

## My Social Stories™ 10.2 Workbook



*To write a Social Story is to assume an invitation into the mind  
of a child, adolescent, or adult with autism.  
Let's be careful in there. - Carol Gray*

Welcome to this two-day workshop that leads to the Advanced Social Story Certificate! This is your workbook. It contains space to complete activities, as well as information and many of the workshop Social Stories. Please wait until directed to complete each activity. Thank you for taking the time to learn how to write Social Stories right! In doing so, you are helping to protect the quality and integrity of this approach.  
All the Best - Carol Gray

### **Activity: Is this a Social Story?**

#### Attending a Social Story 10.2 Workshop

I am going to a Social Story workshop. There will be many people at the workshop. Carol Gray will be the speaker. She knows a lot about Social Stories. She is very entertaining, too! You may want to hear her presentation!

I will sit quietly and listen to the speaker. That way other attendees will be able to hear what is being said. It will be a fun and informative day!

Check one:

1. This is a Social Story\_\_\_\_\_ 2. This is not a Social Story\_\_\_\_\_

### **Social Story Definition**

A Social Story accurately describes a context, skill, achievement, or concept according to 10 defining criteria. These criteria guide Story research, development, and implementation to ensure an overall patient and supportive quality, and a format, 'voice', content, and learning experience that is descriptive, meaningful, respectful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the Story audience (a child, adolescent, or adult).

### The Washing Machine Story

Sometimes we wash clothes. Mom knows when to wash clothes. The washing machine is on when we wash clothes.

Sometimes we do not need to wash clothes. The washing machine is off. This is okay.

Sometimes we wash clothes.

### Activity: Gray's Water Balloon Survey

Directions: Imagine yourself at 9 years old. In the front yard of your home there is a large climbing tree. This tree extends over the sidewalk below. If you climb into the tree and stay very quiet, people passing by do not know you are there. One day, you decide to surprise people by dropping water balloons on them from the tree. Your aim is 100%. What follows is a list of people (and a dog) who walk under the tree that day. For each person, rate the decision to drop the balloon according to the following scale:

1. NO RISK, a safe target. No consequences past the initial reaction of the victim.
2. SOMEWHAT RISKY. Could go either way.
3. RISKY. If a parent or authority figure finds out, I will probably get in trouble.
4. DEFINITE RISK. There will be trouble, but it's worth the drop.
5. I AM NOT GOING TO DROP THE BALLOON due to long term and/or very serious consequences.

- ✚ \_\_\_\_\_ your priest, minister, or rabbi
- ✚ \_\_\_\_\_ your sister, age 6
- ✚ \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Woods, your neighbor
- ✚ \_\_\_\_\_ the neighborhood bully (age 9)
- ✚ \_\_\_\_\_ a boy you don't know (about age 9)
- ✚ \_\_\_\_\_ Grandma
- ✚ \_\_\_\_\_ a group of girls from your class
- ✚ \_\_\_\_\_ Henry, the neighbor's Saint Bernard
- ✚ \_\_\_\_\_ baby in a stroller



### Activity: Select a Workshop Topic

Select a workshop student and topic for each individual on your team, for two or three people within your team, or for your team to work on together. This will be your workshop topic. Below, place a check✓ by your topic.

\_\_\_\_\_ Emma's Story: Toilet training

Emma is a 4 1/2 year old female with autism. Several consistent attempts to teach toileting skills have failed. Emma's behavior suggests that she may be afraid of toilets. Her physician and parents agree that physically she is ready for toilet training. Emma loves ducks. She cannot read.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Aidan's Story: Handwritten vs. typed letters

Aidan is a 6-year-old male with autism. He continually erases his letters to the point of creating holes in his paper. Aidan's "perfectionism" is frustrating to his teachers and parents. One theory is that Aidan may be trying to make his letters look like those on posters and in books.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ J.B.'s Story: Learning to sing at a good volume with the school choir

J.B. is 15 years old, and sings in his high school choir. He is an expert on musical equipment. J.B. often sings louder than the rest of the choir. Several discussions and attempts at intervention have failed. The regional choir competition is in two weeks. The choir instructor is concerned.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Ray's Story: Accepting John as a new staff person

Ray is 25 years old and lives at a group home. Pete was a staff person at the group home, but recently quit his position. John has been hired to replace Pete. Ray is ignoring John consistently, whether en route to work or as they complete daily tasks.

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### Criterion 1: The Social Story Goal

Authors follow a defined process to share accurate information using a content, format, and voice that is descriptive, meaningful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the Audience.

#### Activity: The Social Story Goal

**Activity: Is the goal of a Social Story to change behavior?**

Check one: \_\_\_\_ YES! \_\_\_\_ NO!

### Criterion 2: Two-Step Discovery

Keeping the goal in mind, authors/educators gather relevant information to 1) improve their understanding of the Audience in relation to a situation, skill, or concept and/or 2) identify the specific topic(s) and the most critical information (focus) of each Story. At least 50% of all Social Stories applaud achievements.

**Activity: Gather Information** To gather information for my workshop student and topic, I may...

- Consult the following people: \_\_\_\_\_
- Record the following types of data: \_\_\_\_\_
- Complete the following observations: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Arrange the following experience(e). \_\_\_\_\_
- Use these other sources of information: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Activity: Learning to Walk Twice

When toddlers learn to walk, they:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



**Activity:** My specific Social Story topic for \_\_\_\_\_ is...  
(Fill in with the name of your workshop person.)

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### **Criterion 3: Three-Parts and a Title**

A Social Story/Article has a title and introduction that clearly identifies the topic, a body that adds detail, and a conclusion that reinforces and summarizes the information.

