Evidence-Based Intervention for Social-Pragmatic Communication Deficits

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My Books
Practical Strategies for Assessment and Treatment
Social-Pragmatic Success for Asperger Syndrome and Other Related Disorders
Are you In The Zone? A Simple Technique to Help Someone with Social Difficulties
Asperger Syndrome explained
Me, Myself, and You A Workbook for Children with Social Difficulties
Understanding Emotions A Guide for Adults

Social-pragmatic communication deficits are found in...

Autism
Specific Language Impairment
Learning Disabilities
Language Learning Disabilities
Developmental Disabilities
Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Traumatic Brain Injury
Emotional/behavioral disabilities

Competence is difficult to assess and varies by partners

social communication includes interactions with:
family
caregivers
child care providers
educators
peers

behavioral expectations also change by partner:
eye contact
facial expression
body language
Symptoms

problems with social interaction
speech style and context
rules for linguistic politeness
social cognition
emotional competence
understanding emotions of self and others

pragmatics
communicative intentions
body language
eye contact

Norms vary. Can be code shift?

social-pragmatic skills vary according to:
Demaray, Ruffalo, Carlson, Busse, Olso, McManus & Leventhal, 1995

culture
time
place
person
age

Prerequisites of Pragmatics
Govardhanachary, V., et al. (2014). Are we really testing what the tests are testing? ASHA Annual Convention, Orlando

What is EBP?

"The integration of clinical expertise, current best evidence, and client values"

DO NOT confuse Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT) with Evidence-Based Practice.

Randomized Controlled Trials are studies in which people are assigned at random to receive one of several treatment conditions, including the experimental treatment and either a different type of treatment or no treatment.

EBP decisions are used when making assessment and intervention decisions on a daily basis.

These decisions require an integration of clinical expertise, theoretical knowledge, client preference, and empirical research. As such, "...should be evident that EBP does not refer to a singular focus on using research to make decisions about children" Justice, L. and Fey, M., (2004).
The following strategies are based on PICO concepts:

- **Population**: ✔ Yes
- **Intervention**: No
- **Comparison**: Maybe
- **Outcome**

1. **behavior impacts others**

   sounds obvious but not to them
   concept of Theory of Mind
   are you “In the Zone?”


2. **disability awareness**

   allows class to understand the student better
   knowledge increases tolerance
   50% of discussion relates to the specific child


3. **peer buddies**

   an extra hand for the teacher
   simple “helper”
   spread the wealth


4. **problem-solving**

   lack of flexibility negatively impacts problem solving skills
   task analysis
   seek assistance

   ![Diagram](problem-solving-diagram.png)

   Stop It or Mop It Harris, R. (1998)

   **Stop It**: Cures the problem. This might be in the form of preventing it from occurring or re-occurring, eliminating it all together or reducing it to point where it is no longer defined as a problem.

   **Mop It**: Focuses on the effects of the problem. One can treat the damage, tolerate it, or redirect it.

5. Structured Play

how to lose a game
see-saw/teeter totter
visual reinforcers


6. Social Stories

identify relevant social cues
typical reactions that you may have
typical reactions other may expect of you
why it happened
why I should use this technique


7. Social Skill Groups

structured lessons are a necessity
focus on:
  feelings and emotions
  interpersonal relationships
  communication skills
  conversation skills
carryover requires prompts

8. Social Skill Groups

complexity & level of interaction impact ability
foundation skills: needed for basic interaction
eye contact
personal space
gestures
facial expressions

interaction skills: required for appropriate social interaction
turn-taking
conflict resolution
initiating/terminating conversation
topic choice
interacting with authority figures

cognitive skills: required for complex social interaction
perceive a situation/person
choice making
self-monitoring
matching behavior for immediate environment
8. social etiquette posters

- Display social rules for all to see
- Refer to rules when infractions occur
- Be pro-active

9. social etiquette cards

- Same idea as posters but smaller version
- Child carries them
- Have him refer to his card for assistance
- Concept of “out of sight, out of mind”

10. videotape the student

- Allows for an “out of body experience”
- Identify appropriate/inappropriate behavior
- Allows for self-monitoring of sequential activity

11. social autopsies

- Analysis of social errors
- Good for positive and negative situations
- Allows student to identify
  - Social error
  - Who was impacted by it
  - How to correct it
  - How to avoid it in the future

12. proactive strategies

- Determine what individual needs before event occurs and give it to him
  - Why force him to go to the pep rally if you know loud noises are difficult to tolerate?

