

Tuesday, 10:00 – 11:30, A7

**Social Skills: The Gateway to Inclusion**

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Objective:

Develop strategies to promote community inclusion in meeting the needs of persons with developmental disabilities.

Notes:



**SOCIAL SKILLS:  
THE GATEWAY TO INCLUSION**

Kristi B. Davis, CTRS

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**What are Social Skills?**

- **Dictionary.com definition:** they are the personal skills needed for successful social communication and interaction
- Social Skills are made up of hundreds if not thousands of unwritten rules
- They are the verbal and non-verbal cues that we depend on to navigate our way through all social interactions
- Examples of Social Skills include: how to greet someone, turn-taking in conversation, skills involved in maintaining conversation, engaging in eye contact, sharing, giving positive feedback, appropriate and polite ways to make requests (please) and express gratitude (thanks), etc.

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**Making Community  
Connections**  
is JARC's approach to  
supporting people with  
disabilities to be OE, not just  
IN the community.

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Full inclusion means.....

Being OF the community,  
not just IN the community  
means being

*appreciated*  
*acknowledged*  
*accepted*

by community members.

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IN

vs.

OF

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Residing in the community</li><li>▪ Primary relationships with paid staff</li><li>▪ Primarily recognized as a person with a disability</li><li>▪ Minimal interaction with other community members</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Being a valued member of the community</li><li>▪ Authentic friendships</li><li>▪ Recognized as an individual with unique gifts, abilities, personality, etc.</li><li>▪ A sense of belonging</li></ul> |
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JARC's Making Community Connections (MCC) program was designed to help people with disabilities join community clubs and organizations as full members, and to make friends with others in the club without disabilities.

Connections are also being made at coffee shops, the grocery store, at restaurants where people go with frequency and regularity within their communities.

Learning good Social Skills is one of the key skills needed for successful inclusion.

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### Why are Teaching Social Skills Important?

- Often the folks we serve with developmental disabilities didn't learn the subtle nuances of behavior the way people without disabilities did
- They have difficulty generalizing
- They may have problems both with acquiring and applying social skills. They need a lot of practice
- Poor Social Skills reinforce negative stereotypes about people with disabilities
- People with good social skills have more friends, opportunities, and a better quality of life

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### Assessment of Social Skills

- Observation in a variety of settings
- Interviews with person being assessed and people who know them best
- Use a social skills check list during interview and assessment
- Document the person's strengths and weaknesses in the social skills assessment
- Document results to share with everyone working with the person
- Develop a plan to teach and reinforce the skills you identify as areas of improvement

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### When Assessing Social Skills Look For

- Difficulty paying attention when spoken to, missing pieces of information
- Appears to ignore others
- Difficulty taking turns in conversation (tendency to interrupt frequently)
- Difficulty following through on tasks and/or responsibilities
- Failure to use proper manners
- Missed social cues

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### When Assessing Social Skills Look For

- Sharing information that is inappropriate
- Being distracted by sounds or noises
- Becoming overwhelmed
- Disorganized or scattered thoughts
- Rambling or straying off topic during conversations
- Ending a conversation abruptly

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### Assessing Social Skills

Think of someone you currently work with that needs to improve their social skills.

How would you assess them?

What social skills does the person need to improve upon?

What social skills do you think are most important to help foster inclusion and acceptance?

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### Social Skills Necessary for Inclusion

#### Appearance and Hygiene

- Shower, brush teeth, wear deodorant
- Wear clothing that is clean and appropriate for the situation
- Clothing should fit
- Norms of dressing for different places and situations

#### Eating/Buffer Etiquette

- Do not take too much food on your plate
- Do not eat while in the buffet line
- Do not talk with your mouth full

#### When you first get to your group/activity

- Sit with people who you are familiar with
- Remember why you are there; to be with people and enjoy the activity you are doing
- Wait for the appropriate time to eat

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### Social Skills Necessary for Inclusion

#### Conversation Pointers

- Make eye contact
- Don't be negative or complain
- Recognize when it's time to change topics
- Don't take phone calls (excuse yourself first)
- Take turns talking