#### **Activity: Draft an Outline**

Specific Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Introduction to the Story (Background information)

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II. Information (Often describes a situation, answers “how to,” reassures, and/or explains “why”)

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III. Summary (Often includes a suggested response or choice or responses)

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#### **Criterion 4: Four-mat Makes it Mine!**

The Social Story™ format is tailored to the individual abilities, attention span, learning style and - whenever possible – talents and/or interests of its Audience.

**Activity: Considering categorization and generalization issues in autism,  
draw a circle around the best title for Emma's toileting Story.**

1. Learning to Use the Toilet
2. Learning to Use a Toilet
3. Learning to Use Toilets

#### **Places to Sit and Eat at McDonalds®**

Sometimes my family eats at McDonalds. We usually sit and eat at a table.

We may sit at a table that looks like this. We may eat at a table that looks like this.  
Or, we may eat at another kind of table. This is okay.

Sometimes my family eats at McDonalds. We usually sit and eat at a table.

(Or, to add more detail: If someone is already sitting there, we will try to look for another table.)

Note: The Social Article, "Learning to Apologize for an Unintentional Mistake" is available online in the Carol's Club Clubhouse. Log in to retrieve it. There is an introductory article: <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/A-Social-Articles-Strategy.pdf> that is followed by the Article: <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Apologizing-for-an-Unintentional-Mistake.pdf>. It is also available in my latest Social Story Book by Future Horizons, Arlington, Texas. (Gray, 2015).

**Activity: Creatively Build Meaning with FOURmat and Illustrations**

A large area below is blank. It's for you to think creatively about your workshop topic. Consider the many options just covered in light of what you know about your student: age, ability, interests, and preferences, etc. As you do, think of ways to use FOURmat to build and clarify Story content and meaning for your student. You are not writing the Story text yet, just informally getting some general ideas down on paper. Have fun!

### Criterion 5: Five Factors Define Voice & Vocabulary

A Social Story has a patient and supportive “voice” and vocabulary that is defined by five factors:

- 1) Exclusive use of first- and/or third-person perspective statements (no second person statements);
- 2) Past, present, or future tense;
- 3) Positive and patient tone;
- 4) Literally accurate; and
- 5) Accurate meaning.

**Activity: Wichita Lineman** Rewrite the following lyrics from *The Wichita Lineman* (Glen Campbell, 1968) according to their literal or intended meaning.

I am a lineman for the county \_\_\_\_\_

And I drive the main road \_\_\_\_\_

Searchin' in the sun for another overload \_\_\_\_\_

I hear you singin' in the wire \_\_\_\_\_

I can hear you through the whine \_\_\_\_\_

And the Wichita lineman is still on the line \_\_\_\_\_



I know I need a small vacation \_\_\_\_\_

But it don't look like rain \_\_\_\_\_

And if it snows that stretch down south \_\_\_\_\_

Won't ever stand the strain \_\_\_\_\_

And I need you more than want you \_\_\_\_\_

And I want you for all time \_\_\_\_\_

And the Wichita lineman is still on the line \_\_\_\_\_



### Criterion 6: Six Questions Guide Story Development

A Social Story™ answers relevant 'wh' questions that describe context, including place (WHERE), time-related information (WHEN), relevant people (WHO), important cues (WHAT), basic activities, behaviors, or statements (HOW), and the reasons or rationale behind them (WHY).

**Activity: WH Questions and the Social Competence Flow Chart** When directed, answer the questions below.

1. Which WH questions will you address in your Story?

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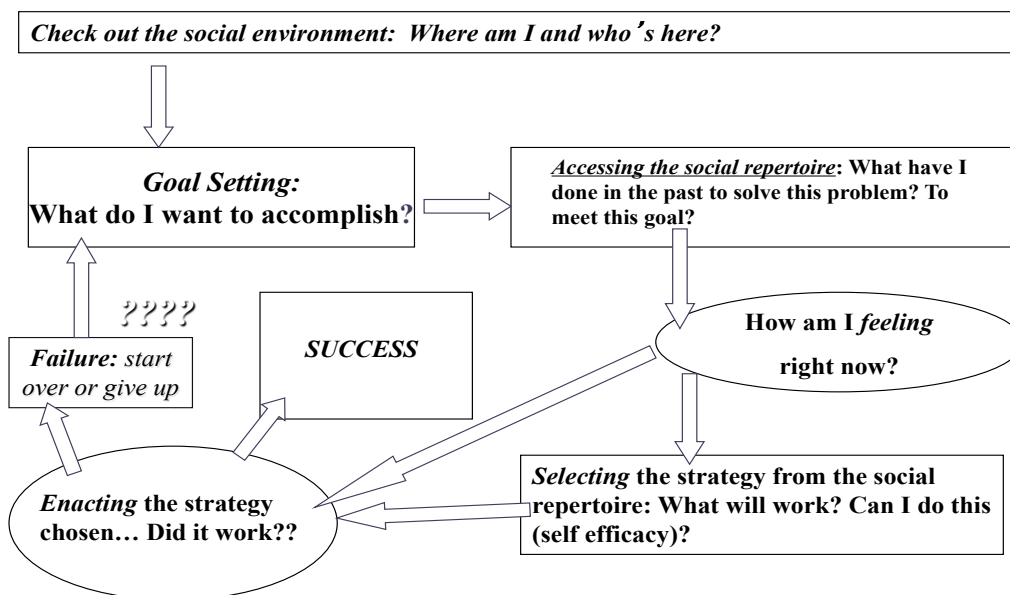
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2. Considering the flow chart below, where do you guess your person is getting stuck? \_\_\_\_\_

## Social Competence: A Closer Look

Kenneth H. Rubin, Ph.D. *The Friendship Factor* (2002)

New York: Viking Penguin.



