



Tri-State Autism Spectrum Disorder Webinar Series



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Presenter Information

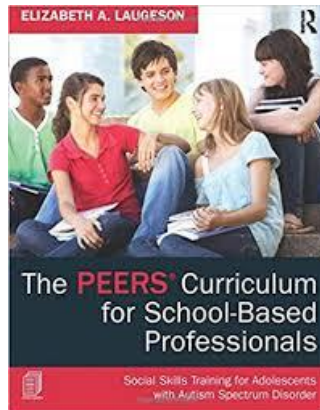
Mary Schlieder, Ed.D.
Special education teacher, professor, consultant



Learner Objectives

- Identify social skills deficits among adolescents with ASD
- Recognize the importance of improving friendships
- Consider limitations of existing social skills interventions
- Explore research findings related to social skills instruction
- Learn how to implement the PEERS social skill curriculum for adolescents

PEERS for Adolescents



References

1. Laugeson, E. A. (2014). *The Peers curriculum for school based professionals: Social skills training for adolescents with autism spectrum disorder*. New York, NY: Routledge.
2. Laugeson, E. A., Frankel, F., Gantman, A., Dillon, A. R., & Mogil, C. (2012). Evidence-based social skills training for adolescents with autism spectrum disorders: The UCLA PEERS Program. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 42, 1025-1036.
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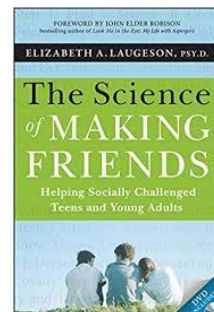
PEERS Website Research

<https://www.semel.ucla.edu/peers>



PEERS Curriculum Background

- International program
 - Developed at UCLA in 2004
 - Translated into dozens of languages
- Evidence-based social skills programs
 - PEERS for preschoolers
 - PEERS for adolescents
 - PEERS for adults



What to Expect from PEERS

- Teach ecologically valid social skills used by socially successful adolescents
- Focus on relationship skills
 - develop and maintain friendships
 - manage conflict
 - handle rejection

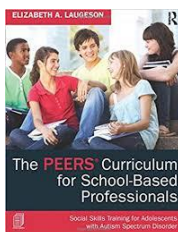


What to Expect from PEERS

- Help find sources of friends
- Addresses core social skill deficits in ASD
- Foster independence in social relationships
- Communication with caregivers to provide ongoing support and skills practice

Daily School-Based Curriculum

- Teacher facilitated
- 16 week curriculum; daily lesson plans
- Includes weekly parent handouts
- Evidence-based treatment for middle and high school ASD



The Why



Poll Question #1

List the steps you would use if instructing a teen how to join in a conversation:

Why This Curriculum?



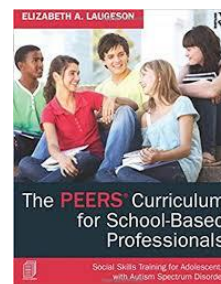
Joining a Conversation

- Listen to the conversation.
- Figure out what they're talking about.
- Look over occasionally.
- Use prop like phone.
- Wait for a pause in the conversation.
- Move closer.
- Make a comment or ask a question that's on topic.
- Determine whether or not you're being accepted.
- If not accepted, look away, turn away, walk away.



Why This Curriculum?

- Nuanced
- Ecologically valid
- Requires little planning; scripted
- Well organized
- Lessens guilt
- It works!



Poll Question #2

List social skill deficits teens with ASD experience:

Social Skill Deficits in ASD

- Poor social communication
 - Problems with topic initiation
 - One-sided conversations
 - elicit fewer extended responses
 - give fewer reciprocal responses
 - fail to identify common interests

Social Skill Deficits in ASD

- Repetitive themes
 - persevere on restricted interests
 - disregard the other person's interests



Social Skill Deficits in ASD

- Difficulty providing relevant information
- Make unexpected leaps in topics
- Pedantic style in speaking



Social Skill Deficits in ASD

- Difficult interpreting verbal and nonverbal communication
 - voice tone
 - sarcasm
 - gestures
 - social touch