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### Social Skills Necessary for Inclusion

#### Conversation Pointers

- Don't interrupt
- Respect people's time
- Don't bother people when they're busy
- Be a good listener
- Don't be narcissistic

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### Social Skills Necessary for Inclusion

#### What TO Talk About

- Hobbies
- Interests (sports, movies, cars, music)
- Funny Stories
- Commonalities
- Current Events
- Weather
- Food
- Community
- Holidays

And remember who you're talking to!  
Is it a friend, acquaintance, or stranger?  
This will change what is appropriate and what is not.

#### What NOT to Talk About

- Politics
- Religion
- Personal/Private Information
- Sexual innuendos/comments
- Finances
- Medical/Health

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### Knowing the Difference between Strangers, Acquaintances and Friends

- **Stranger**- someone you don't know
- **Acquaintance**- someone you know and are familiar with but do not consider yourself close to
- **Friend**- someone you know, like and trust; someone you can depend on or count on

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What is your definition of a friend?

How do you classify the difference between stranger, acquaintance, friend and good friend?

How can we teach people with developmental disabilities this difference?

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### The Three "R"s (pillars of good Social Skills) Recognize, Respect and Reciprocity

#### RECOGNIZE

- Cues can show you how a person is feeling
- Walking away from you
  - Looking at their watch
  - Saying "it's getting late" when you're talking to them

- Group Norms
- How people dress
  - How the group celebrates each other's birthdays
  - When the right time to go for the snack is

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### RECOGNIZE

#### Personal space

- Make sure you are not too close to someone when talking to them
- Say "excuse me" if you accidentally intrude
- Be discreet with your personal information

#### Behavior

- Does your behavior fit in with the group
- Don't interrupt people or talk too loud
- Make eye contact

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### RESPECT

#### Always show appreciation for others

- Say "Thank You" often

#### Be considerate of people's time

- Do not make frequent phone calls to a person. Call once, leave a message and trust they will call you back
- Do not bother people when they are busy

#### Don't be selfish, negative or bossy

- Don't complain too much

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### RECIPROCITY

#### Offer to bring something when invited to someone's home

- Flowers, dessert, beverages

#### Think about how you can give back to someone

- Give a card, gift, or volunteer your help

#### Remember someone's birthday/condolence/get-well

- Give a card or a call to wish a Happy Birthday
- Participate in the group's celebration of birthdays
- Send a card to say get-well or to say you're sorry for someone who lost a loved one

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## RECIPROCITY

### Don't Just Talk About Yourself in Conversation

- Ask questions of the person you're talking with such as "how was your day?"
- Be a good listener

### Be Gracious when Accepting a Gift or Compliment

- Say "Thank You" when given something even if you don't like it or need it
- Send a thank-you card to acknowledge a gift, kind words, or hospitality that you have received

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## Teaching Social Skills

- Start with most basic skills, such as saying hello.
- Break down skills into smaller parts
- Practicing in real situations, people with developmental disabilities may struggle with generalization
- Individually or in Groups (small or large depending on the skill being taught)
- Goal setting applicable to the social skill the person most needs to work on
- Reinforce often

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## Teaching Social Skills

- Active Listening: Speaker, Listener and Observer
- Social scripts/stories
- Role-Playing
- Modeling: observing another person involved in the skill
- Video self modeling
- Small group discussion
- Social Prosthetics i.e. wearing a Detroit Tiger's T-shirt
- Providing social support, small cues, without answering for the person or explaining their behavior (Bruised tongue syndrome)

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### Role-plays

Practice is essential for maintaining Social Skills. Role-playing is a great way to give participants an opportunity not only to practice the skills they are learning, but also teach participants to evaluate each others or their own performance of skills.

(Show Video clip)

Break up into a small group.

Using the worksheet provided pick a scenario and develop a role play to teach the objective.

What skill are you trying to teach?

