



Social Stories

Social stories are short and easy to understand descriptions of situations that help people with autism to understand what to expect and why. Social stories™ were created by Carol Gary in 1991 and are a great way to visually support learning, they are tried and tested and proven to be a very effective teaching and learning strategy.

Social stories provide an easy to understand script, accompanied by pictures, that are reread to reinforce learning. The student can read or have the script read to them and look at the pictures to further embed the message. They can be in various forms depending on the learning style of the student e.g. written, pictures, audio, tactile or posted in places for 'on the move' learners, design and technology can be incorporated to create story books make props to add a sensory element. They need to be repeated with a variety of people in a variety of places to ensure that the targeted skill can be generalised across settings.

Social stories are available from many sources, see links below, and you can also write your own following a simple formula. Remember to keep it straightforward, use words that allow for flexibility in case of unexpected changes and for those wobbly moments to encourage the student to try again and build on that resilience!

Social stories can help with everyday situations such as developing **self-help skills** or **social skills**, **life events** such as a new baby or **unexpected events** e.g. the corona virus.

They help with

- understanding difficult or ambiguous situations or activities
- sequencing, planning and organisation (executive functioning)
- relieving anxiety in coping with different situations
- providing structure and routine

For further reading please see

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>

Click here for more information on visuals:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/visualsupports>

How to write and teach your own social story

Social story ten top tips

1. Use straightforward, clear language with one situation per story only
2. State the story positively
3. Teach one or two stories at a time only

4. Present the story in various media styles e.g. written with pictures or try 'Alexa play the sharing social story', incorporate the student's interests e.g. their favourite cartoon as a border
5. Post the story in places relevant to the situation e.g. the bathroom for washing hands
6. Repeat the social story, perhaps even for several months
7. Have different people repeat the story in a variety of settings
8. Encourage the student to engage with the story e.g. colour in the story, create their own version or make their own book
9. Read the story when the student is calm
10. Praise and reward the student for attempting to or successfully implementing the story

The following subjects may be helpful for Social stories during Covid 19

- Washing hands
- Using hand sanitiser
- Personal hygiene
- Wearing a mask or others wearing a mask
- Social distancing
- Outside daily exercise
- Staying at home and keeping touch with family and friends
- Not going to school and learning at home
- Not meeting friends and things to do at home
- Understanding Corona virus to relieve anxiety
- Using the internet to look up information about the Coronavirus
- Why mum/dad/carer are at home more
- People getting sick
- Taking my temperature
- Taking medication
- Feeling unwell

Click here for more information on visuals:

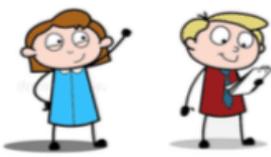
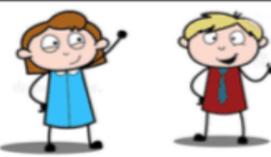
<https://www.autism.org.uk/visualsupports>

Here is an example of how to write a social story from Sue Larkey (2020)

<https://suelarkey.com.au/social-scripts-for-students-with-autism-understand-coronavirus-2/>

Example of How to Write a Social Script

My name is...If I don't know what to do I can ask for help.

	<p>Sometimes I need to ask the teacher for help.</p> <p>It's okay to ask for help when I don't know what to do.</p>	<p>Title Introduces the topic/ scenario</p> <p>Perspective Sentence Makes the script personal for the child and more specific to them. It appeals to their literalness.</p>
	<p>I put my hand up to attract the teacher's attention.</p> <p>I look towards the teacher.</p>	<p>Coaching Sentence Keeps it positive and tells the child what to do.</p>
	<p>Sometimes the teacher is busy with someone else, that is okay I can wait for help.</p>	<p>Alternative Scenario Include likely scenarios to avoid anxiety</p>
	<p>When the teacher has finished with the other student I can call out in a medium voice, "Excuse me."</p>	<p>Descriptive Sentence Teaches the social skills necessary in the scenario</p>
	<p>I wait for the teacher to look at me and say my name.</p> <p>I then ask my question.</p>	<p>Descriptive Sentence Teaches the social skills necessary in the scenario</p>
	<p>When the teacher has answered my question I say, "Thank you."</p>	<p>Conclusion -> Affirmation Positively reinforces and restates the original purpose with addition information</p>

It is okay to ask the teacher for help if I don't know what to do.

Corona Virus Social Stories

Written and visual, free to download

- Carol Grey Social Story about Pandemics and the Corona Virus

https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1hM_AgRYCGqnyMLOUF9ua_V_S00Pg0oDnxuGDqBbFNrzOpLI1hFiWp1Jk

- Sue Larkey Social Story (English)

<http://suelarkey.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Social-Script.pdf>

- Sue Larkey Social Story (Chinese)

<http://suelarkey.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-Social-Script-Chinese-translation.pdf>

- The Autism Educator

<https://theautismeducator.ie/2020/03/11/corona-virus-social-story/>

- The National Autism Association

<https://nationalautismassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WhatsCOVID-19.pdf>

- Dimensions UK

https://www.dimensions-uk.org/.../uploads/Coronavirus_Social_Story.pdf

- Talking Mats

<https://www.talkingmats.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/20200319-coronavirus-easy-read-pdf.pdf>

- Visual schedules - daily living and hygiene

http://livingwellwithautism.com/how_to_use_picture_cards_and_schedules/self_care_visual_helpers