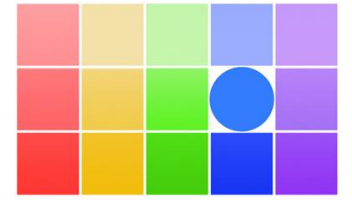




Joanna Burden
Education Consultant
SEND Supported



SEND Supported
Embracing difference

Developing social understanding in young people with autism

By the end of the session you will :

- ✓ Have developed strategies to support the development of social understanding in a young person with autism
- ✓ Have developed your knowledge and skills in how to write a comic strip conversation.

“People with Autism Spectrum have to learn social behaviour without the benefit of social understanding.”

Emeritus Professor Rita Jordan, 2013 Birmingham University

What is social understanding?

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.



Developing Social Understanding

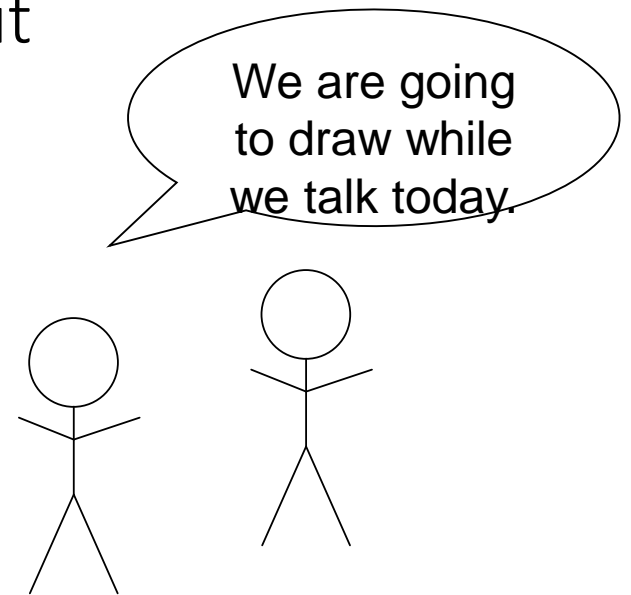
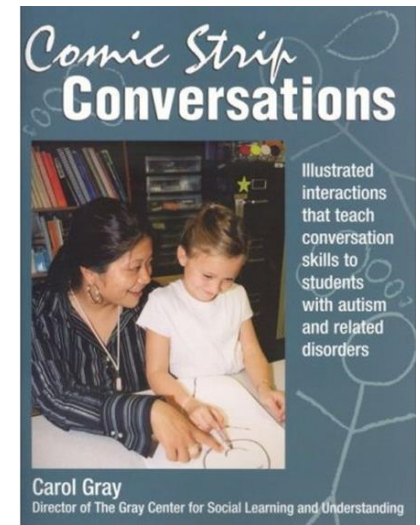
Social Stories and **Comic Strip Conversations** were devised by Carol Gray (1991) as an approach to help establish social understanding as a component to teaching social skills.

The approach is founded on theories such as 'theory of mind' and it uses a visual approach that recognises the visual learning style of individuals with ASD.

Strategies develop: social skills, social prediction, social judgement and social understanding.

What is a Comic Strip Conversation?

- Individuals with ASC often have problems in social situations. They may not be able to understand or process speech as quickly as is needed for most social interactions. A Comic Strip Conversation is a conversation between 2 or more people using simple drawings. This slows the conversation, allows you to forensically find out what was said and thought in a situation that caused a problem.
- A conversation between two or more people which incorporates the use of simple drawings – talking with pictures.

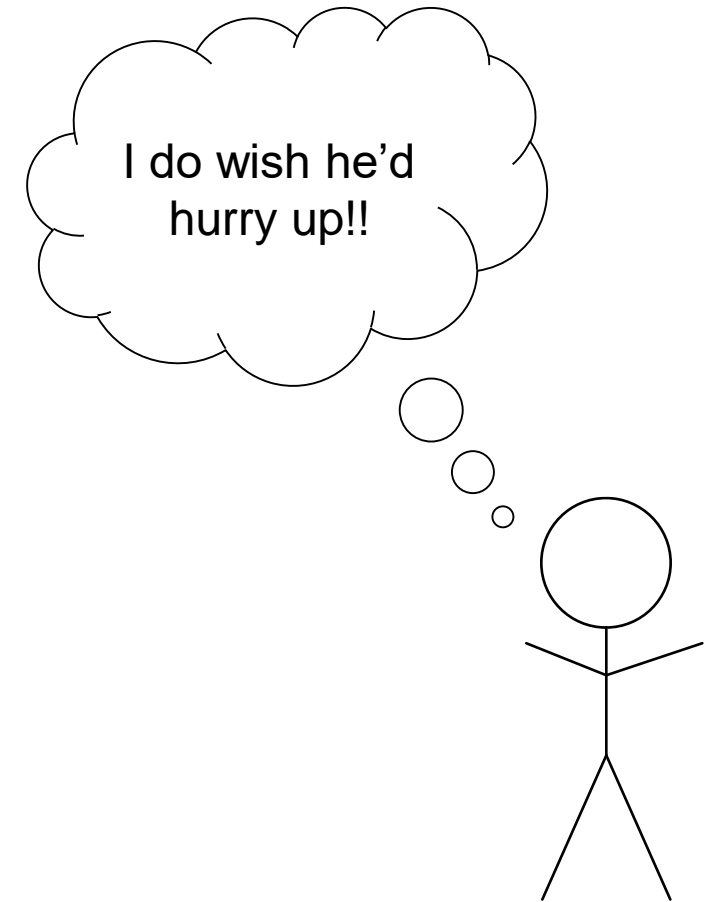


Why use a comic strip conversation?