### Criterion 7: Seven is About Sentences

A Social Story is comprised of Descriptive Sentences, and may also have one or more Coaching Sentence(s). Sentences adhere to all applicable 10.2 criteria.

Descriptive Sentences accurately describe relevant aspects of context, including external and/or internal factors while adhering to all applicable Social Story Criteria. They are free of assumption or bias, judgment, devaluation, or unidentified opinion.

Coaching Sentences gently guide behavior via descriptions of effective Team or Audience responses, or structured Audience Self-Coaching, adhering to all other applicable Social Story Criteria.

**Activity: Identify the Descriptive Sentences** For those that are not, rewrite to make each one a Descriptive Sentence.

1. There are fun games at a birthday party. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Last year I went to Angie's birthday party. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sometimes children play games at a birthday party. \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity: Write a Descriptive Sentence** Write a Descriptive Sentence that describes the illustration on the right, any of those on the workshop screen.

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Notes

**Activity:** Write a Descriptive Sentence that describes anything related to the internal context (the thoughts or feelings of one, two, or all of the children) of the photo on the right.

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**Activity: Write 3 Descriptive Sentences** Develop 3 Descriptive Sentences for your workshop Story. They may be any three sentences, and do not have to be the opening sentence, or sequential.

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**Activity: Write 1 Coaching Sentence** Develop 1 Coaching Sentence for your workshop Story.

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### #8 A Gr-eight! Formula

The Social Story™ Formula ensures that every Social Story describes more than directs.

$$\frac{\text{Total \# of Descriptive Sentences}}{\text{Total \# of Coaching Sentences}} \geq 2$$

\*If there are no (0) Sentences that Coach, use 1 in the denominator.

### Activity: Write a Social Story

[illegible]

### **Criterion 9: Nine to Refine**

A story draft is always reviewed and revised if necessary to ensure that it meets all defining Social Story criteria.

### **Criterion 10: Ten Guides to Editing and Implementation**

The Ten Guides to Implementation ensure that the philosophy and Criteria that guide Story/Article development are consistent with how it is introduced and reviewed with the Audience. They are:

- 1) Plan for Comprehension
- 2) Plan Story Support
- 3) Plan Story Review
- 4) Plan a Positive Introduction
- 5) Monitor
- 6) Organize the Stories
- 7) Mix & Match to Build Concepts
- 8) Story Re-runs and Sequels to Tie Past, Present, and Future
- 9) Recycle Instruction into Applause
- 10) Stay Current on Social Story Research and Updates

Notes

### Optional Day-One Homework: Mid-Term Exam

Please complete pages 14 - 15

#### Activity: Write Your Best Guess or Answer

1. This sentence is from a Social Story for a little girl who loves to eat many foods. What kind of sentence is it?

*Sometimes I eat vegetables. Sometimes I eat meat. I eat many different kinds of foods.*

One word in the sentences above could backfire. It's not needed anyway. Which word do you think it is?

2. One word in the sentence below could be replaced to increase accuracy. Which word do you think it is and what is a better replacement?

*Mrs. Hall likes to keep children safe on her bus.*

The sentence above is from a Social Story for an eight-year-old boy about riding the bus. Now that you have fixed it, what kind of sentence is it?

3. What kind of sentence is this? *Dad will stay with me in the doctor's office.*

For it to be a Social Story, someone asks you if the above sentence should read, "Dad will *try* to stay with me in the doctor's office." What's your answer?

4. Would this sentence ever appear in a Social Story? If your answer is "no," rewrite the sentence so that it can be used in a Social Story.

*When you hurt someone's feelings, you should apologize.*

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**Activity: Is ‘When I Am Feeling Upset’ a Social Story?** Does it meet the criteria (specifically 3-8) that distinguish Social Stories from other literary formats? (The original Story was submitted with illustration. My review of “When I Am Feeling Upset” begins on page 24 of this workbook.)

### When I Am Feeling Upset

My name is Adler and I am in kindergarten.

I like to do many things with my friends at school. I play games, eat in the cafeteria, go to the playground, and walk in line.

Sometimes I get upset at school. When I am feeling upset at school, it's important to find a way to feel calm.

If I don't like what I have for lunch, I could tell a teacher or a friend how I feel using a number 3 voice.

If I am last, I can take a deep breath and be flexible. All of us are going to get to the same place.

If I don't win a game I can say I had fun playing with my friends.

If I forget what I can do I can ask my teachers for help.

If I feel like I am going to be upset knowing what to do may help. With practice I may be able to feel calm.

