

Improving Social Skills



Interpreting cues in different contexts

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GOAL

The goal of this activity is for the person to learn how to interpret different cues in social situations and communicate in a socially acceptable way.

OBJECTIVE

The person will be able to interpret facial expressions, body language, and surroundings and use those to understand what is happening within that specific context. After being able to interpret those various social cues, the person will learn how to communicate in those specific situations and adjust their body language, facial expressions, and conversation accordingly. This will improve a person's ability to socialise within the community!

MATERIALS

- Laminated sheets for pictures (optional)
- Pictures of social situations (included)
- Sticky notes for speech bubbles
- Monitoring form for progress (included)

PROCEDURE

Step 1: Introduce the activity

Explain to the person that you are going to help them with increasing their ability to socialise by reading social situations.

Ask them if they have any problems with this and discuss the positives of how improving their social skills will help them in being able to make friends and go out into the community more.

Top Tip

Supporters can be creative with this activity. In the first instance they may want to let the person interpret the pictures as they are to get an understanding of what his strengths and weaknesses are in relation to interpreting social situations. Supporters can then use "speech bubbles" to change to the context of each social scenario. This will increase his ability to interpret social situations and will help to generalise his social skills across different contexts.

Step 2: Select a picture and talk about what is happening.

The best way is to prompt the person with questions such as:

1. What do you think is happening in this situation?

This question will help determine the person's current level of understanding.

Supporters should be patient and let them answer without prompting at first. If the person appears to have problems supporters can then prompt them by asking the person to focus on specific details in the picture (body language, facial expressions).

2. What is he or she thinking?

This question will help determine the person's ability to be able to empathise with the individual in the picture and will assist them in imagining themselves in their position.

Prompt the person as required with follow up question; How would you feel if that happened? How do you think they feel? Can you see how thoughts can influence your feelings? How would this affect your feelings?

3. "What should they do?" and "what are they saying?"

The next question enables the person to be able to predict what type of language including tone will be used in that situation.

Supporters should encourage the person to predict what is likely to happen next. This will also assist with problem solving in situations and increase their ability to modify behaviour and communication abilities in social situations.

Supporters could use follow up questions such as; What would happen if the person says or does this? What do you think the best thing to do in this situation is? Any questions that facilitate more discussion is encouraged.

Top Tip

When the person can generate a logical answer for what is occurring, supporters can use the sticky notes to write their answers on and place it on the pictures. This will help the person remember their answers, supporters will encourage them to write the answers themselves.

Step 3: Generalising the skills to real life

1. Doing Roleplays

Set a social scene and act it out with the person. Try and make it as fun as possible as this will encourage them to keep doing it.

2. Movies, Shows, and Video clips

Supporters can watch a movie, television show or video clip and get the person to discuss what is happening. Supporters can ask them to take the perspective of different characters and ask them what they are thinking feeling, and what they are likely to do next. Supporters could also pause a clip and ask them to interpret their facial expressions, and body language. They could also ask them to model what they have observed.

3. Real Life

Supporters can take the person to different places and observe real life situations. This could be at a shopping centre, coffee shop, park, or another public place. Ask the person what they think is happening in the observed social situations based on the social cues and for them to predict what they think will happen throughout the observation.

Progress Check

Supporters can use the monitoring form on the next page to record and track the person's progress.

Social Skills Progress Form

Name _____

Date _____

Scenario	Person's Response	Was the response logical?	Prompts required	Comments

NOTES _____



