- Engage in problem solving/ conflict resolution where a social situation has been unsuccessful
- To help a young person communicate their feelings and perception of a situation (helps others to understand the experience from their point of view)
- To enable reflection in a non-threatening manner (drawing the story rather than asking lots of questions)
- Slows the conversation down, making it less stressful and giving time for verbal processing.
- End product is visual and can be referred back to.

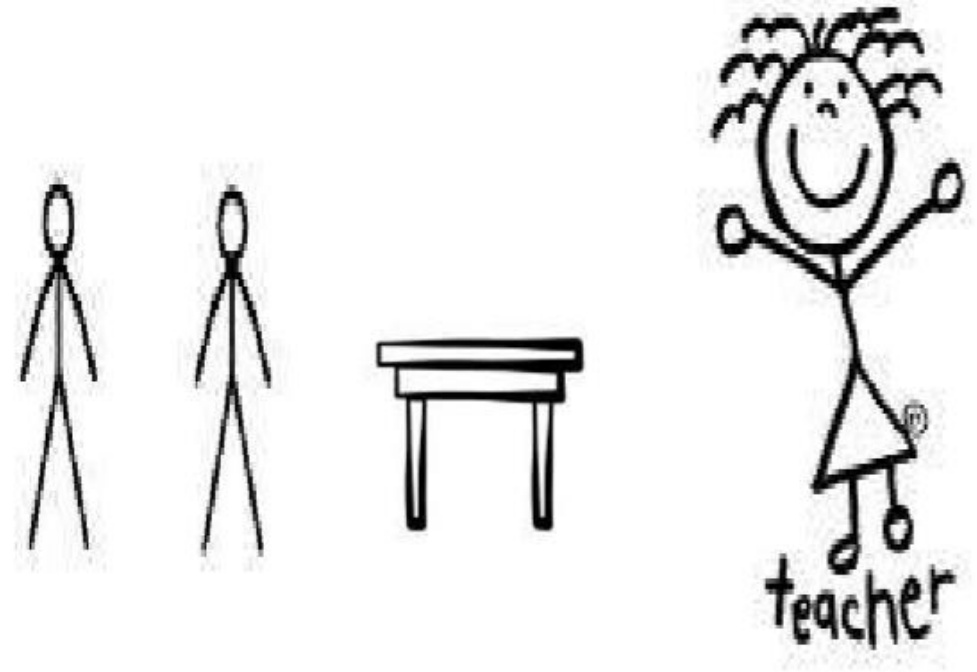
A Comic Strip Conversation helps to

- Report the past.
- Describe the present.
- Plan for the future.
- Identify what people say and do.
- Emphasise what people may be thinking or feeling.

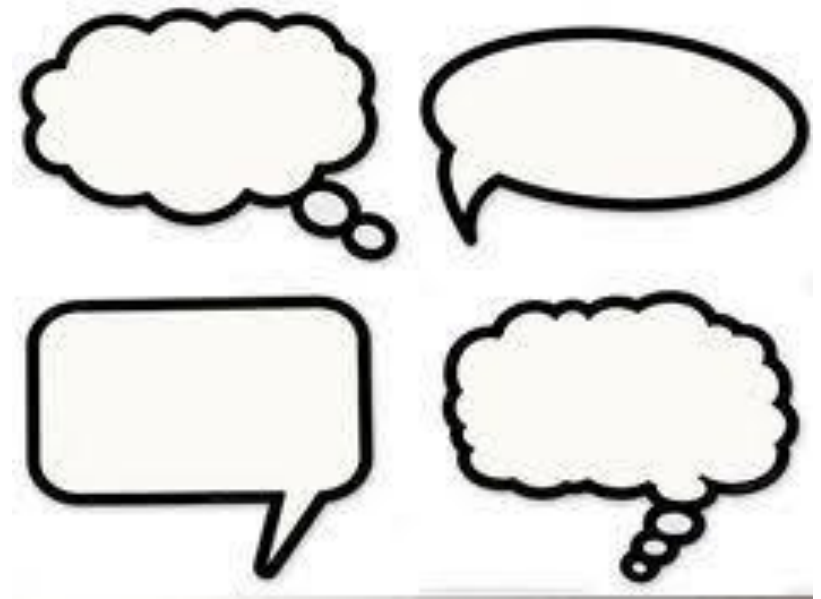


Elements of a comic strip conversation

- Begin with drawing the event that caused the problem
- Where were you? Draw a symbol to represent the place and a stick person to represent the child.
- Draw the key people involved in the event.