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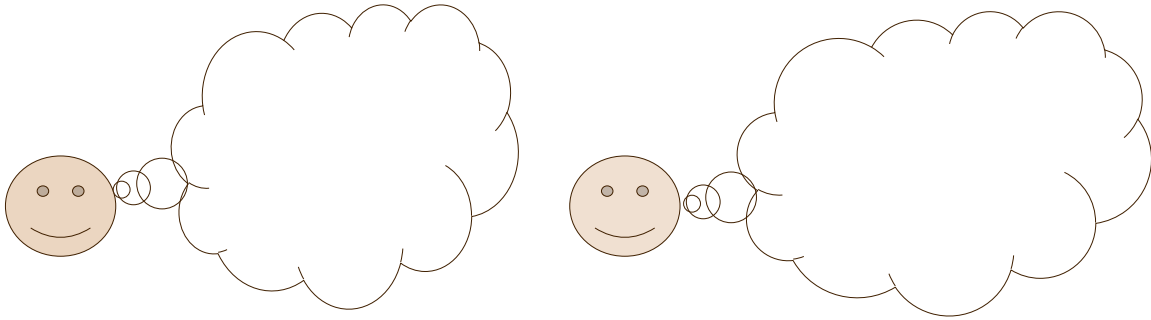
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**Activity: Stories About Thoughts** Write definitions/descriptions of the words *guess* and *decide*.

Define/establish a meaningful thought vocabulary



Guess:

Decide:

Guess: \_\_\_\_\_

Decide: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes**

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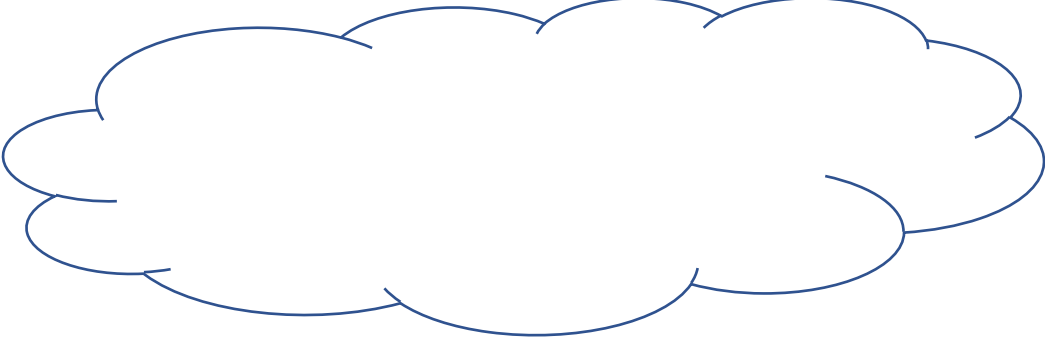


**Activity: Thinking Stories Format** The format below is often used to describe idioms and confusing phrases.

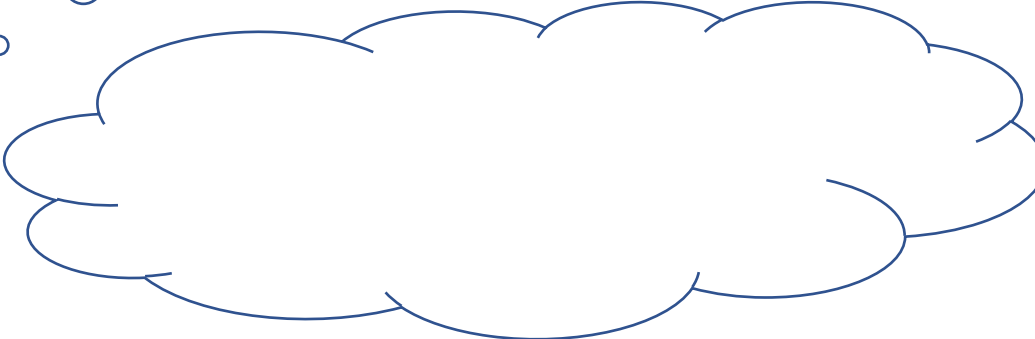
When someone says...



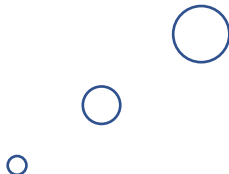

that person may be thinking...

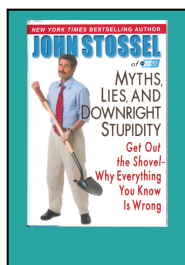


or



or maybe something else.

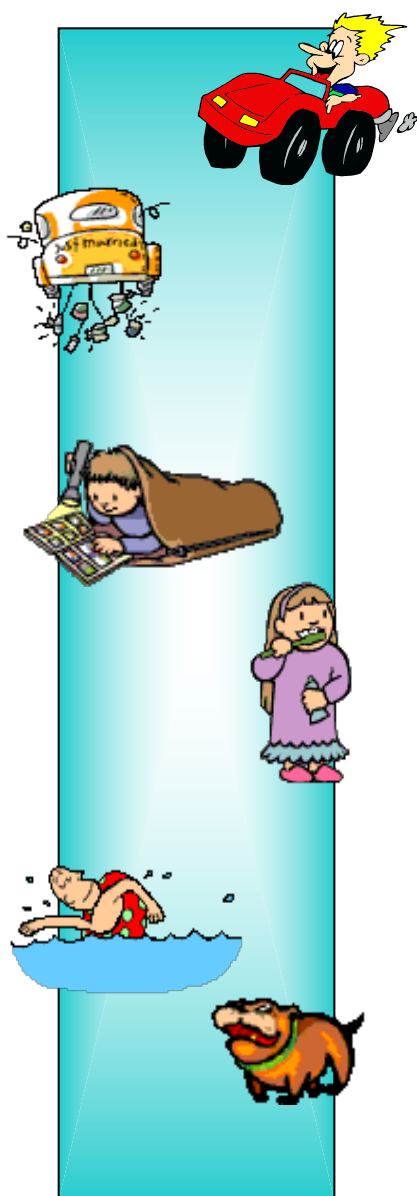




## Activity: The John Stossel Quiz

Based on the book *Myth, Lies, and Downright Stupidity* (2004) by John Stossel, New York, New York. Harper Collins Publishers.

