






The Benefit of Using Social Stories

Why are social stories helpful?

Children with autism and other developmental disabilities often lack an understanding of social cues or rules. The social story (also called a social narrative) is a tool that is tailored to the individual and describes an upcoming social interaction or event and how to act in it. Research has shown that social stories can reduce problem behaviors, increase social skills and lessen anxiety.

Important elements

-  Includes "W" questions (who, where, what, when, why),
-  Offers a positive tone,
-  Addresses uncomfortable feelings/offers reassurance,
-  Coaches the individual by suggesting appropriate behavior choices, and
-  Meets the interest and needs of the individual.



Social Story Example

A Social Story About Anxiety

Inside your body there's a special alarm system that keeps you safe.



It is similar to a fire alarm, but in your body,



This alarm system is designed to tell you when there is danger or trouble.



Common Uses



Teaching a task such as putting away toys



Preparing for a challenging situation like going to the dentist



Understanding and responding to expressions & body language



Preparing for a unique event like a funeral or family wedding

Steps for creating a social story

- Identify the topic
- Gather information
- Develop the story to match the child's abilities and interests
- Use visual cues--photos, drawings, pictures, or videos
- Introduce the story to the child
- Review and revise

Resources:

"**Social Seas**" - a 2024 SPIN Conference presentation on social stories by **Dr. Maya Matheis** and **Susan Wood**:
<https://spinconference.org/2024-conference/>

Autism Works: <https://www.autismworks.com/>

Social Story Creator & Library - an iOS app

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