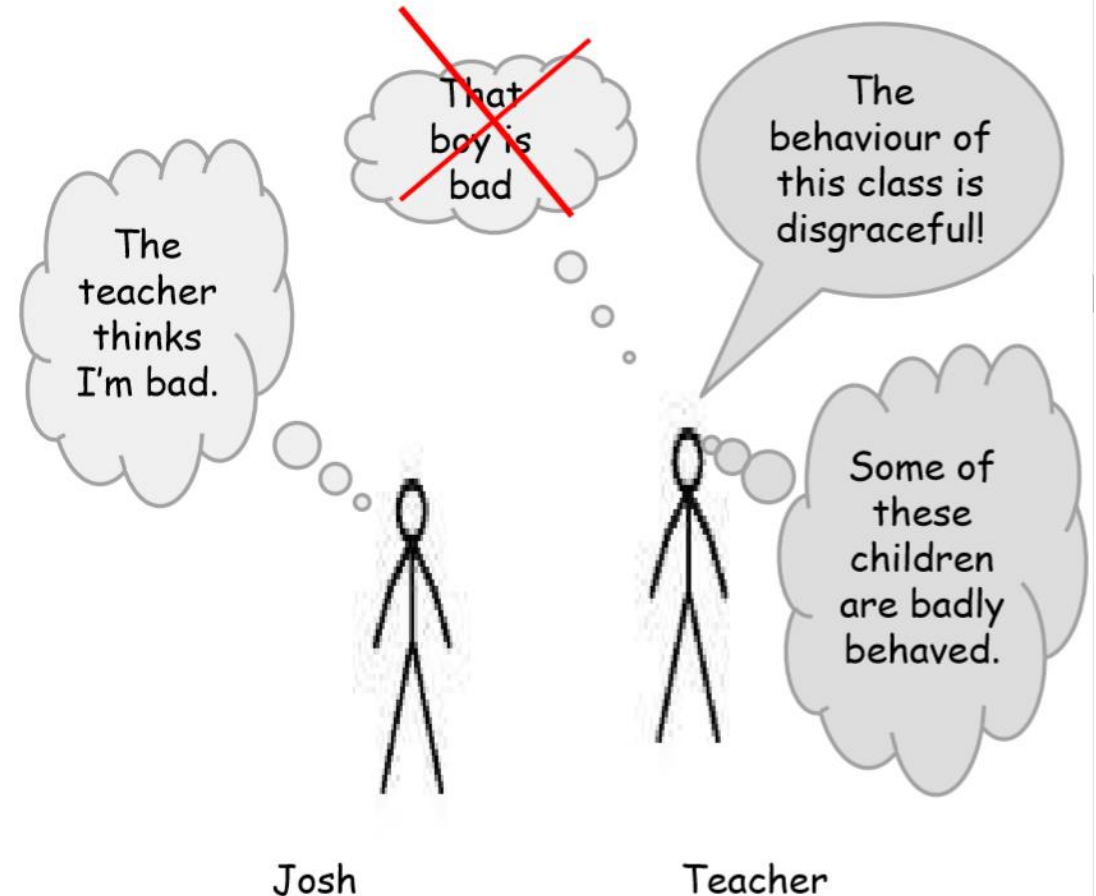


- Add in what happened.
- What did others do and say?
- Use speech bubbles and thought bubbles – use speech bubbles to record what was said by the student and others and thought bubbles to show what the student was thinking and to show the student what others may have been thinking.



Correct their interpretation of what happened if necessary

- You could use post it notes or cross out the first thought bubble and replace it with a more accurate one.



Thinking vs. Saying

Insert person 1	Insert person 2

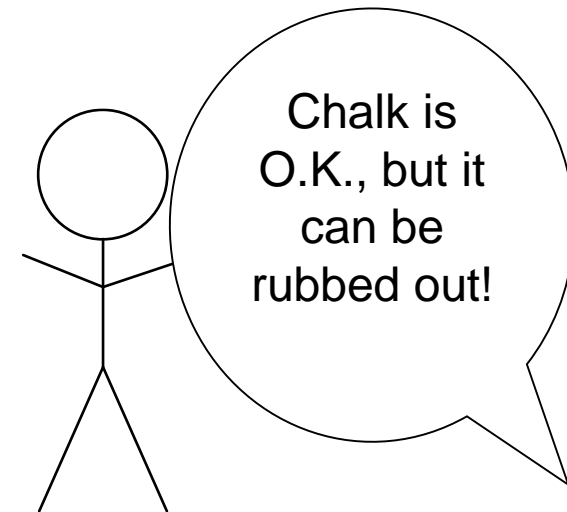
The worksheet is titled "Thinking vs. Saying" in a purple rounded rectangle. Below the title is a central table with two columns. Above the first column is a thought bubble, and above the second column is a thought bubble. Below the first column is a speech bubble, and below the second column is a speech bubble. The table has a header row with the labels "Insert person 1" and "Insert person 2". The table body has one empty row for notes.

- You may be able to draw a solution or idea of how to avoid the situation happening again.
- You could use a sad and smiley face to show how people felt and put a smiley face outcome after a solution as a way of coding good ideas or green tick!



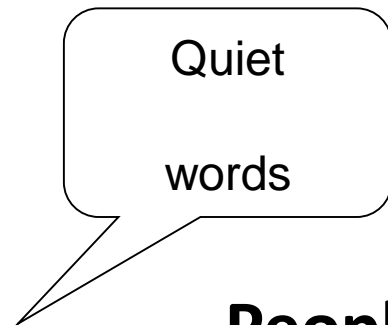
Materials

- Decide which drawing and writing materials you wish to use before you start.
- These can include:
 - ✓ White boards / markers
 - ✓ Paper / pencil / pens
 - ✓ Chalkboards / coloured chalks
 - ✓ All of these have advantages and disadvantages.

