

Gravesham Early Years Specialist Teaching & Learning Service



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Social Stories

Social stories were created by Carol Gray in 1991. They are short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, which include specific information about what to expect in that situation and why.

The terms 'social story' and 'social stories' are trademarks originated and owned by Carol Gray.

More information

Timmins, Dr. S. (2017) Successful Social Stories for School and College Students with Autism, Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Timmins, Dr. S. (2016) Successful Social Stories for Young Children with Autism Jessica Kingsley Publishers

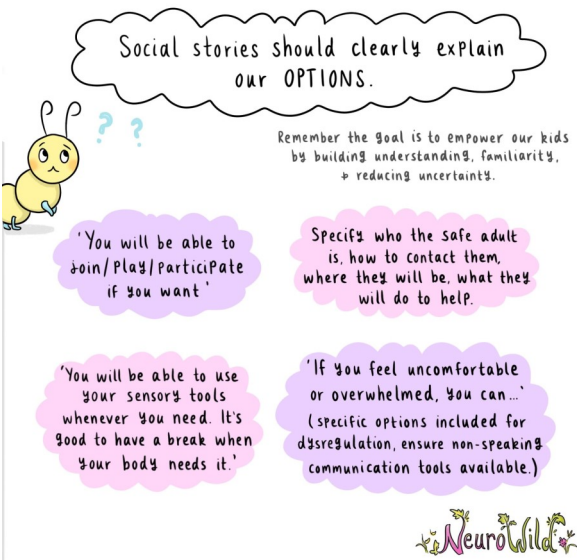
Gray, C. (2015) The new Social Story book: 15th Anniversary Edition. Future Horizons Firm

Gray, C. (1994) Comic strip conversations: illustrated interactions with students with autism and related disorders Carol Gray social story sampler

What is it?

Social stories can be used to:

- develop self-care skills (for example, how to clean teeth, wash hands or get dressed)
- social skills (for example, sharing, asking for help, saying thank you, interrupting) and academic abilities
- help someone to understand how others might behave or respond in a particular situation
- help others understand the perspective of an autistic person and why they may respond or behave in a particular way
- help a person to cope with changes to routine and unexpected or distressing events (for example, absence of teacher, moving



Social stories should clearly explain our **OPTIONS**.

Remember the goal is to empower our kids by building understanding, familiarity, + reducing uncertainty.

- 'You will be able to join/Play/participate if you want'
- 'You will be able to use your sensory tools whenever you need. It's good to have a break when your body needs it.'
- Specify who the safe adult is, how to contact them, where they will be, what they will do to help.
- 'If you feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed, you can...' (specific options included for dysregulation, ensure non-speaking communication tools available.)

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What to do

Social stories are often used to develop appropriate behaviour

The goal is to **teach social understanding, not rote compliance.**

To **describe** rather than direct

Descriptive sentences give accurate information about the setting. They provide, in words, the basic facts about what is occurring.

Perspective sentences provide simple information about why things happen, letting the child into the heads and hearts of those in the story.

Directive/coaching sentences prompt the child's appropriate behaviour

The content of the story must be true.

Avoid terms like **always**, instead use **usually** or **sometimes**.

State directive sentences **positively** describing desired responses instead of problem behaviour. Again, use the term **will try** rather than **will**.

Always write in the **first person**.

Write the story for a specific child and specific difficulty he/she faces.

Base the story on careful observation and gathered information.

Use language and vocabulary that match the child and his/her level of understanding.

Focus on one aspect or step at a time.

Example

My toys

My toys belong to me. They are mine. Many of my toys were given to me. Some of my toys have my name on them. I may play with my toys or share them with someone. I have toys that are mine.

Carol Gray's *The new social story book, 2015*



Social stories that are neurodiversity-affirming can be really valuable for our ND kids.

They should:

- Explain the details of a new experience e.g. what it involves, where it is, duration, who will be there, + the reason for doing it.
- Knowing what to expect can significantly reduce our anxiety around unfamiliar experiences, and lets us mentally prepare.

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