

Description of Strategies

There are numerous intervention tools and strategies, which can be used interactively, that may be helpful in addressing the concepts we covered in this package. As no one strategy works for all children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), three strategies were chosen to be included in this package. These strategies include: Social Narratives, Power Cards and Comic Strip Conversations. Below is a summary of each strategy and the reasons why they were chosen for each concept.

Social Narratives

A Social Narrative is a brief, individualized story written in first person about a specific social situation. The narrative provides support and instruction by describing social cues and appropriate social responses to social behaviour and teaching new social skills. The Social Narratives are read during a quiet time with no demands placed on your child.

Social Narratives are typically in sentence form with photos, drawings or picture symbols used to confirm the content. Social Narratives should include content that matches your child's needs and takes their perspective into account (Smith Myles, Trautman & Schelvan, 2004).

Social Narratives were chosen as a strategy to address dating, masturbation, and public vs. private as it accomplishes the following goals:

- ✓ Identifies important cues in a given situation
- ✓ Presents another's point of view
- ✓ Describes routines, rules, situations, upcoming events or abstract concepts
- ✓ Develops understanding around expectations
- ✓ Celebrates the child's successes
- ✓ Gently suggests alternate responses
- ✓ Brings attention to positive achievements
- ✓ Creates a permanent record of successes/strengths

Power Cards

Power Cards are a visual strategy that capitalizes on the special interests of children with ASD, to help change unwanted or inappropriate behaviour. A 'hero' is chosen (your child's special interest) and a brief scenario or character sketch is created that describes how your child's hero solves a problem (the social situation that typically results in inappropriate behaviour). The power card summarizes how your child can use the same strategies as the 'hero' to solve a similar concern or problem of their own. Typically, the power card is broken down into 3-5 steps and is created from the script and can be carried by your child (Gagnon, 2001).

Power cards were chosen as a strategy to address Masturbation as it accomplishes the following goals:

- ✓ Provides information around the appropriate behaviour for a specific social situation
- ✓ Lets your child know they have choices
- ✓ Outlines the relationship between a specific behaviour and its consequence
- ✓ Provides a visual cue to your child so he/she remembers what to do
- ✓ Describes perspective of others

Comic Strip Conversations

A Comic Strip Conversation uses simple drawings to visually outline a conversation between two or more people. These drawings serve to illustrate social conversations and interactions, and can be helpful for children who may struggle to comprehend the quick exchange of information. Comic Strip Conversations are commonly used with children with ASD, for reporting past occurrences (and identifying solutions that can be implemented the next time the situation occurs), describing a present situation, or for helping children plan for future social interactions (Gray, 1994).

Comic Strip Conversations were chosen as a strategy to address Dating as it accomplishes the following goals:

- ✓ Provides insight into your child's perspective of a situation
- ✓ Provides insight into the perspectives of other's
- ✓ A helpful way to systematically identify what people might say and do, and what people may be thinking
- ✓ Communicative device for children struggling with verbal expression
- ✓ A useful tool for developing social skills

References:

- Gagnon, E. (2001). *Power Cards*. Kansas: Autism Asperger Publishing Co
- Gray, C. (1994). *Comic Strip Conversations*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.
- Myles, B.S., Trautman, M., & Schelvan, R. (2004) *The Hidden Curriculum – Practical Solutions for Understanding Unstated Rules in Social Situations*. Kansas: Autism Asperger Publishing Co.
- Perry, A., Condillac, R. (2003). *Evidence Based Practices for Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Review of the Literature and Practice Guide*. (pp. 43) Children’s Mental Health Ontario, Toronto.