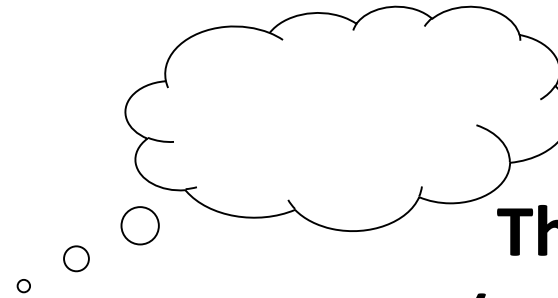


The Conversation Symbols Dictionary

- This includes different symbols for basic conversation concepts:



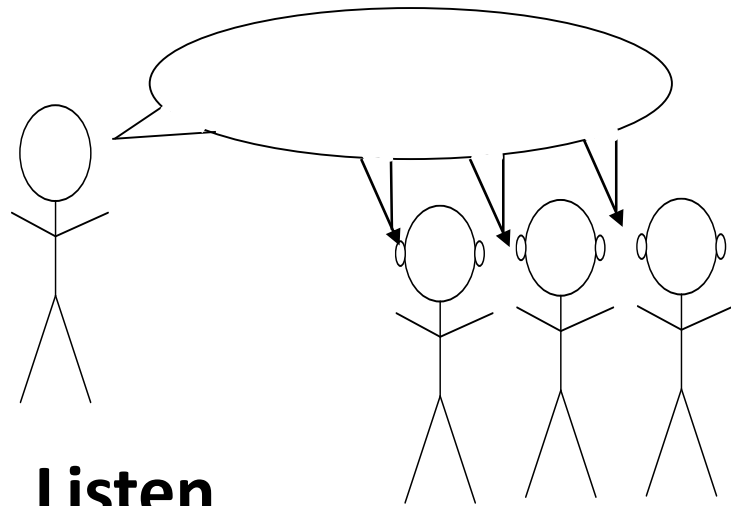
People use quiet words to whisper.