**Directions:** Complete the quiz independently, without consulting anyone around you. After reading each of the six statements, circle your answer. When you *and all on your team* have finished, compare your answers. You may wish to change one (or more) answers after this discussion. Feel free to do so.



1. Women are better drivers than men (p 42)

TRUE FALSE

2. It is safe for cousins to marry and bear children together (pp 198-200)

TRUE FALSE

3. Sugar makes kids hyper (pp 224-225).

TRUE FALSE

4. Is it safe to read in low light? (pp 225-226)

YES NO

5. Mouthwash cures bad breath (p 226)

TRUE FALSE

6. Is it safe to swim after eating? (pp 229-230)

YES NO

7. A dog's mouth is cleaner than yours (p 230)

TRUE FALSE

### Activity: Coloring and Brainstorming



#### Coloring at a Workshop is Okay

We are attending a Social Story workshop. Sometimes, adults color at a workshop. This is okay. Even if this is the first time that adults have ever colored pictures at a conference, it is still okay. This Story explains why coloring at a meeting is a mature and informed thing to do.

Coloring involves small repetitive motions that “...engage parts of the cerebral cortex while relaxing the amygdala, the brain’s fear center” (Chen, D., no date). This may explain why coloring has been linked to improved creative thinking and attention (Neuroscience News, May 4, 2018).

It is okay to color at a workshop while brainstorming on a specific topic, especially when there is research to support the idea.



### Social Story Answer Key: Workshop Topics

(Please refrain from reading this section until after you have completed a Story for your workshop topic. Thank you!)

What follows are sample Social Stories for Emma, Aidan, J.B., and Ray. Keep in mind that there are many possible Social Stories that could be developed for each of these students. These Stories are provided to give you an opportunity to compare with the Story that you wrote during the course of this workshop.

#### Emma's Story: Learning to Use Toilets

My name is Emma. I am learning to use the toilet. Many people use toilet to pee and poop.

I am learning to sit on a toilet to pee and poop. This is okay. It is safe to sit on a toilet.

Sometimes, I sit on the toilet. This is safe for me. It's important to try to pee and poop in the toilet. My mom and dad will feel happy when I pee and poop in the toilet.

After people pee or poop in a toilet, they flush the toilet. This makes a special sound as it sends the pee and poop to the sewer. Each toilet may have its own special flushing sound. This happens with toilets.

I am learning how to sit on a toilet. I am learning how to pee and poop into a toilet. I am learning how to flush a toilet, too! I am learning new skills as I grow!

#### Aidan's Story: My Writing is Great!

My name is Aidan. I am in the first grade. First graders learn to write. They learn to write letters and numbers. I am learning to write letters and numbers.

When children learn to write, they need practice. Sometimes their letters look like this:      or this:      . This is okay. This is great first grade work!

Letters in book and on posters look perfect. That is because they are typed. Typed letters look the same each time. Here is the lower case letter "b" typed 5 times: b b b b b. Each one looks the same. That's because they were typed on a computer.

When people write, each letter is a little different. If I write a lower case "b" 5 times, it looks like this:

Each letter is a little different.

I am learning to write letters. Each time I write them, they will look a little different from one another. This happens when people write.

#### J.B.'s Story: Singing at the Right Volume with a Choir

I attend Grandville Middle School. I have choir class second hour. We sing songs. I am learning about singing at the right volume.

In choir class, it is very important to sing at the correct volume. Volume is the magnitude of a sound, like soft or loud. When singing with a choir, if I can hear the person singing next to me, that is one clue that I may be singing at the correct volume.

Sometimes, one person in a choir sings a solo. This means that person sings alone. If it is my turn to sing a solo, I will have the microphone. All other times, it is important to try to sing so that I can hear the person singing next to me.

When people listen to a choir, they want to hear all of the voices working together, at the correct volume. I will try to sing with the choir at the correct volume.

#### Ray's Story: The Alexander Group Home: Residents and Staff

There are residents and staff at The Alexander Group Home. The residents' names are Doug, Ben, Jeff, Boone, and Ray. Each resident lives at the Alexander Group Home. They resident has his own bedroom, job, leisure activities, and chores. The staff names are Anne, Jon, Carolyn, Cathy, Roger, Bill, Gary, and John. Staff people live at their own homes. They come to the Alexander Group Home to work. This article is about the residents and the staff of The Alexander Group Home.

Sometimes a staff person may get a new job, somewhere else. When this happens, that staff person will not work at the group home anymore. Pete used to be a staff person. I talked and worked with him. On September 1, 2014, Pete started working at another job. So, beginning in September, Pete was not a staff person at the group home anymore. Now, he goes to his new job.