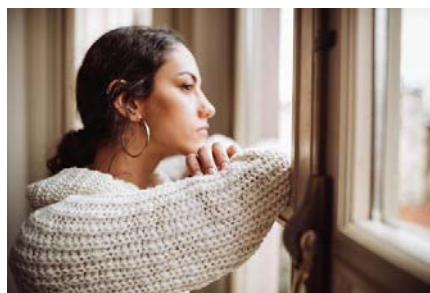


Social Skill Deficits in ASD

- Poor social awareness
 - eye contact
 - difficulty understanding social cues
- Poor social motivation
 - less involvement in social activities
 - more online “friends” than in-person friends
 - lack of peer entry attempts, fewer social initiations

Social Skill Deficits in ASD

- Poor social cognition
 - difficulty understanding perspectives of others
 - poor theory of mind
 - lack of cognitive empathy



Poll Question #3

List 3 consequences for teens with ASD due to these social skill deficits:

Consequence? Poor Quality Friendships

- > Companionship
- > Help from friends
- > Security within friendships
- < Social isolation
- < Peer conflict
- < Loneliness
- < Peer rejection



Consequences of Peer Rejection

Peer rejection is one of the strongest predictors of:

- mental health issues
- substance abuse
- suicidal ideation
- suicide attempts



Good News!

Having 1 or 2 close friends:

- predicts later adjustment in life
- can buffer the impact of stressful life events
- correlates + with self esteem/independence
- friendships prevent victimization



How Is PEERS Different?

- Common for younger children with ASD
- Don't always use evidence-based curricula
- Not tailored to unique needs of ASD
- Do not include homework
- Don't involve parents/teachers in treatment
- Do not generalize to other settings
- Lack durability gains over time

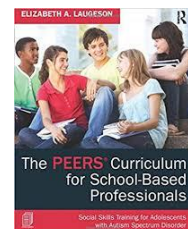


The How



PEERS Topics

- Wk. 1: Introduction and Trading Information
- Wk. 2: Two-way conversations
- Wk. 3: Electronic Communication
- Wk. 4: Choosing Appropriate Friends
- Wk. 5: Appropriate Use of Humor
- Wk. 6: Starting and Joining Conversations
- Wk. 7: Exiting Conversations
- Wk. 8: Good Sportsmanship



Topics

- Wk. 9: Get-Togethers
- Wk. 10: Handling Arguments
- Wk. 11: Changing Reputations
- Wk. 12: Handling Teasing and Embarrassing Feedback
- Wk. 13: Handling Physical Bullying
- Wk. 14: Handling Cyber Bullying
- Wk. 15: Minimizing Rumors and Gossip
- Wk. 16: Final Review, Post-Test Assessment, and Graduation



Peek Inside the Book

Table 1.1. Overview of Manual

Week	Didactic Lesson	Homework Review	Behavioral Rehearsal Activity	Materials Needed	Homework Assignments
1	Trading Information and Starting Conversations	None	<i>Jeopardy</i>	Board, markers, <i>Jeopardy</i> answer sheets, scissors, pens	1. In-group call or video chat 2. Practice starting a conversation and trading information with social coach
2	Trading Information and Maintaining Conversations	1. In-group call or video chat 2. Practice starting a conversation and trading information with social coach	<i>Jeopardy</i>	Board, markers, <i>Jeopardy</i> answer sheets, scissors, pens	1. In-group call or video chat 2. Practice starting and maintaining a conversation and trading information with social coach
3	Finding a Source of Friends	1. In-group call or video chat 2. Practice starting and maintaining a conversation and trading information with social coach	<i>Jeopardy</i>	Board, markers, <i>Jeopardy</i> answer sheets, scissors, pens	1. Find a source of friends 2. In-group call or video chat 3. Practice starting and maintaining a conversation and trading information with social coach 4. Personal item
4	Electronic Communication	1. Find a source of friends 2. In-group call or video chat 3. Practice starting and maintaining a conversation and trading information with social coach 4. Personal item	Trading information about personal items	Board, markers, young adult personal items	1. Find a source of friends 2. Start a conversation and trade information with a peer 3. In-group call or video chat 4. Practice starting and ending a phone call and trading information with social coach 5. Personal item
5	Appropriate Use of Humor	1. Find a source of friends 2. Start a conversation and trade information with a peer 3. In-group call or video chat 4. Practice starting and ending a phone call and trading information with social coach 5. Personal item	Trading information about personal items	Board, markers, young adult personal items	1. Find a source of friends 2. Start a conversation and trade information with a peer 3. Pay attention to humor feedback 4. In-group call or video chat 5. Personal item
6	Entering Group Conversations	1. Find a source of friends 2. Start a conversation and trade information with a peer 3. Pay attention to humor feedback 4. In-group call or video chat 5. Personal item	Entering group conversations	Board, markers, young adult personal items	1. Find a source of friends 2. Enter a group conversation with social coaches 3. Enter a group conversation with peers 4. Pay attention to humor feedback 5. In-group call or video chat 6. Personal item