**Thoughts
(words and pictures of the mind)**

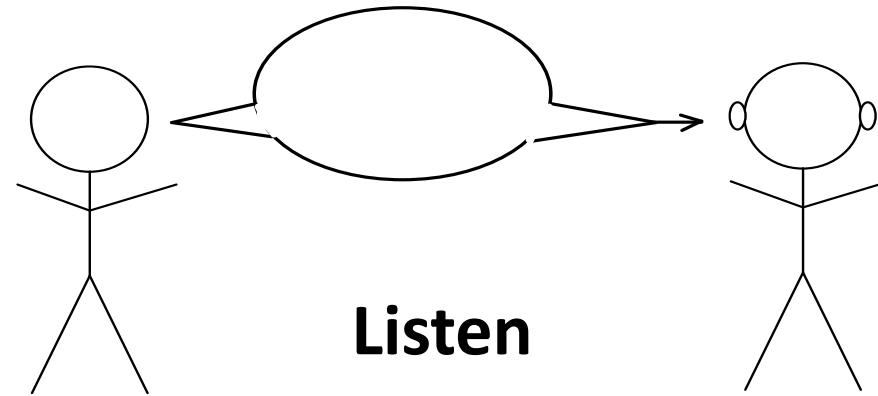


People use LOUD words to YELL

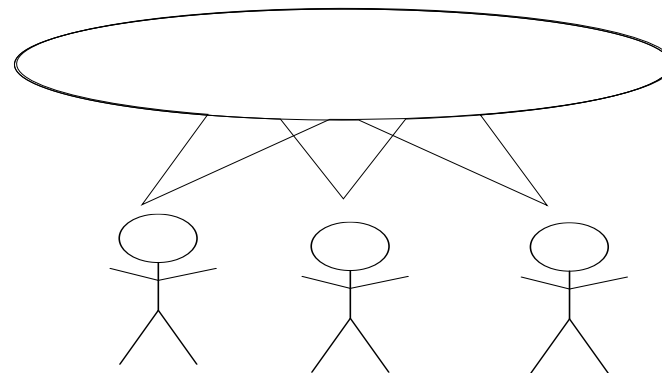


Listen

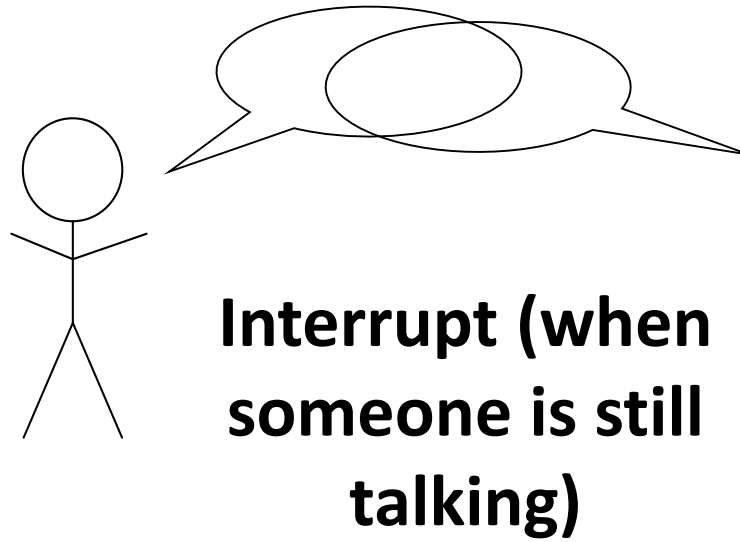
**(as part of
a group)**



Listen



**Everyone
talking at
once or a
choir**

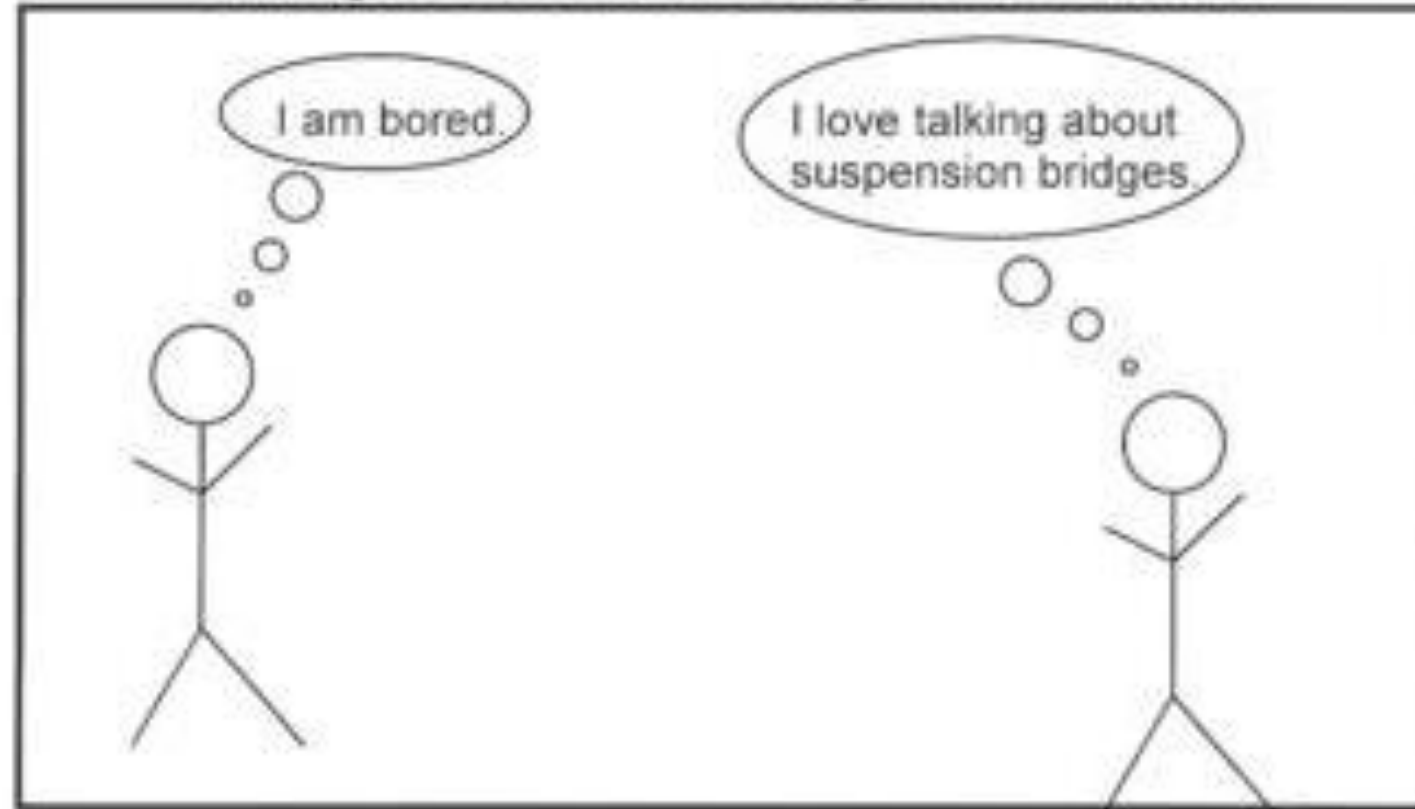


**When my words
bump into words
from other people.**



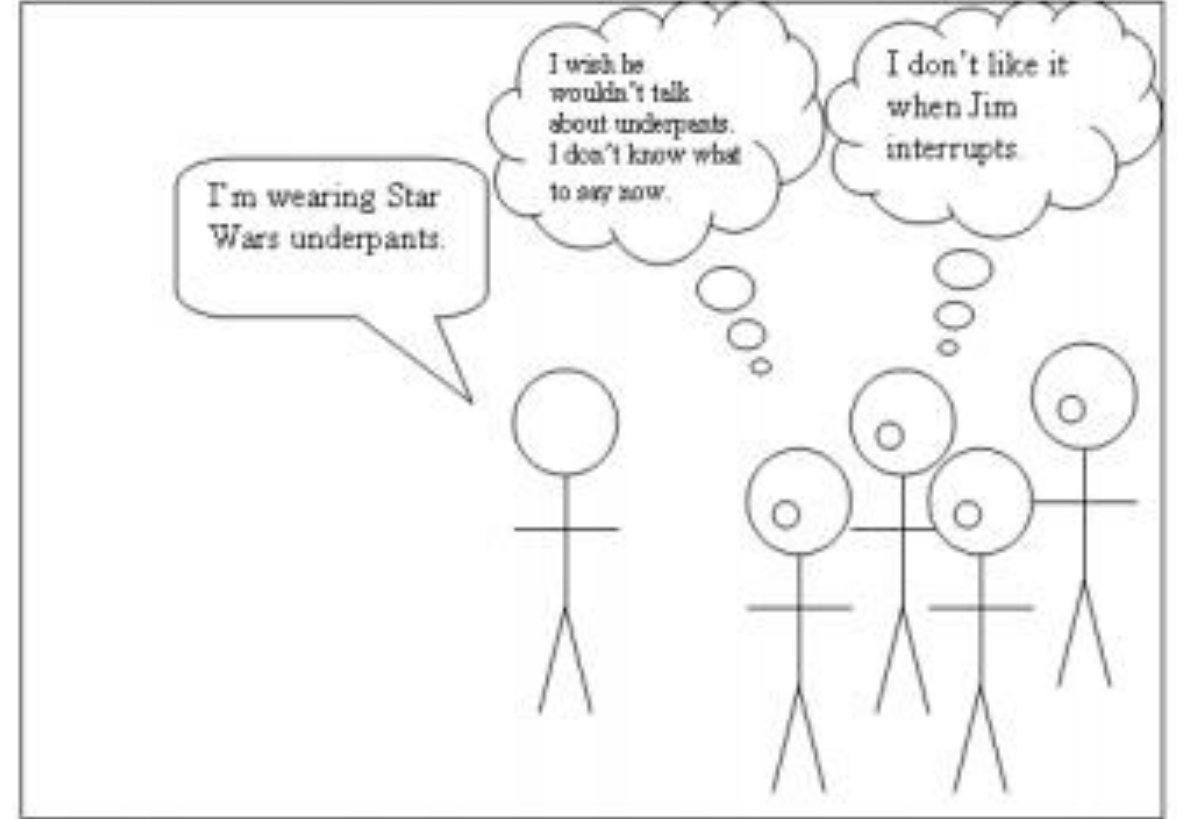
