School Counselors and Social Skills: Practical Strategies for Developing Socially Competent Students

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Overview of Presentation

This presentation includes select slides that will be posted online in advance of the presentation; all of the slides will be available to participants after the presentation.
Why are Social Skills Important?

• “Without the friendships of peers, children feel alone, confused, and out of sync with the rest of the world. And these feelings can have serious repercussions for their future. Research has found that children with poor peer relationships are more likely to later develop serious problems such as low academic performance, depression, failed relationships, poor parenting skills, and troubled careers.” Raise Your Child’s Social IQ, Cathi Cohen (p. v, 2000)

• When children don’t know how to respond in social situations they often feel frustrated and anxious, which may lead to an increase in undesirable, attention seeking behaviors.

• Adults are more likely to be terminated from a job for inability to work with others, rather then for lack of knowledge.

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Why are Social Skills are Difficult to Teach?

- Involve activation and communication of many brain regions
- Involve many skills
- Involve using those skills differently depending on audience, situation, and other factors

p. 57 Scientific American Mind, March/April 2012
Social Skills and School Counseling
Social Skills and School Counseling

- Academic, Career, and Social/Emotional domains
- New ASCA Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors

Goodman-Scott, 2015
First Things First
First Things First: Considerations Before Teaching Social Skills

Parents MUST treat underlying conditions FIRST.
First Things First: Understand Typical Child Development
First Things First:
Students’ Motivation

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First Things First: Generalizing Skill

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First Things First:
Peer Model

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Use Visual Supports to Teach Social Skills

Why Visuals?

Goodman-Scott, 2015
1 PICTURE = 1,000 WORDS

Learn three creative techniques for using visuals to teach social skills.

BY EMILY GOODMAN-SCOTT, PH.D., LPC, AND JUDY O’RORKE-TRIGIANI, PH.D.

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Using Visuals

Based on Brain Research

• Information from visuals incorporated in long-term memory via the visual cortex
• Visuals allow for cognitive review and reinforcement
• Attention, Anxiety, & ASD research
  – Youth with disorders may struggle with information encoded in long-term memory
• Everyone is a visual learner (Willis, 2013)

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Using Visuals

Other Advantages

• Multimodal learning
• Student ownership (school counselor and student co-develop)
• Review independently
• Concrete tool
• Using tool and generalizing skill to other environments
Strategy 1: Find Pictures

Microsoft Word Clip Art

- Excited
- Scared
- Silly
- Angry

http://thefilesofmrse.com
Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 1: Find Pictures

Mayer Johnson’s Boardmaker

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 1: Find Pictures

Taking photographs

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 1: Find Pictures

Create your own

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 2: Power Cards

- On the front of the card place a desirable picture (Minecraft, Spiderman); student designs
- On the back of the card a visual of the desired skill
- The card is placed on a child’s desk or workspace
- Staff can prompt student to target behavior without verbal exchanges

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 3: Sociogram

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 4: Conversational Games

Let’s Keep the Conversation Going!
Topic Maintenance

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 5: One Sheet Wonders

Solving Problems with Friends.

- Spend time with caring friends.
- Walk Away.
- Use an "I statement": I feel _______ when you _______.
- Say: Please Stop.
- Tell a grown-up.
- Tell a joke.

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 6:
One Sheet Wonders to Accompany Books

Sometimes my mouth is like a volcano.
Sometimes my mouth erupts.
My mouth is like a volcano when I interrupt others.

Instead of interrupting I can:

1. Take a deep breath and keep my important words inside my mouth.
2. Write down my thoughts.
3. Wait my turn to talk.

I can talk when the other person is done talking.

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 7: Just Right/Regulation

• Teach the verbals and nonverbals of passive, assertive and aggressive communication with a picture

• Student selects a card with one of these communication styles and a phrase

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 7: Just Right/Regulation

Car engines have different speeds.

Sometimes they run high.

Sometimes they run low.

Sometimes they run just-right.

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 8: Cool/Not Cool

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 9: Self Talk Prompt Sheets

“I don’t have to be perfect. I just have to try”
“Other people have done this so can I”
“The things that I worry about rarely happen”
“It is going to be ok”
“It is really not as bad as I imagine it to be”
“If I don’t succeed, try again or use a different approach”
“I can do this. This will not hurt me”
“This is a safe place and I am safe”
“This will be over soon...I can do anything for a short time”
“This is really no big deal”
“All I can do is try my best. That is all anyone can do”
“The more I do this the easier it will get”
“This will help me in the long run”

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 10: Pictures

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 11: Social Stories

Goodman-Scott, 2015
Strategy 11: Social Stories

- Tells a story & use pictures to explain situation and show expected behaviors
- Can be developed on PowerPoint, Word, or Boardmaker
- Can use pre-created stories
- Best if individualized to child or situation
  - Child can help create story
- Give copies of story to staff and parents to reinforce in other settings

Goodman-Scott, 2015
References

References


References