Teaching Methods

- Didactic lessons
- Socratic method
- Role plays
- Perspective taking ?s
- Use of buzzwords
- Behavioral rehearsal exercises
- Coaching with performance feedback
- Homework assignments



Program Organization

- Go in lesson order
- Don't skip anything
- Daily lessons 50-60 min./day
- Weekly homework assignments
- 16 weeks



Program Organization

- Day 1: Homework review
- Day 2: Didactic lesson (new instruction)
- Day 3: Review and behavioral rehearsal
- Days 4 & 5: Practice and Reinforcement activities

*Homework practice: Parent/teen handout



Day 1: Homework Review



Homework Review

Go over the following Homework Assignments and **troubleshoot** any potential problems. Start with completed homework first. If you have time, you can inquire as to why others were unable to complete the assignment and try to **troubleshoot** how they might get it done for the coming week. When reviewing homework, be sure to relabel descriptions using the **buzzwords** (identified by **bold and italicized** print). Spend the majority of the *Homework Review* on the **in-group call or video chat**, as this is the most important assignment.]

In-group call or video chat.

- Say, **"One of your assignments this week was to have a phone call or video chat with someone in the group in order to practice trading information. Raise your hand if you did the in-group call or video chat."**
- Ask the following questions:
 - **"Who did you talk to and who called whom?"**
 - **"Did you trade information and did you find a common interest?"**
 - **"What could you do with that information if you were going to hang out?"**
- Have the other person who participated in the call or video chat give their account immediately after, but not at the same time.

Young adults and social coaches should have practiced **starting a conversation, trading information, and finding common interests.**

- Say, **"Another assignment this week was to practice starting a conversation, trading information, and finding common interests with a social coach. Raise your hand if you traded information with your social coach this week?"**
- Ask the following questions:
 - **"Did you practice starting a conversation and which steps did you follow?"**
 - **Steps for Starting Conversation**
 1. **Casually Look Over**
 2. **Use a Prop**
 3. **Find a Common Interest**
 4. **Mention the Common Interest**
 5. **Trade Information**
 6. **Assess Interest**
 - **Are they talking to me?**
 - **Are they looking at me?**
 - **Are they facing me (or are they giving me the cold shoulder)?**
 7. **Introduce Yourself**
 - **"Did you trade information and did you find common interests?"**
 - **"What could you do with that information if you were going to hang out with your social coach?"**

Homework Review

Go over the following homework assignments and troubleshoot any problems. Remember to use buzzwords.

Say, **"One of your homework assignments this week was to have a phone call or video chat with someone in the group in order to practice trading information. Raise your hand if you did the call or video chat."**

Ask the following questions:

"Who did you talk to and who called whom?"

"Did you trade information? What was the common interest?"

"What could you do with that information if you were going to hang out?"

Day 2: Didactic Lesson



322 Week 12: Handling Teasing and Embarrassing Feedback

Day Two: Didactic Lesson—Handling Teasing and Embarrassing Feedback

don't get into personal stories

Didactic Lesson: Handling Teasing and Embarrassing Feedback

- Explain, "Today we're going to be talking about teasing and what to do when someone teases us. We're not going to be talking about the specific ways we've been teased or how we feel about being teased. We all know it feels bad to be teased. Instead, we're going to focus on what we can do in these situations to make it less likely that we'll be teased again."

