

Social Stories

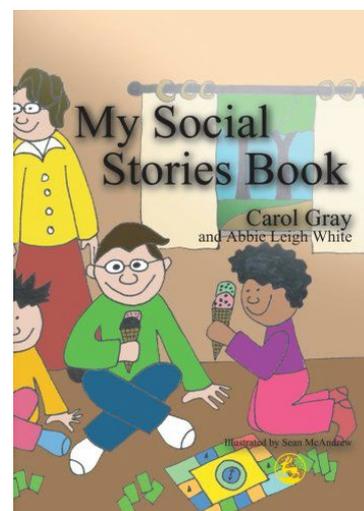
Social Stories were developed by Carol Gray, a former teacher who worked with students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Social Stories are now widely used with a range of clients to help them with a multitude of topics. Social stories are extremely versatile and easy to use.

What are Social Stories?

A Social Story provides accurate social information in a reassuring way, which can be easily understood by the person it is written for. The aim is not to change a behaviour, but to allow the individual to improve their understanding of an event or expectation, therefore leading to a more effective response to it.

Like most stories, Social Stories have an introduction, body and conclusion. At least half of the content of a Social Story should congratulate the individual for their strengths. They are often used with images to support understanding and are written at a level that the individual can understand.

Social Stories can reduce anxiety because they provide information about what might happen or provide guidelines on how to behave.



Why use Social Stories?

There are a range of benefits to using this approach, including (but not limited to) helping user's:

- with sequencing and planning skills;
- identify their strengths and boost their self-esteem;
- prepare for changes to routine or cope with distressing events;
- understand how they might be expected to behave in certain situations;
- understand how another person may react in a certain situation.

Who can benefit from Social Stories?

Social Stories were initially written for individuals with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. However, they have also been used effectively with individuals with other social and communication difficulties, as well as people with learning difficulties.

Who can deliver Social Stories?

The approach has strict guidance but it is relatively easy to learn and straight forward to implement so anyone can use them, from families to therapists. Language needs to be modified and simplified depending on the language level of the user. Our therapy team can provide training on writing social stories and can advise you on how best to use this approach.

Evidence for Social Stories

Research into the effectiveness of Social Stories is controversial; the impact on user's remains unclear (Ali & Frederickson, 2006; Reynhout, 2006; Sansosti, Powell-Smith & Kincaid, 2004).

References

- Ali, S., & Frederickson, N., (2006). Investigating the evidence base of Social Stories". *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 22, 355–77.
- Reynhout, G. & Carter, M. (2006). Social Stories for children with disabilities. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 36 (4): 445–69.
- Sansosti, .F.J., Powell-Smith, K. A. & Kincaid, D. (2004). A Research Synthesis of Social Story Interventions for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 19 ,pp. 194–204. <http://www.thegraycenter.org/home>.

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