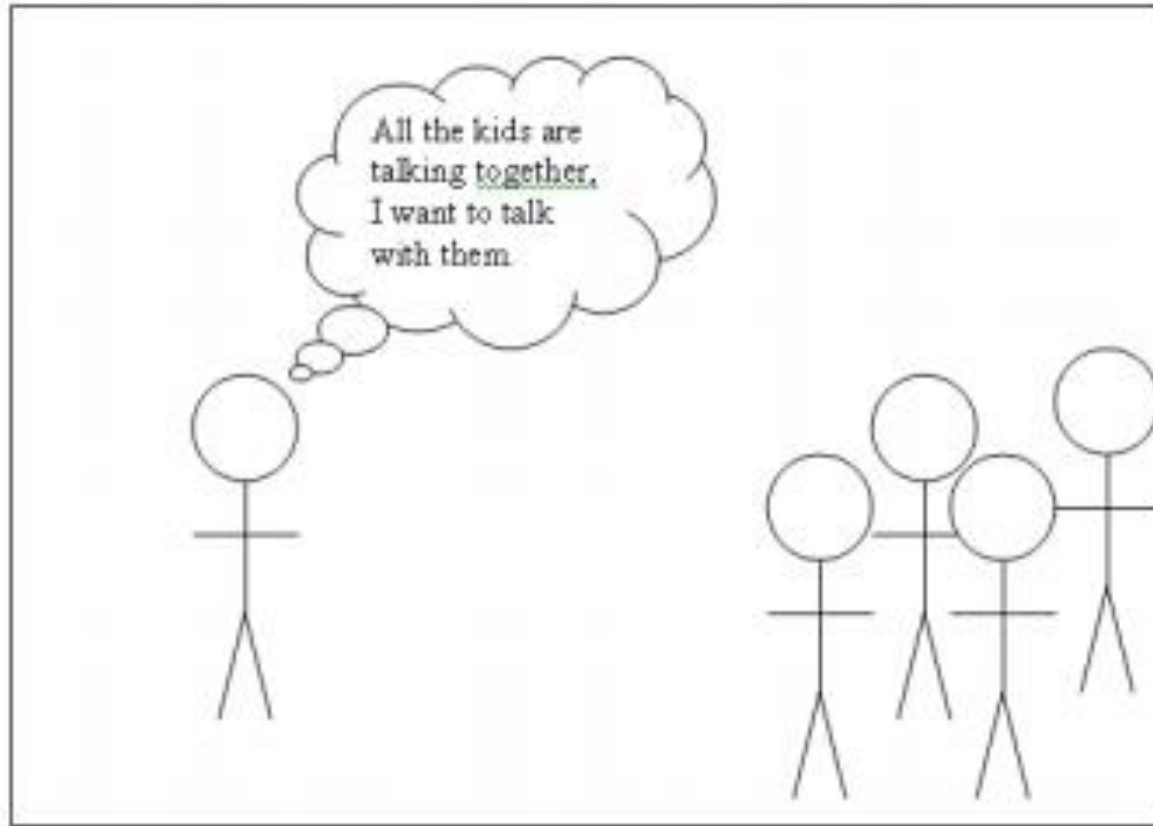
EXAMPLE

Example of a Comic Strip Conversation

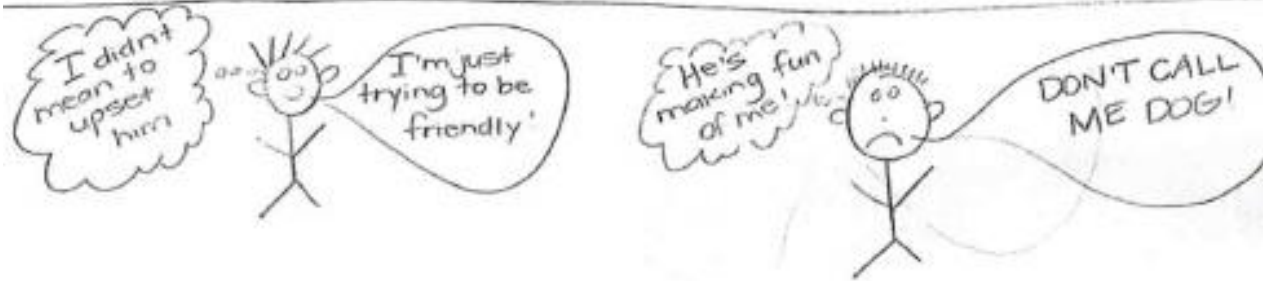


24

EXAMPLE



EXAMPLE



When Matt says "How ya doing Dog?" he is treating me like one of the guys. He is trying to be friendly. He is just joking around. He doesn't think I look like a dog. Next time I see him I'll smile and say, "How ya doing dog?" to him.

