

Social Stories: A Women's Health Example

Social stories are teaching tools originally created to help children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder to navigate confusing or stressful social situations. Their use has been expanded to help other individuals with a range of needs, in a variety of settings, to learn the "scripts" for social interaction. The social story serves as this script, helping the user to understand the expected behavior for a given situation.

Social stories can be very helpful for individuals who have difficulty navigating ambiguous or anxiety-producing social situations, or who are encountering an environment or an experience for the first time. Although generic social stories are available, it is often necessary to customize the social story for an individual user. For example, the language should be appropriate for the person's developmental level, the directives provided should be appropriate for that individual, and the social story should incorporate consideration of the user's strengths. Social stories should be carefully balanced between description and direction. The purpose is not merely to provide guidelines for prosocial behavior, but also to alleviate anxiety associated with unfamiliarity and confusion.

EXAMPLE: Link here to a social story, "[A Visit to the Women's Health Clinic](#)," in PDF (Requires Acrobat Reader). Feel free to share this document with individuals, parents and care givers.

Social stories can be read by the individual user, read to the individual, or presented through audio, video, or computer equipment. For more information about the use of social stories, interested readers are referred to:

Sansosti, F.J., Powell-Smith, K.A., & Kincaid, D. (2004). A research synthesis of social story interventions for children with autism spectrum disorders. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 19*, 194-204.

For resources related to writing social stories:

Gray, C. A. (2000). *Writing social stories with Carol Gray [Videotape and workbook]*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

Many additional resources are available on the internet.