

# Social Aspects of Communication Praxis Review Course

Byron Ross, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
University of Houston  
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# Social Communication

- The dynamic interplay of 4 primary components
  - Social cognition, social interaction, pragmatics, and receptive/expressive language
- Social communication can exist as a disorder independently, or as a part of the criteria for other disorders
  - ASD, LI (SLI), TBI, ADHD

# Components of Social Communication (ASHA, 2013)

## 1. Social Interaction

- Speech style and context
- Cultural influences
- Gender communication differences
- Social reasoning
- Code switching
- Peer-related social competence
- Social tasks (cooperative play)

# Components of Social Communication (ASHA, 2013)

## 2. Social Cognition

- Theory of mind (perspective taking)
- Executive functions (organization, planning, attention, problem solving)
- Joint attention (establishing shared attention)
- Making inferences
- Presuppositions
- Emotional regulation

# Components of Social Communication (ASHA, 2013)

## 3. Pragmatics

### •Verbal

- Speech acts (requests, directives, demands)
- Prosody
- Grice's maxims (quality, quantity, relevance, manner)
- Discourse (conversation style, topic maint., communication breakdown and repair, cohesion)
- Social reciprocity

### •Nonverbal

- Body language
- Gesture
- Eye contact and gaze
- Facial expression
- Proximity

# Components of Social Communication

(ASHA, 2013)

## 4. Language Processing

- Spoken and written language (receptive)
- Spoken and written language (expressive)
- Components of language (form, content, use)
- Phonological skills (used for spelling and reading)

# Social Communication

- Can be heavily influenced by cultural influences
  - Cultural norms may be different (nonverbal communication, verbal communication, social interaction)
  - Can conflict with standardized tests
- What's “normal” is changing as society changes
- What's normal also depends on the context



# Assessment Principles of Social Communication

- Assessment is not a “one and done” concept
  - Is an ongoing process
  - Should occur in multiple settings that are meaningful to the child
  - Should involve multiple strategies
    - Some observations in multiple natural settings
    - Use of parent/caregiver interviews
    - Some standardized tests (not always optimal for SC, but if used, should always be used as a supplement to ecological type assessments)

# Assessment Principles of Social Communication

- Ecological functional assessment
  - Observational assessment technique in which the SLP observes child in her natural environment
  - Looking to determine communication demands of the environment and how the child performs in that environment
  - Usually created by the SLP or modified existing test
- Ecological assessments provide information on how the child usually performs and how they should be expected to perform
- Leads directly to intervention plan

# Assessment Principles of Social Communication

- Should include a variety of communicative acts
  - Spontaneous contextual communication, such as conversation
- Should be functional
  - Social/communication that the individual needs to function in day to day activities should be measured

# Functional Assessment of the Individual

- In determining direction for therapy, the most useful information is obtained from asking the most crucial, FUNCTIONAL questions:
  - What the child might need to communicate
    - Will the child need to be able to communicate when he's hurting? When his diaper is full?
  - For what purposes the child might need to communicate
    - Will the child need to be able to make a lot of requests? Comments?
  - In what manner
    - Verbal speech, VOCA, sign language, gestures, combination

# Functional Assessment of the Individual

- What are the social communication expectations of the environment?
- The assessment should be done in the natural environment (or as close as possible)
  - You're likely getting an accurate representation of the child's abilities
  - Helps determine direction for therapy

# 4 Areas of Assessment for Pragmatics

- Pragmatic functions have 4 general subcategories that should be examined:
  1. Functional competence
    - Communicating for a variety of reasons
  2. Sociolinguistic competence
    - Choosing language that is socially appropriate based on context
    - Interpreting the social meaning of language

# 4 Areas of Assessment for Pragmatics

## 3. Interactional

- Understanding rules for interactions in specific communicative situations
  - Includes discourse abilities
  - Common behaviors are violations of proximity and walking away in the middle of a conversation

## 4. Cultural competence

- Knowledge of how and the ability to function appropriately according to cultural norms
  - More appropriate to evaluate with adolescents and adults

# Intervention Principles of Social Communication Disorder

- Components of social communication are learned in social contexts, and should therefore be taught in social contexts
- Should be individualized to match a child's:
  - current developmental level
  - profile of learning strengths and weakness
- Intervention should directly address the predominant core components of social communication



# Intervention Principles of Social Communication Disorder

- Intervention approaches should be derived from a range of sources
  - Clinical & Educational Practice
    - Currently higher in availability
  - Empirical Research
    - Not as much available currently