There are eight staff people at The Alexander Group Home. When Pete left, there were only seven staff people. A new person was needed, so there would be eight staff people. On September 5, 2014, John started working at the group home. He is now the eighth staff person. I will try to talk and work with John. It will help John in his new job working with me.

## Comparison of Social Stories 10.1 and Social Stories 10.2

Congratulations as you complete the Social Stories 10.2 workshop! The only downside is that your family, friends, or colleagues may have learned how to write Social Stories in a workshop or training prior to 2014. They will not be familiar with Social Stories 10.2. This brief overview describes the basic differences between the Social Story 10.2 criteria that you are learning today and their predecessor, Social Stories 10.1. That way, you'll be able to 'make the translation' when talking about Social Stories with others!

Social Stories were formally introduced in *Social Stories: Improving Responses of Students with Autism with Accurate Information, in Focus on Autistic Behavior* (Gray & Garand, 1993). The article listed Social Story Guidelines that became defining characteristics (criteria) in Social Stories 10.0 (2004). Subsequent revisions and reorganization resulted in Social Stories 10.1 (2010) and Social Stories 10.2 (2014). Many elements – like the emphasis on individual considerations, meaning, and accuracy – have stayed the same over time, with research and experience resulting in the periodic updates.

Carol Gray developed Social Stories in 1991. In 2009, she became interested in the role of context in communication. Unable to find a definition of social context, she developed one. It was published in an article shortly thereafter by the Autism Society of America. At about the same time, Dr. Peter Vermeulen was writing a detailed groundbreaking work, *Autism as Context Blindness* (2012). His research, ideas, and insights helped to build the framework to update Social Stories 10.1. His ideas are reflected and cited in the introduction and rationale of today's workshop, as well as in the discussion of some of the 10.2 criteria.

One of the biggest differences between the 10.1 and 10.2 criteria is the number of sentence types. There are seven sentence types in 10.1, and two – Descriptive and Coaching Sentences in 10.2. The definition of a Descriptive Sentence is broader in 10.2 compared to all earlier versions of the criteria. That is also true of Coaching Sentences. While the vocabulary associated with previous sentence types (as examples, Perspective or Affirmative Sentences, or Sentences that Coach the Team) have been dropped, their role is still represented in the 10.2 sentence definitions.

Social Stories 10.2 contains other changes as well. In Social Stories 10.1, discussion of the 4<sup>th</sup> Criterion, FOURmat, and the 9<sup>th</sup> Criterion, Nine Makes it Mine, often overlapped. In Social Stories 10.2 they are combined as FOURmat Makes it Mine. The new 9<sup>th</sup> Criterion, Nine to Refine, focuses attention on the importance of review, rewriting, and revision prior to a final draft. The 10<sup>th</sup> Criterion now closes with a reminder to keep learning through Social Story research and updates.

On the following page you will find a chart that compares the Social Story 10.1 and 10.2 Criteria. It makes it possible for you to compare the basic differences between the two sets of criteria, and the subtler differences in emphasis and vocabulary.

Again, congratulations! Thank you for taking the time to learn to write Social Stories right!

## Comparison of Social Stories 10.1 and Social Stories 10.2 Criteria

### Social Stories 10.1 (2010)

**#1 The Goal.** The goal of a Social Story is to share accurate information using a process, format, voice, and vocabulary that is descriptive, meaningful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the Audience. Every Social Story has an overall patient and reassuring tone.

**#2 Two-Step Discovery.** Keeping the goal in mind, Authors gather relevant information to 1) improve their understanding of the Audience in relation to a situation, skill, or concept, and/or 2) identify the specific topic(s) and type(s) of information to share in the Story.

**#3 Three Parts and a Title.** A Social Story has a title and introduction that clearly identifies the topic, a body that adds detail, and a conclusion that reinforces and summarizes the information.

**#4 FOURmat.** A Social Story has a format that clarifies content and enhances meaning for the Audience.

**#5 Five Factors Define Voice and Vocabulary.** A Social Story has a patient and supportive "voice" and vocabulary that is defined by five factors. These factors are: 1. First- or Third-Person Perspective; 2. Positive and Patient Tone; 3. Past, Present, and/or Future Tense; 4. Literal Accuracy; and 5. Accurate Meaning.

**#6 Six Questions Guide Story Development.** A Social Story answers relevant "wh" questions, describing the context (where); time-related information (when); relevant people (who); important cues (what); basic activities, behaviors, or statements (how); and the reasons and/or rationale behind them (why).

**#7 Seven Types of Social Story Sentences.** A Social Story is comprised of Descriptive Sentences with an option to include any one or more of the following sentence types: Perspective Sentences; Three Sentences that Coach (Audience, Team, Self); Affirmative Sentences, and Partial Sentences.

**#8 A GR-EIGHT Formula.** One Formula and Seven Sentence Types ensure that every Social Story describes more than directs.

**#9 Nine Makes It Mine.** Whenever possible, a Social Story is tailored to the individual preferences, talents, and interests of its Audience.

**#10 Ten Guides to Editing and Implementation.** The Ten Guides to Editing and Implementation ensure that the goal that guides Social Story development is also evident in its editing and use.

### Social Stories 10.2 (2014)

**#1 The Social Story Goal.** Authors follow a defined process to share accurate information using a content, format, and voice that is descriptive, meaningful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the Audience.