If teens try to talk about specific ways they have been teased, be sure to immediately redirect them by saying, "We're not going to talk about the specific ways we've been teased. Instead, we're going to talk about what we can do in these situations to make it less likely we'll be teased again."

- Explain, "One important way to make it less likely that we'll be teased relates to how we react when someone is teasing us. In order for us to know how to react, it's helpful to think about why people tease."
- Ask, "Why do people tease?"
 - Answer: They're trying to get a reaction out of you, they want you to get upset, embarrassed, or tease back, they want you to put on a "show" for other teens because it's fun for them, they may even say "Watch this!" and get other teens in on the teasing
- Ask the questions, "When you get upset..."
 - "...are you doing what the teaser wants?"
 - Answer: Yes
 - "...are you putting on a show?"
 - Answer: Yes
 - "...are you making the teasing fun for the teaser?"
 - Answer: Yes
 - "...are you MORE likely or LESS likely to get teased again?"
 - Answer: Definitely more likely

Handling Teasing

- Say, "A lot of adults will give teens advice about what to do in response to teasing. What do most adults tell teens to do?"
 - Answer: Ignore them, walk away, tell an adult

Day 2: Didactic Lesson

Explain: "One important way to make it less likely that we'll be teased relates to how we react when someone is teasing us. In order for us to know how to react, it's helpful to think about why people tease."

Ask: "Why do people tease?"

Ask the questions: "When you get upset..."

"...are you doing what the teaser wants?"

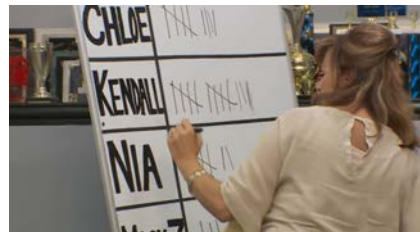
"...are you putting on a show?"

"...are you making teasing fun for the teaser?"

"...are you MORE or LESS likely to get teased again?"

Points System

- Completing homework
- Class participation
- Following rules
- Names on whiteboard
- Add points accordingly
- Keep track
- Party at end of class



Day 2: Didactic Lesson

Present the rules for handling teasing and embarrassing feedback by writing these buzzwords on the board.

- Don't ignore the teasing.
- Don't walk away.
- Don't tell an adult right away.
- Don't tease them back.
- Don't banter.
- Act like it didn't bother you.
- Act like what they said was lame or stupid.
- Have an attitude.
- Give a comeback.

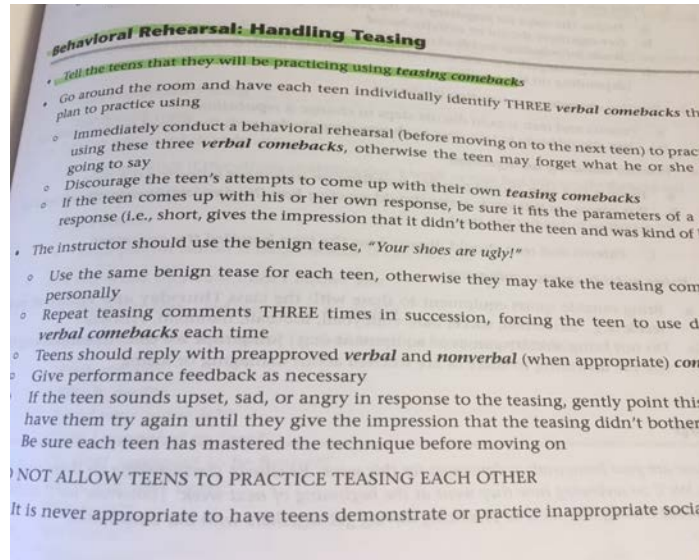
Comebacks

"Whatever!"
"Yeah, and?"
"And your point is?"
"Is that supposed to be funny?"
"And why do I care?"
"Big deal."
"So what."
"Who cares?"
"Tell me when you get to the funny part."