# Intervention Principles of Social Communication Disorder

## ○ Individual/Group

- One day a week for individual, once for group in the beginning (optimal)
- Individual sessions are used to address each child's unique social challenge
- Group sessions offer the child a chance to practice the skills learned in individual sessions
- Some are not ready for group work
  - Individual variation

# Intervention Principles of Social Communication Disorder

- Intervention techniques
  - Dynamic vs. static skills
    - Teach dynamic skills in static ways
    - Work on situational adjustments later
  - Scripting
    - Providing a conversation in written form
    - Often used early in intervention
    - Later teach how to turn scripts into dynamic skills (adaptive skills)
    - skits

# Intervention Principles of Social Communication Disorder

## – Role playing

- Combine with scripting at first
- Try setting up the room as close to the actual setting as possible
  - If the actual situation would be in a standing position-stand

# Intervention Principles of Social Communication Disorder

## – Video modeling

- Predetermined skill or behavior is developed as a result of watching images of someone demonstrate the skill/behavior
- Peer, adult, or individual is the model

## – Comic strip conversation

- An illustrated conversation between two or more people using simple line drawings

# Intervention Principles of Social Communication Disorder

## – Social stories

- Short stories that describes a skill, concept, or situation meaningful to the child
- Supposed to increase understanding (social expectations), which leads to change in behavior

# Sample Question

Stan is 14 years old adolescent diagnosed with Level I ASD, and he has an above average IQ. He loves going to the local Boys and Girls Club to hang out with the other kids and play basketball but there are a couple of problems. He doesn't seem to have the social skills that a typical 14 year old should have. He exhibits some very awkward social behaviors, including a loud laugh at inappropriate times, he stands very closely to other people while speaking, and he often wipes his nose on his sleeve. He has passion for numbers and often wants to tell the other kids about every basketball statistic known to man! His intentions are to impress the other kids with his knowledge of basketball stats, so he doesn't understand why the other kids avoid him.

1. Stan stands too closely to people while speaking primarily due to his deficits in which component of social communication?

- a. Pragmatics
- b. Language processing
- c. Social cognition
- d. Social interaction

# Sample Question

2. Standing too closely to people while speaking to them is clearly a social deficit, given the background information about him. However this behavior may not be a social deficit under certain circumstances, such as:

- a. Stan is telling a secret to someone
- b. Stan is showing them a text on his cell phone while talking to them
- c. Stan is from a culture where personal space is smaller
- d. A&B
- e. All of the Above

3. Stan doesn't understand why the other kids avoid him primarily due to his deficits in which component of social communication?

- a. Pragmatics
- b. Language processing
- c. Social cognition
- d. Social interaction



# Sample Question

You have an evaluation scheduled. From the case history you know that your client is 3 1/2 years old, Hispanic, has ADHD, doesn't seem to use or understand many conventional gestures, uses about 20 words, but has an unusual prosody, and perseverates when he gets anxious. He has poor interaction with his siblings, teachers, and strangers. His parents feel that he is well engaged with them. This boy likes trains and testing gravity (not in a malicious way; he is curious about watching things drop, usually not glass/breakable). What would be the optimal way to test his social communication skills?

- a. By using one standardized test that assesses social communication
- b. By interviewing the parents and teachers
- c. By observing him in his natural environment and then getting a language sample
- d. By administering two standardized tests that assess social communication and language

# Sample Question

- Reggie is an 11 year old middle school student with significant social communication issues. His expressive and receptive language skills are moderately delayed and he reads on a 4th grade level. Reggie often gets in trouble for “policing” his classroom-telling the other students what to do and tattling on them for every little thing. According to teachers, Reggie has trouble turning in his own assignments and monitoring his own behavior. As Reggie goes through puberty, he often gets in trouble for staring inappropriately at the girls in his class, as well as for putting his hands in his pants (and he doesn’t wash them afterwards). Reggie’s passion in life is Harry Potter. He has the entire collection. Which behavior related to social communication do you start with as a target for therapy?
  - a. Policing the classroom
  - b. Turning in his assignments
  - c. Tattling on classmates
  - d. Staring at girls inappropriately

# Praxis Tips

- Biggest issue: running out of time!
  - You have approximately 1 minute per question
  - Answer as best you can, and keep moving
- Read all choices before answering
- On long case study questions, write down the facts (inside the booklet) as you read
- Be aware of words such as “always” “never”, “will not”-likely not the answer
- “usually”, “sometimes”, “maybe”- more likely answers

# Praxis Tips

- Cover up choices with a piece of paper while you read the question.
  - Try to anticipate the right answer before you get distracted by the choices
  - If you see the answer you anticipated, circle it then read through the other choices
- Don't eliminate a choice unless you know what every word in the sentence means