CONVERSATION COLOURS

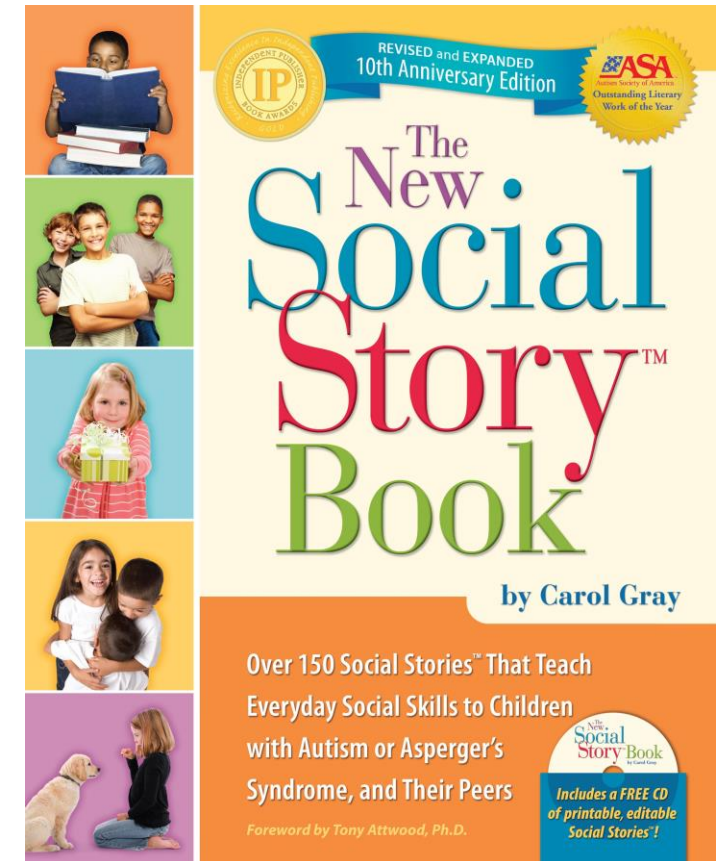
- Green: good ideas, happy, friendly.
- Red: bad ideas, teasing, anger, unfriendly.
- Blue: sad, uncomfortable.
- Brown: comfortable, cosy.
- Purple: proud.
- Yellow: frightened.
- Black: facts, things we know.
- Orange: questions.
- Combinations of colours: confused.

Social Stories

Social story is a brief description of a social situation to aid a young persons understanding of social situations.

Carol Gray's (2004) definition :

“A social story describes a situation, skill or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives and common responses in a specially defined style and format.”



SEND Supported

Embracing difference

Purpose of Social Stories

- Explain and provide information about a social situation or event
- To provide information on the perspectives of others
- To give direction to an individual re social skills and behaviour
- To teach routines
- To translate goals into understandable steps
- Personalises or emphasises social skills

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

Writing Social Stories

- Always use non committal statements. 'I will try to, sometimes, usually' and avoid terms like 'always'
- Length of story will vary with reading age and attention levels
- Always use vocabulary that the child or young person uses
- Always present the information in a non threatening format
- You can write a social story about anything to increase the child/young persons understanding
- Read social stories daily and before the targeted situation and then gradually phase them out
- Add illustrations to enhance the meaning of the text

EXAMPLE STORY

TITLE

Lining Up

INTRODUCTION

At school, we sometimes line up.

BODY OF SOCIAL STORY

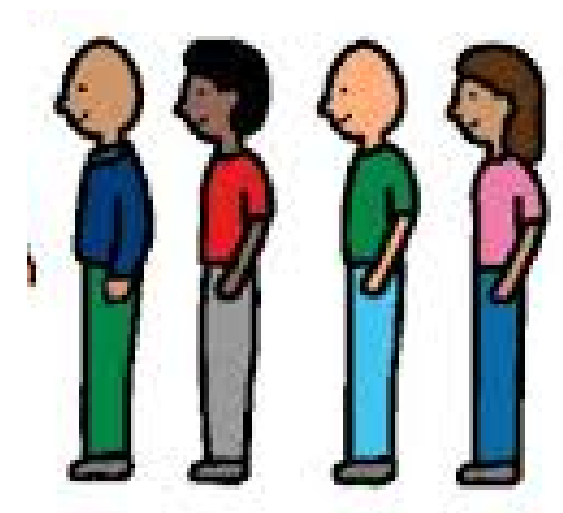
We line up to go to the hall, to go to the library, and to go out at playtime.

Sometimes my friends and I get excited when we line up, because we're going somewhere fun, like out to play.

It is okay to get excited, but it is important to try to walk in the line. Running can cause accidents, and my friends or I could get hurt.

CONCLUSION

I will try to walk in the line.



There are four basic sentences used in Social Stories:

- Descriptive sentence
- Perspective sentence
- Directive sentence
- Affirmative sentence



Descriptive sentence

‘A truthful, opinion-and-assumption-free statements of fact’.

My name is

Sometimes my granny reads to me

Many children like to play on the
playground



Perspective sentence

‘Are statements that refer to, or describe, a person’s internal state, their knowledge/thoughts, feelings, beliefs, opinions, motivation, or physical condition/health’.

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

Some children believe in the Easter Bunny (belief).

Many children like to eat sandwiches for lunch (opinion)



Directive Sentence

‘Identify a suggested response or choice of responses to a situation or concept, gently directing the behaviour of the person with ASC’.

