

Michigan Autism Training Videos Presents:

Teaching Social Skills To Individuals With Autism

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STATE OF INTERVENTION

- Social deficits remain the most resistant to intervention efforts
- Social skill deficits are socially significant (i.e., community and workplace)

IMPACTS EARLY ON

- Every level of development is impacted by social skills
 - Potential for isolation
 - Bullying
 - Marginalized
 - Loneliness

WHY IS IT HARDER TO TEACH THESE SKILLS? DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA REVIEW

- Impairment in social interaction
 - Global responses
 - Outcomes are so remote
 - How do we begin?

WHY ELSE IS IT HARDER TO TEACH THESE SKILLS?

- Multi-element skills
 - Several components for each skill
- Involve social judgment as well as skill mastery
 - Judgment is made more difficult by the myriad possibilities that exist in natural interactions

WHEN DOES SOCIAL SKILL TRAINING BEGIN?

- What are the most fundamental deficits?
- What are early targets of instruction?
 - Manding
 - Imitation
 - Play skills

IMITATION TRAINING

- The basis of many more complex behaviors
- “Watch and do”
- Importance of observational learning

DEVELOPMENTAL APPROPRIATENESS

- Use developmental information to create target skills
- Matching expectations create success in environments with peers

WHAT ABOUT TEACHING TOLERANCE?

- Possibility for training tolerance in the community
- Still important to work specifically with individuals with autism to create integration

CRITICAL ISSUES IN SOCIAL SKILLS

- Responsiveness
 - to the overtures and bids of others
- Initiations
 - Responsive does not mean initiative
- Qualitative aspects of responses and initiations
 - Clear, appropriate, timely
 - Endurance
- Complex social behavior

ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

- ABLLS and the VB-MAPP
 - Both have sections relevant to social skills
- Core skills
 - Manding
 - Imitation

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT

- Usually not a necessity for deficits
- Some children may need further assessment
 - Excess behaviors (inappropriate behaviors)

TREATMENT

- Generally taught through structured training
 - Discrete trial training
 - Naturalistic training
- Focus on transfer to natural environment
- Demonstration of behavior in generalized contexts
- Spontaneous display of behaviors

HOW TO MAKE SOCIAL INTERACTION REINFORCING

- Variability across individuals
- Social motivation will change over time of intervention

VIDEO MODELING

- Has also been shown to be effective in building a variety of skills
 - Play
 - Conversation
- Probably under-utilized given the empirical support
 - High response effort
 - Need to program variability

POTENTIAL ISSUES

- Similar problems for video modeling and scripting
- Individuals may perseverate on scripts or models
- Program in variability and novelty to prevent issues
 - Multiple exemplars

SOCIAL SCRIPTS

- Help provide ways for individuals to continuously engage in conversational exchanges through systematic fading

GENERIC WARNING

- Individualize treatment to teach individuals to discriminate between examples and non-examples

FEEDBACK SYSTEMS

- Behavior skills training approach
- Demonstrate (model)
- Practice (skills)
- Provide feedback (on performance)
- Self-monitoring- individual watches and rates own behavior

WHAT ABOUT JOINT ATTENTION?

- Best work done by behavior analysts (e.g., Taylor)
- Initiating interactions and responding to engagements is often largely absent for those with autism
- Crucial to social skills because later interaction rest on gaining the attention of others and responding to their bids

PERSPECTIVE TAKING

- The capacity to understand an experience from another person's point of view
- Occurs in a variety of concrete and abstract ways

EMERGING INTERVENTIONS

- Social Stories and Social Thinking
- Social stories are often one component