**#2 Two-Step Discovery.** Authors gather information to 1) improve their understanding of the Audience in relation to a situation, skill, or concept and 2) identify the topic and focus of each Story/Article. At least 50% of all Social Stories applaud achievements.

**#3 Three Parts and a Title.** A Social Story/Article has a *title* and *introduction* that clearly identifies the topic, a *body* that adds detail, and a *conclusion* that reinforces and summarizes the information.

**#4 FOURmat.** The Social Story format is tailored to the *individual* abilities, attention span, learning style and - whenever possible - talents and/or interests of its Audience.

**#5 Five Factors Define Voice and Vocabulary.** A Social Story™/Article has a patient and supportive "voice" and vocabulary that is defined by five factors. These factors are: 1) First- or Third-Person Perspective; 2) Past, Present, and/or Future Tense; 3) Positive and Patient Tone; 4) Literal Accuracy; and 5) Accurate Meaning.

**#6 Six Questions Guide Story Development.** A Social Story answers relevant 'wh' questions that describe context, including place (WHERE), time-related information (WHEN), relevant people (WHO), important cues (WHAT), basic activities, behaviors, or statements (HOW), and the reasons or rationale behind them (WHY).

**#7 Seven is About Sentences.** A Social Story is comprised of Descriptive Sentences, as well as optional Coaching Sentences. Descriptive Sentences accurately describe relevant aspects of context, including external and internal factors, while adhering to all applicable Social Story Criteria.

**#8 A GR-EIGHT Formula.** One Formula ensures that every Social Story describes more than directs.

**#9 Nine to Refine.** A story draft is always reviewed and revised if necessary to ensure that it meets all defining Social Story criteria.

**#10 Ten Guides to Implementation.** The Ten Guides to Implementation ensure that the Goal that guides Story/Article development is also evident in its use. They are: 1) Plan for Comprehension; 2) Plan Story Support; 3) Plan Story Review; 4) Plan a Positive Introduction; 5) Monitor; 6) Organize the Stories; 7) Mix & Match to Build Concepts; 8) Story Re-runs and Sequels to Tie Past, Present, and Future; 9) Recycle Instruction into Applause; 10) Stay Current.

## What Would Carol Gray Say?

A note from Carol Gray: A few years ago, I had the opportunity to read and provide feedback on stories by New York City teachers. It was an awesome experience. I am pleased to be able to share one of those stories and my review with you. To protect confidentiality, the name of the student has been changed and the photo illustrations removed.

### Feedback on *When I Am Feeling Upset*

Hi Tamara,

Thank you for sharing two Stories with me. You write great stories. The story about the bowling outing is one for the *Social Story Hall of Fame*. The fact that you went to the bowling alley to get the perfect illustrations, and that the Story is in the shape of a bowling ball – PINK, of course, the favorite color – is, well, the state of the art and science of Social Stories. Imagine moving from being frightened of bowling, to loving it, and doing so via a story! To this day, I am surprised when a Social Story ‘works’. I do understand how and why they work, of course, but they still hold me in awe. Social Stories showcase the flexibility of people with autism to accept new information and ‘give it a go’ – even when it doesn’t match their initial perception.

Your bowling ball story took me back to the early 1990s when I was writing the first Social Stories. I had a girl, about 3-4 years of age, on my caseload. I’ll call her Stephanie. Stephanie did not want new shoes, and did not want to go to the shoe store! Her mom was concerned because Stephanie was quickly outgrowing her current footwear! Mom and I wrote two Stories. The first was pretty standard – it explained how children grow, and the rationale for having shoes and clothes that fit.

The second Story described the upcoming trip to the shoe store. To gather information, mom went to the store and selected four possible pairs of shoes, taking a photo of each. The store manager agreed to set the shoes aside until Stephanie came two days later. We glued the Story on the lid of the box and placed the photos of the shoes inside. Stephanie loved the box story and took it with her to the store. As described in the story, she handed each photo one at a time to the store clerk, who retrieved each pair of shoes for her to try on. Stephanie selected her shoes by placing the corresponding photo in the box as she tossed the other photos into the wastebasket.

I think the Story worked so well because it gave Stephanie a tangible outline of what would happen at the shoe store, as well as some control of the process. The only downside was that the following week Stephanie asked if they could buy more shoes. That led to a Story about how often children get new shoes, complete with a paper link-chain to count the days with a photo of the shoe store at the end. It was a long chain supported by a short Story.

I apologize for getting off track – let’s get back to the task at hand.

In *When I Am Feeling Upset*, you have tackled one of the most difficult topics with a lot of Social Story ‘class’. Stories about negative subjects are tricky to write. You’ve avoided some of the most classic and frequent mistakes. In my opinion, what is most important is that I can tell that you like Adler *and* that you have confidence in him. It comes through loud and clear between the lines. I’ve often said that if an Author does not like the Audience, they have no business writing the story – their dislike of the Audience will be there between the lines and felt by the Audience.

The most frequent mistake in the development of a Social Story occurs before placing words on paper. Social Story Authors often do not realize the importance of gathering information (second criterion). It increases the likelihood that we will write a genuine Social Story, one that ‘hits the nail on the head.’ Or, an alternate solution is discovered, and a Story is not needed. In fact, before we can identify a story as a Social Story, we have to know how the topic was identified. I’m so impressed that you use teacher observation, data, parent and student interviews, team meetings and more to select your topics and determine their focus. In doing so, you improve story quality and save valuable time – yours, and that of your Audience.



