the paint on the paper
You will have fun at the birthday party	At the party, I may eat cake. I may play with a balloon.

The Social Story Book



Writing a Social Story

- Social stories are usually written in the first person: *I, me, mine, we.*
- Can also be in the third person (child's name)
- Positive
- Where possible they should be written with the child/young person present.
- Comprise of four sentence types :

Descriptive: what might be expected from the situation.

Perspective: describes the thoughts/feelings/moods of others.

Directive/coaching: what might be expected of the child.

Affirmative: to affirm/stress an important point or refer to a rule.

Social Article

- A Social Story that is written from a third-person voice, similar to a newspaper article, is called a Social Article.
- Social Articles may use columns, advanced vocabulary and/or Times New Roman font to minimize any “babyish” or insulting quality in the text. They can be used for older students for example.



Three Parts and a Title

- **TITLE & INTRODUCTION (Introduce)**
 - My name is...
 - If I lose a toy, people can help (clear topic sentence)
- **BODY (Describe)**
 - My Mum and Dad know how to find my toy. We will try to think and look.
- **CONCLUSION (Reinforce & Summarise important points)**
 - People can help me look for my toy.

How to write a Social Story : sentence types

Descriptive Sentences

(must have)

- Factual and objective – describe the event/situation/topic
- The only required type of sentence in a social story and the most frequently used.

“My name is...”

“There **are** many holidays during the year.”

“Some holidays **are** long, and others **are** short.”

“Wrapping hides a gift, and helps to keep it a secret.”

Sentence types

May also contain –

Perspective Sentences “other people”

- Usually describe the thoughts and feelings of other people.

Many people **think that** nice surprises are fun. (opinion)

My teacher or supply teacher **knows about** maths. (knowledge/thoughts)

My sister usually **likes to** play the piano (feelings)

Sentence types

Directive/Coaching Sentences “I will try”/ “I can”

- Identify a suggested response or choice of responses to a situation or concept, gently directing...

I may choose to play on the swings. Or, ***I may*** choose another play activity.

I will try to keep the paint on the paper.

I will try to follow Mr Jackson’s directions.

More descriptive sentences!

Descriptive sentences should always outnumber the directive sentences.

- 1 directive sentence for every 2-5 descriptive sentences.
- Explain not direct
- They remind us to share the information that we often assume everyone knows.

Sentence types

May also contain –

Affirmative Sentences

- To stress an important point or reassure or refer to law

The toilet makes a sound when it flushes. ***This is okay***
(reassure)

To stay safe , children take turns going down the slide . ***This is very important.***
(reference to a rule)

I will try to keep my seatbelt fastened. ***This is very important.***
(reference to a law)

Sentence types

May also contain –

Partial Sentences

- Fill in the blank
- Can be used to check comprehension
- Encourages prediction

Wrapping hides a gift, and helps to keep it a

_____.

Many people think that nice surprises are _____.

Example Social Story

Craig, aged 10, has a favourite bus driver and has difficulty adjusting to other drivers.

My name is Craig **(descriptive)**

On most days I go to school on the bus

Usually Otto is my driver **(descriptive)**

Sometimes other drivers drive the school bus. **(descriptive)**

All the drivers will take me to school safely **(perspective)**. I will let a different driver take me to school. **(directive)**

This is the right thing to do and I will be safe. **(affirmative)**



Oxleas
NHS

Thank you

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