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### Active Listening

Active listeners show speakers that they are paying attention. They do this through body language (such as eye contact, orienting their body in the direction of the speaker, being quiet) and verbal feedback (restating in their own words what the speaker is trying to communicate).

A popular method of teaching active listening has 3 roles: speaker, listener, observer.

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### Active Listening

Speaker-talks a few minutes about something important to them.

Listener-listens quietly, giving small cues that they are paying attention. When the speaker is done the listener repeats back in their own words the main focus of what the speaker said.

Observer-evaluates the speaker and listener. Did the speaker stay on topic? How did the listener indicate that he/she was paying attention? Share results.

Switch roles and try again.

(parentingscience.com)

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### Social Scripts

- Use examples from real life, videos, books and television
- Video resource-James Stanfield Company video series and teacher's guide for teaching social skills related to being with people, etc.

#### Example of a Community Social Script: Going out to eat

- When you go to a restaurant you can have certain expectations about what will happen
- You will approach the hostess, be seated, and given a menu
- You will read the menu and when the server arrives, you will give him or her your order
- After a period of time you will be given your food
- After you've eaten you will be given a bill
- You will pay the bill and leave a tip

Social scripts are good so that people know what to expect and can practice desired skills. The use of pictures can also help reinforce.

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For people with developmental disabilities what are the most important Social Skills for successful inclusion?

Brainstorm

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Sean at Atheist Club Picnic

#### Social Skills focus

- Appropriateness of topic
- Reciprocity
- Listening to others
- Patience

#### Tools Used

- Social scripts
- Discussion with community guide

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Jacob at the Jewish learning series COJAR

Social Skills Focus

- Conversation skills
- Appropriateness of topic

Tools

- Role-Playing
- Social scripts

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Ivan with Pat at the Livonia Woodcarver's Club

Social Skills Focus

- Etiquette
- Appropriate topics
- Cues
- Conversation skills
- Group norms

Tools

- Role-Playing
- Social stories
- Reinforcement prior to activity
- Active listening

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MARLENE WITH BINGO FRIEND ANN

Social Skills Focus

- Group norms
- Focus on activity, not food
- Personal space

Tools

- Video
- Reinforcement prior to activity
- Social scripts

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Kevin with Astronomy Club Members

**Social Skills Focus**

- Appropriate topics/questions
- Cues-when to know when someone is done talking
- How much to talk

**Tools**

- Role-Playing
- Group Discussion
- Reinforcement prior to activity



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Tobi with National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) Social Action Group

**Social Skills Focus**

- Appropriate conversation topics
- Saying "Thank You"
- Group norms
- Reciprocity

**Tools**

- Role-Playing
- Reinforcement prior to activity
- Group discussion



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Gateway to Inclusion????

What to do now?

- Form a Social Skills group in your organization
- Make Social Skills a priority in goal setting and PCP's
- Always reinforce Social Skills in a positive way
- Be creative

Questions?????

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# Social Skills: The Gateway to Inclusion

## Role-Play Sample Scenarios

Break up into a small group. Choose a social skill objective to teach. Using the worksheet provided pick a scenario or come up with one on your own. Develop a short role-play to teach the objective. What skill are you trying to teach? Volunteers needed to demonstrate their role-play? 😊

### 1. Telephone calls

Scenario: A friend gives his/her number out to a group of friends.

Objectives: Show how to respect people's time, when to call and when not to call, how to recognize when somebody is trying to get off the phone, good and bad reasons to call, conversation topic, etc.

### 2. Dinner

Scenario: Some friends have guests over for dinner.

Objectives: Display appropriate length of time to stay, appreciation of food prepared by others, bringing a dish to pass, appropriate discussion.

### 3. Surprise Birthday Party

Scenario: Some friends throw a surprise birthday celebration.

Objectives: Show how to recognize a nice gesture and reciprocate, how to give and accept gifts, how to respect personal space.

**Suggested other topics to demonstrate:** Giving and receiving compliments, taking turns, asking someone to share a desired item, buffet/food etiquette, hygiene/clothing, reciprocity.



# Social Skills: The Gateway to Inclusion