

## Social Communication Programmes

Social communication is the understanding, reading and processing of non-verbal cues. It also involves inferring meaning from many different social scenarios. The focus of this approach is to support the language and communication of children and adults.

## What are Social Communication Programmes?

Social communication programmes consist of a wide range of resources which can help children and adults improve their social communication. Social communication programmes work on the premise that, as social skills are learnt, they can be taught to people who for many different reasons missed out on learning them. They will actively try to teach the skills that someone needs for successful social interactions in order for them to be able to build relationships.

Social Communication programmes target areas such as;

- **Non-verbal communication** – eye contact, gestures, proximity, facial expression, touch, appearance;
- **Paralinguistic skills** – volume, rate, clarity, intonation, fluency of speech;
- **Conversation skills** – listening, starting a conversation, maintaining a conversation through turn taking, questions, relevance, repairs and how to end a conversation;
- **Assertive behaviour** – expressing feelings, standing up for yourself, making suggestions, apologising, disagreeing, complaining, requesting.

## Why use Social Communication Programmes?

There are a range of benefits to using this approach, including (but not limited to) increasing word meanings, high-level language skills, pragmatics, and social interaction.

## Who can benefit from Social Communication Programmes?

Social communication programmes are generally used with people who have learning disabilities and more specifically with teenagers and adults with disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Condition and Down Syndrome. The programmes can also be used with children who have a specific language impairment, specifically a pragmatic language impairment which impacts their understanding and use of social communication.

# Who can deliver Social Communication Programmes?

A range of people can implement social communication programmes on a one to one and regular basis, including family members, carers, professionals and teachers. It is important that those implementing social communication programmes understand the principles underpinning the approach and have training by a Speech and Language Therapist.

## Evidence for Social Communication Programmes

There is evidence that suggests social communication programmes have positive outcomes for individual's, particularly regarding their overall conversational skills (Adams, Lloyd, Aldred, & Baxendale, 2006; Freed, Gaile, Earl, McBean, Nash, Green, Vail, & Law, 2012; G. & Freed, 2012)

## References

- Adams, C., Lloyd, J., Aldred, C. & Baxendale, J., (2006), Exploring the effects of communication intervention for developmental pragmatic language impairments: a signal-generation study. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 41, 41-66.
- Freed, J., Gaile, J. Earl, G, McBean, K., Nash, M., Green, J., Vail, A. & Law, J. (2012s) The Social Communication Intervention Project: a randomised controlled trial of the effectiveness of speech and language therapy for school-age children who have pragmatic and social communication problems with or without autism spectrum disorder *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*. 47, 233–244, DOI: 10.1111/j.1460-6984.2011.00146.x
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