13. perspective taking

- Emphasize Theory of Mind
- Don’t understand other’s think about them
- Not everyone approaches situations in the same manner
14. imaginary camera

take a picture to help him perceive how he is being perceived by others
are you “In the Zone?”

15. sharing

sharing is not giving, you get it back
try using a timer to help conceptualization
reinforce positive moves toward spontaneous sharing
use cue cards
set up situations

16. share friends

friend making is difficult, keeping friends is harder
it was so difficult to obtain a friend, I don’t want him to engage with others
use visual strategies

17. negotiation skills

requires perspective taking
“Get the facts - Get the feelings”
isolate judgmental qualities
help him see the end goal
brainstorm alternatives
evaluate consequences in terms of outcomes

18. responsibilities & roles

time and place concept
if it’s good here, it’s not necessarily true that it’s good everywhere
requires perspective taking
19. vocabulary of emotions

6 basic human emotions
600 words to describe these emotions
good-bad
use books and videos

20. volcano meter

21. self-calming

stress is a fact of life
use stress relaxation techniques - google

22. avoid distractions

be proactive

23. safe place

reduces anxiety
useful to:
organize
release stress
escape to avoid potential meltdown

24. acting lessons

concept learned on stage are used as a “social script” for future reference
find similar situations in real life
25. comic strip conversations
help recognize and react to specific situations

26. topic boxes
teaches how to interact and converse with another individual

27. work in small groups
assign roles and responsibilities
determine strengths and weaknesses

28. respect via academic strengths
strengths can lead to appropriate social interactions
  Trivial Pursuit

29. transitioning
use visual strategies
use humor (“Change is good”)
humor disperses anxiety

30. time timer
graphically displays:
elapsed time
remaining time
31. watch timer

programmable
allows for awareness of time

EBP: Mechling, L., et al. (2009), Grynszpan, O. et al. (2013)

32. focus on whole picture - not minutia

use gestalt processes
central coherence

33. facial expressions

be aware of multi-tasking
use videos
teach using A-B-C concepts


34. humor

often missed
use methods of Spector (1992):
  incongruity
delivery style
presupposition
riddle use

EBP: Ching-Lin Wu, et al. (2016)

35. psycho-drama

drama class concepts with specific strategies
  think drama class meets social stories
be sure to use positive feedback


36. visual supports

can’t stress enough - visual learning is best

37. contingency statements

“First this, then that.”

use visuals
EBP: Mruzek, D. et al. (2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First</th>
<th>Then</th>
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38. model a student

choose a student to model
be aware, it’s easier to model bad behavior than good behavior

39. accept another’s viewpoint

don’t need to agree with everyone
Level 1 Theory of Mind

40. limit “verberia”

set rules for quantity of time
help self-monitoring skills
use gestures

41. come to the point

often associated with central coherence deficits
use visuals

42. what's relevant now

let by-gones be by-gones
Forget About It Box
flush the thought
43. relationship between negative feelings & anxiety producing situations & events

bad thoughts create bad feeling
the basis for CBT
pair with a visual

44. abstract language

higher level thinking skills are typically difficult
requires formal instruction
be aware of perspective taking
“Be good in Mrs. Smith’s class.”
be specific with statements
“Why did you do that?” (too vague)


45. time and place

try to teach using filters
here and everywhere
reality or TV/movie?

46. idioms

formal instruction often doesn’t produce carryover by itself
create the Silverberg’s “Aha!”
quickly move to context awareness
“pepper” your language with phrases
working memory and language abilities were significant predictors of idioms in context performance. Norbury, C. (2004)

47. simplify directions

be aware of:
multiple-step commands
abstract language
multiple meaning words


48. context clues

often hyper-literal
context clues are simply hints to decipher a message
does it make sense?
if not, try another guess

49. self-esteem

history has shown peers do not appreciate them
point out situations where the individual is “In the Zone”
try to get the individual to realize the glass is “half-full”


50. homophones

multiple meaning words
50% of American english
70% of most common words
requires flexible thinking


51. do we have the same definition?

definition of “good”
often a function of Central Coherence

52. protect from teasing

be pro-active
unstructured tasks typically more difficult situations
“Perfect Targets”

53. implied meanings

often contextually based
requires perspective teaching
requires ability to perceive ulterior motives


54. stop signs

by-passes auditory channel
rapid perception

EBP: ASHA, (2019)
55. traffic signals
helps entire class
can be worn on lanyard
EBP: ASHA, (2019)