I will work on staying calm when someone changes their mind.

I will try to stay in my chair.

I may decide to play on the swings or on the monkey bars, or maybe with something else.



Affirmative Sentence

‘Enhance the meaning of surrounding statements, often expressing a commonly shared value or opinion within a given culture’.

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

One child goes on the slide at a time. *This is a safe thing to do.*

The bell makes a sound when it rings. *This is okay.*



Having a supply teacher



My maths teacher at school is Mrs Jones. She usually is there everyday to take maths. Sometimes she isn't there. My teacher may be away learning new ways to teach. She may be ill. On those days I will have a supply teacher. A supply teacher knows how to help children learn maths.

My teacher will have left work for me to do with my supply teacher. That way the supply teacher knows what to do.

I will try to treat my supply teacher like I treat my teacher. I will try to get on with my work and not worry about it. The supply teacher is trying too.

Mrs Jones will come back as soon as she can to teach my class maths again.

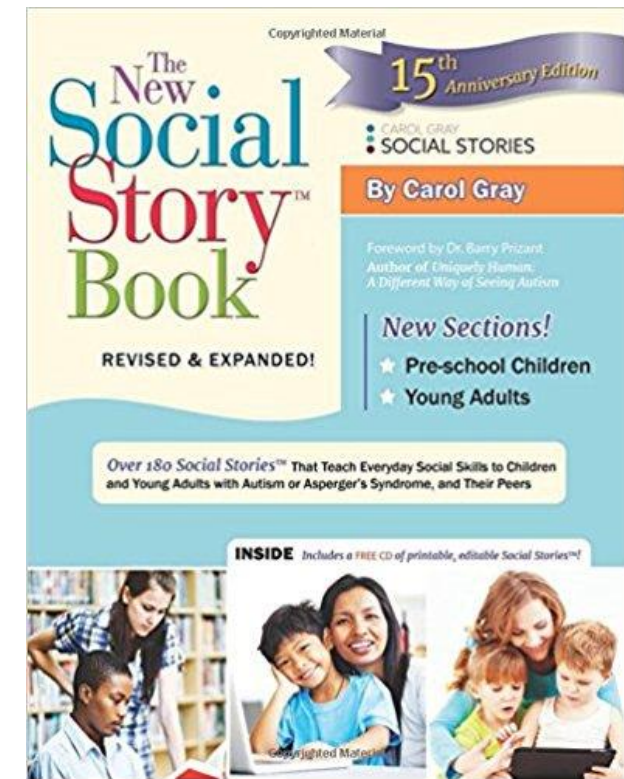
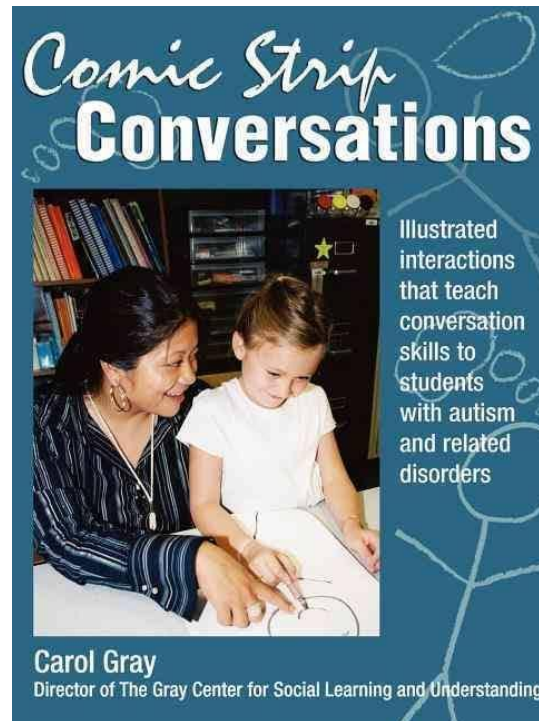
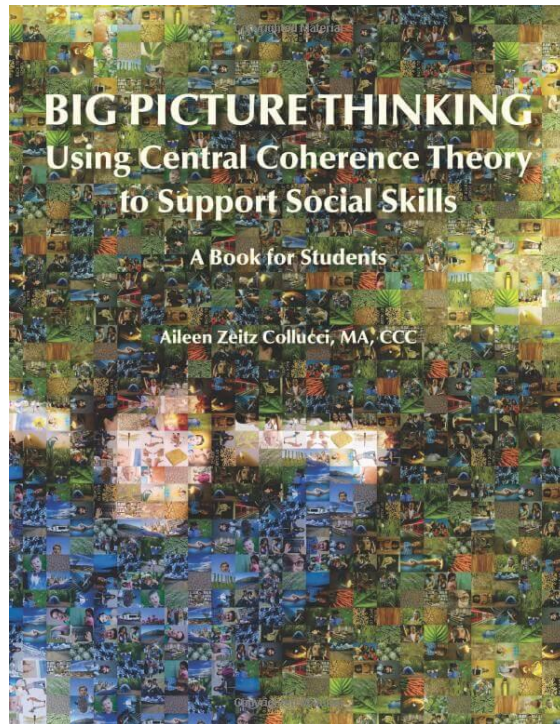
Control Sentences - Are statements written by a person with ASC to identify personal strategies to use to recall and apply information'.

When someone says "I've changed my mind", I can think of someone writing something down, rubbing it out and writing something new.

Cooperative sentences - 'Identify what others will do to assist the student.'

My mum, dad and teachers will help me as I learn about people changing their minds.

Resources.....



<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>

SEND Supported

Embracing difference

Any questions?

