**Sôsh-ial Security:**
Improving Social Skills for Young Adults

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**Introduction**

- Social Skills: Specific behaviors used in social situations to produce desirable outcomes
- Poor research outcomes
- Gen Ed vs. Special Ed
- Generalizability

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**Sound Familiar?**

- Weak ability to take perspective of others.
- Difficulty sustaining social leisure skills.
- Difficulty working as part of a group.
- Difficulty interpreting what to do or analyzing higher level reading.
- Difficulty with sensory regulation.
- Very rigid!
- Difficulty with written expression.
- Difficulty with organizational skills…….

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**Many Labels Share Traits**

- High Functioning Autism (HFA)
- Asperger’s Syndrome
- Semantic Pragmatic Disorder
- Non-verbal Learning Disorder (NLD)
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder: Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)
- Hyperlexic
- Tourette’s?
- ADHD + OCD?
- ODD
- Fragile X

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**When do we perceive that people have good “social skills”?**

When they share space effectively; often non-verbally.

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**What social skills are required to participate in a classroom/higher education setting?**

- Awareness the thoughts of others.
- Awareness of the hidden rules of the classroom.
- Ability to stay focused on the topic.
- Ability to manage self when bored so not to distract others.
- Awareness of when is a good time to talk.
If the standards are our “building blocks” of education, than our social thinking is the mortar that holds it all together.

Understanding Perspective...

• Defined as: Considering the thoughts and emotions, motive, intentions, beliefs, prior experiences and personality of yourself and others around you.

Four Steps Toward Perspective Taking*

• I think about you.
• I think about WHY you are near me or talking to me. What is your intent?
• I think about what you are thinking about me.
• I monitor and regulate my behavior to keep you thinking about me the way I want you to think about me!

* Based on work of Garcia-Winner

Avoid Weird Thoughts

How to...

• See One, Do One, Teach One
• Walk the Line (Support and Challenge)
• Behavior before Mood
• Manage Stress-Predictability
• Ideal Play Partner
• Conversation Skills
• Mine vs Other

Development

• The “Switch”: Catch-22
• Cognitive Development
• Emotional/Social Development
• Behavioral Development
• What to Do and When to Do It
• Channeling Kenny: When to Hold ‘Em and When to Fold ‘Em.
• The Importance of “Play”
• The “Filing Cabinet”
What Do We Know Helps?

• Parent Training and Education
• Treatment for ancillary behaviors and emotions
• Earlier the Better as well as Coaching and Practice at School
• Consider the needs of the child when designing the approach
• Ratings
• Peer Involvement
• Naturalized, In the Moment, Varied Peers

The 5 R’s of Sōsh™

• Relate (Connect with Others)
• Relax (Reduce Stress)
• Reason (Think it Through)
• Regulate (Manage Behaviors)
• Recognize ( Understand Feelings)

Relate: Connect with Others

• Out & About
• Behavior Before Mood
• Managing Stress
• Facilitating Interactions
• Phone Calls and Outings
• Talking Strategies
• Mine vs. Other

Scaffold and ASSIST

• Arouse interest
• Simplify the skill
• Scaffold the skill
• Interpret the interaction
• Solve problems
• Teach enthusiasm
Relax: Reduce Stress

- Sensory Breaks
- Relax Time
- School Wide Programs
- Buffers
- Allow Down Time
- Exercise
- Breathing/PMR/Imagery
- Meds
- Sleep/Diet

Regulate: Manage Behaviors

- What You Focus on Expands
- Rewards
- Good-Bad-Ugly
- Rules
- Boundaries
- Demands, Structure, Predictability
- Monitoring
Reason: Think It Through

- Executive Function
- Video Modeling
- Transitions
- Perspective
- Mental Strategies

Recognize: Understand Feelings

- Check-In
- Video Modeling
- Photography
- Feelings Posters
- Shades of Gray
- CBT
- Force a Smile/Hide Your Mouth

Stage 4 Milestones (Ages 13 to Adult)

- Peer group more imp. than parents
- Greater depth and breadth of self-disclosure
- Desire to be understood by friends
- Friend’s character compatible with own
- Why is ____ your friend?
  - He accepts me for who I am
  - We think the same way about things
  - Conflict resolved with mutual analysis
Stage 4 (13 years to adult)

- Animals as potential friends
- Internet as a source of friendship
- Consider support groups
- Provide info on relationships
- Explore anxiety reduction strategies
- Guide how to maintain friends/Explain difficulties (e.g., looking away to think)
- Explore advantages of moving to another culture
- Explore Friendships with work colleagues
- Limit duration of socializing if necessary

To Do Across Development

- Reinforce
- Tell Individual What TO Do
- Begin Approach Where Student Will Achieve Success
- Allow Time to Think When Problem Solving
- Facilitate
- Social Feedback Loop

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