56. visualize choice options
choices are good and bad - what outcome do you want?
EBP: ASHA, (2019)

57. power cards
developed by Elisa Gagnon (2001)
wanna-be scenarios

58. solve an argument
requires perspective taking and negotiation

59. script out interactions
use social scripts
immediately generalize into daily use

60. flexibility of thought
rigidity is common
use figure-ground reversals
stroop tasks
61. redirect attention

often fixate on area of current interest

EF concept: Goal Focus

EBP: Patten, E. and Watson, L. (2011)

62. conversational skills

how to initiate a conversation (topic boxes)

turn-taking is like a see-saw

conversational zig zags

EBP: see visual cues

63. establish routines

routines provide consistency

consistency allows for success

creates self-satisfaction

use visuals


64. active listening

passive-active listening

active listening is an art

use “whole body listening”

need to “read” the message in all its formats

65. engage via questions

be aware of anxiety

barrage of questions often stress related

66. comprehend gestures

60-90% of a message is conveyed outside the vocabulary

gestures play a big part in this process

use videotapes

be aware comprehending gestures is much easier than using gestures


67. using gestures

use structured tasks to introduce, practice, and generalize appropriate use

don’t allow them to be robotic


68. conversational repair

dilemmas often produce shut-down due to anxiety

repair strategies use by:

speakers

listeners


69. eye contact

why is eye contact important?

don’t formally teach it

creates a “bond”


70. maps

provide visual strategies to reduce stress

class maps show where everything is located

larger maps reflect the layout of a campus


71. mutual focus

what do we have in common?

topic boxes

friend facts

72. Adapt topic & style for audience

given situations have a set of rules
be aware of where and when these rules can be employed

73. Barrier games

teaches that what you say isn’t as important as how you say it
easy concept - difficult to achieve

74. Code shifting strategies

groups of people will be more interested in some topics than others
personal issues are typically more interesting to family members

75. Interpersonal distance

too close/too far
floor tiles
arm length
hoola hoop

76. Grice’s maxims

Quantity
Quality
Relation
Manner

77. Lunch bunch

often provides for less stressful environment
practice social skills in a meaningful environment

78. friend facts

have no interest in remembering information about others
friend facts allow for information to use when starting a conversation

79. what is a friend?

what do your friends want and how do they relate to what you want?
a friend is not someone who looks at you and doesn't terrorize you

80. friendship circles

not all friends are close friends
not all friends of yours are their friends

81. friendship target

not everyone wants to know everything

82. Incredible 5-Point Scale

helps in understanding one's EQ
useful for anxiety, emotions, anger, stress, etc.

83. No means NO!

don't fall into the trap of an argument
84. define work areas

helps with organization skills
use visual cues to assist in organization
EBP: Griffin, H., et al. (2006),

85. SOCCSS

helps students to recognize social problems and develop choices to deal with them
each choice has a consequence

86. logic problems

help develop reasoning skills and context clues

87. segment workloads

break up the task into manageable units
remember to reinforce

88. room consistency

change creates anxiety
anxiety creates emotional distress
emotional distress creates behaviors

89. build upon successes

inertia is a hallmark for AS
defeatist attitudes often impede intentions
go slowly
90. use a tutor

Tutors help individuals without the interaction and difficulty of having mom and dad do it.

91. unemotional vocal tone

Frustration is inevitable. Voice rises either in intensity or pitch, which may be inadvertently perceived as “we’re having fun!”

92. positive reinforcement

Reinforce, reinforce, reinforce. Motivation may be greater when using the concept of “intelligence.”


93. southern “y’all”

Try not to single one out from the crowd. Use of the southern vernacular often increases compliance without behaviors.

94. proximity

Just get closer to redirect. Don’t need words.

95. task lists

A form of visual strategy. May require a more detailed description of how to complete the task.

EBP: Myles, B, et al. (2007).
**96. timeline**

assists in executive functions
home-made or computer programs
EBP: Griffin, H., et al. (2006)

**97. nonverbal prompts**

unobtrusive techniques to redirect
not helpful for the “non-savvy” individual

**98. make mistakes**

perfectionism often negatively impacts performance
everyone makes mistakes
they are inevitable

**99. Achilles Heel**

knowing one’s Achille’s heel will help in recognizing situations that will create problems

**100. empathy**

teach how to use the language of emotion coupled with facial expressions

**In Summary**

have a variety of strategies
be comfortable with those you use
ground your decisions based on the deficits present, together with what you know through literature and your own experiences.