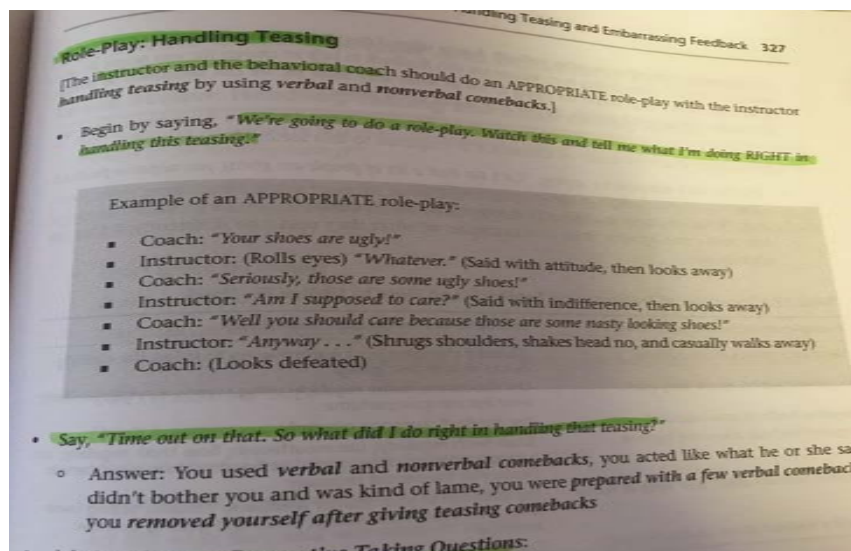
Day 3: Lesson Review and Behavioral Rehearsal



Day 3: Lesson Review and Behavioral Rehearsal



Day 3: Behavioral Rehearsal



Day 3: Lesson Review and Behavioral Rehearsal

Begin by saying: "We're going to do a role play. Watch this and tell me what I'm doing RIGHT in handling this teasing."

Example of an appropriate role-play:

Coach: "Your shoes are ugly!"

Instructor: "(rolls eyes) "Yeah, and?" (said with attitude, then looks away)

Coach: "Seriously, those are some ugly shoes!"

Instructor: "Am I supposed to care?" (said with indifference, looks away)

Coach: (Looks defeated)

Poll Question #4

What is Elena doing wrong?

- What was that like for the other person?
- What did she think of Elena?
- Would she want to talk to Elena again?

Role Play Videos

Starting an Individual Conversation Bad Example



Poll Question #4

What is Elena doing wrong?

- What was that like for the other person?
 - uncomfortable, confusing
- What did she think of Elena?
 - annoying, weird
- Would she want to talk to Elena again?
 - probably not

Poll Question #5

What is Elena doing right?

- What was that like for the other person?
- What did she think of Elena?
- Would she want to talk to Elena again?

Role Play Videos

Starting an Individual Conversation Good Example



Poll Question #5

What is Elena doing right?

- What was that like for the other person?
 - on topic
 - traded information; listened
 - asked ?'s
- What did she think of Elena?
 - cool girl
- Would she want to talk to Elena again?
 - yes