I do have some ideas for you. It's the third and fifth criteria that are keeping your story document from being a Social Story by definition. No worries – it's a simple fix because your story is so darn good. I am also going to share other ideas with you as well – just for fun – tricks of the trade that might add meaning, build concepts, or support generalization of skills to other contexts. I copied your text and placed it in bold below. I have indented my comments after each sentence.

### **When I Am Feeling Upset**

The fifth criterion prevents us – in most cases – from using the Audience voice when referring to negative emotions. We can still write about negative emotions if we use a third person voice. The fifth criterion requires us to state information positively. A substitute title might be – *Learning to Stay Calm. Better yet, Learning to Be in Control.* (A good Social Story strategy – If you are ever stuck for a title, put the word *Learning...* as the first word and see what comes next!)

There's often a problem with the word 'calm' in a Social Story. Dictionary.com defines calm as: *without rough motion; still or nearly still.* If a child tends to interpret information literally, he or she may be 'calm' at the wrong time. For example, in the gymnasium, 'calm' isn't usually a good fit for most games and activities. The same goes for many classroom activities. Teaching the meaning of the phrase '*in control*' – perhaps in a separate Social Story - is what we want to get across – i.e., play, have fun, get excited, work well, but... please don't 'lose it'.

### **My name is Adler and I am in kindergarten.**

This is a great opening sentence, especially for a young child. It uses his name to recruit his attention, and you've set the context at the same time (in kindergarten). If *in kindergarten* isn't needed, eliminating it may help with generalization of the information in the Story. We need a topic sentence (third criterion) that follows, to identify what the Story is about, as in: *I am learning how to keep myself in good control.*

**I like to do many things with my friends at school. I play games, eat in the cafeteria, go to the playground, and walk in line.** (In these photos I look calm and happy. I'm friendly. When I am calm and in control, it helps my friends and teachers, too.)

You're a genius, Tamara! In every case, the photos accompanying this text show Adler in good control of his feelings – his affect is in line with the context, similar to his peers, etc. In other words – you've demonstrated the goal – to be in good control. And, Adler is the model. He is the BEST model for this Story. In parentheses, I added text to the paragraph to take full advantage of the opportunity you've created here – with praise for acquired skills and information about the benefit of those skills to himself and others. Now all we need to do is expand that concept to situations where being 'in control' is harder, more challenging. To do that use the third person voice as the story continues.

### **Sometimes I get upset at school. When I am feeling upset at school, it's important to find a way to feel calm.**

The fifth criterion requires us to go to the third person here; we can't use the Audience voice to refer to negative behavior, especially his or her negative behavior. Using the third person voice is emotionally safer, better for self-esteem, especially with a population of people who often find it difficult to make mistakes. Also, we don't want to model the use of self-deprecating statements, which can often be a problem with those with autism. We can still cover the topic territory from a safer vantage point. As examples:

*Sometimes, children feel sad or uncomfortable. With practice, they (or As they grow, children...) learn how to stay in good control until they feel better (again). Staying in good control is important.*

(I admit, the above sentence may be a little long, and we may need to edit it back. Using the word 'again' is a good reminder that, '...you were doing quite well, happy, etc., and you can get there once again.' And, the earlier text describing Adler in control, etc. makes it even easier to use. In other words, we can make the point that happy isn't as far away as it feels right now.)

As the story continues below, I LOVE how you've applied the skill of being in control to a variety of situations. Great for building and generalizing the concept 'in control.'

I've re-written the following sentences according to my comments thus far. In almost every case, I've over-written – in other words, it's longer than it should be, or even needs to be, but I am sharing as many ideas as I can without writing something that rivals the length of *War and Peace*. Editing back is needed!

**If I don't like what I have for lunch, I could tell a teacher or a friend how I feel using a number 3 voice.**

*Children don't always like their lunch. Using good control is important. With practice, they learn to tell a teacher or friend about their feelings. Using a #3 voice is a smart choice.*

(Watch for Adler to 'get it right', at which point we can add this sentence to the paragraph above:

*Yesterday, there was an orange in my lunch. I used a #3 voice to tell Andy how I feel about oranges in my lunch.*

If the Story is getting too long, we can read 'the new part' only, or write a very short second, related Story.

**If I am last, I can take a deep breath and be flexible. All of us are going to get to the same place.**

Some theory of mind information may help with this one, as well as a thought-based solution: *Most children want to be first in line. Thinking, "Someday I may have a turn to be first" helps many children feel better. It helps them stay in good control.*

**If I don't win a game I can say I had fun playing with my friends.**

*Sometimes children play games. No one on this planet wins every game every time. When children lose, staying in good control is friendly. Saying something like, "That's a fun game" is a smart choice. (Note: The fifth criterion prevents us from using 'can' if the Audience has not demonstrated the behavior; we could replace it with 'may'.)*

**If I forget what I can do I can ask my teachers for help.**

*My teachers are children that got older. They know what to do with sad and uncomfortable feelings. They can help me and everyone else stay in good control.*

**If I feel like I am going to be upset knowing what to do may help. With practice I may be able to feel calm.**

*If I begin to feel upset, thinking about my story may help. I will try to stay in good control.*

Tamara, thank you for this opportunity to go through Adler's Story. You have a knack for this! Keep Writing! All the Best, Carol

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**Activity: Write a Social Story on a Topic of Your Choice**