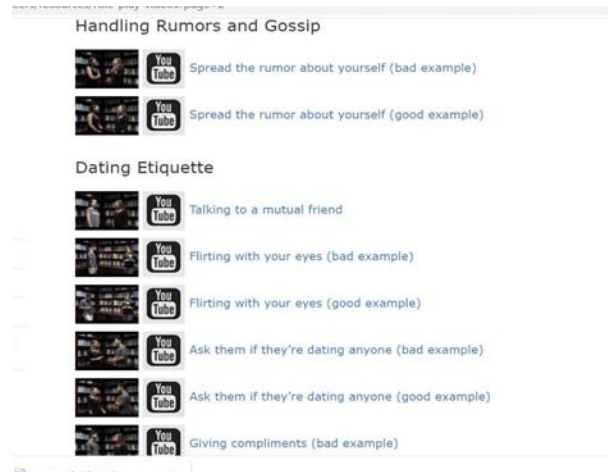
Role Play Videos

Handling Teasing



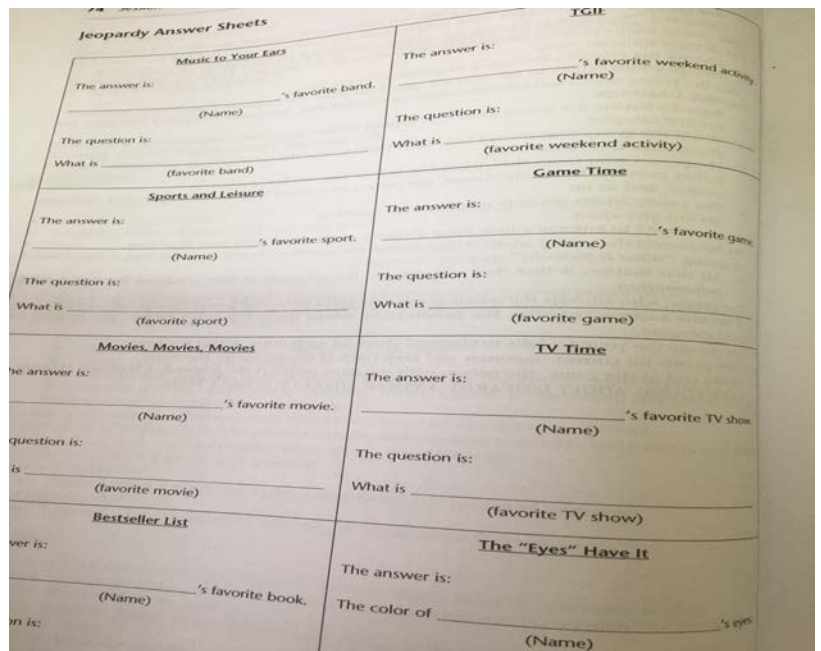
Role Play Videos

<https://www.semel.ucla.edu/peers/resources/role-play-videos>



Days 4 and 5 Practice Activities

- Jeopardy
- Sharing info using personal items
- Board, card, video games, gym or outdoor games



Behavior Management Techniques

- Verbal praise “You guys are doing a great job listening.”
- Reinforcement using points
- Using names to redirect attention “So, Jake, the rules for trading information are....”
- Using peer pressure-general statements, not towards individuals
 - “We need to raise our hands. What could be the problem with not raising our hands?”
 - “We need to be respectful. What could be the problem with laughing at people?”
 - “We don’t police people. What could be the problem with policing?”

Behavior Management Techniques

- State your expectations “We need to be serious.” (‘we’, not ‘I’ or ‘you’)
- Give warnings “Addy, this is a warning. If you continue to make jokes, I’m going to have to send you out of class. We need you to be serious.”
 - Later in private, explain and problem solve.

Including Parents As Social Coaches

- Send home PEERS parent handouts (electronic version) weekly
- Share role play videos



Class Composition

- 6-10 ideal
- Middle and high school ages
- Boys and girls
 - If only 1 girl must agree
- Can include students without ASD
- Can include peer mentors
- Homogenous groups o.k.
- Students with cognitive impairments

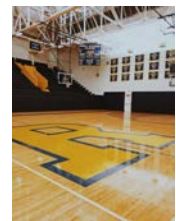


Required Teaching Personnel

- Primary instructor (teachers, speech paths, counselors, school nurses, paraprofessionals)
- 1-2 behavioral coaches
 - role play demo for students
 - coach students during role play
 - videos available if no coaches
 - peer mentors

Physical Facilities Required

- Whiteboard
- Chairs/desks, space for role plays
- Outside play or gym space for weeks 12-15
- Program may be adapted for virtual instruction



Forms Provided

- Pre/post skills assessment (Test of Adolescent Social Skills Knowledge TYASSK)
- Quality of Socialization Questionnaire
- Phone roster
- In-Group Call or Video Chat Assignment Log

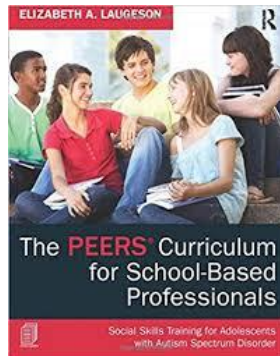


Forms Provided

- Good Sportsmanship Point Log
- Daily Point Log
- Homework compliance sheets
- Certification of Completion



Conclusion-Next Steps



Contact Information

Mary Schlieder, Ed.D.
mary.schlieder@gmail.com



