

## Establishing a Tier 2 System of Support Social Skills Training



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### Definition- *Social Skills*

Social skills are specific **behaviors** a student demonstrates in order to perform appropriately on a **given task**. Social skills are one facet of social **competence**.

(Gresham, 1986).



## *Small Group* Social Skill Intervention

Goals at Tier 2 =

- Rapid access to continuously available, research based intervention
- Intervention to teach/build pro-social replacement behaviors
- Include maintenance and generalization strategies to promote use
- Attend to possible function of the problem behavior
- Least intrusive but matched to student need; not highly individualized



## Why Teach Social Skills?

Students with well developed social skills tend to

- Pay better attention
- Work more cooperatively with others
- Ask for assistance when needed
- Behave more responsibly and
- Respect other points of view

(Elliott & Gresham, 2008)



## Why Teach Social Skills?

- Students with better developed social skills tend to be more successful in classroom environments (Elliott and Gresham, 2008)
- Students who possess higher levels of social skills tend to have higher levels of academic achievement than students who possess lower levels of social skills (Malecki & Elliott, 2002; Wentzel, 1993)



## Why Teach Social Skills?

Reasons for social skill deficits

- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of practice
- Lack of cues
- Lack of reinforcement
- Presence of competing problem behaviors

(Elliott and Gresham, 2008)



## Classification of Social Skill Deficits

- **Acquisition Deficits**
  - Absence of knowledge for executing skill or failure to discriminate which social behaviors are appropriate in specific situations (can't do)
- **Fluency Deficits**
  - Lack of exposure to sufficient or skilled models of social behavior, insufficient rehearsal/practice or low rates or inconsistent delivery of reinforcement of skilled performances
- **Performance Deficits**
  - Skill is present in repertoire, but student fails to perform at acceptable levels (won't do)

(Gresham, Horner, & Sugai, 2001)



### *Small Group*

## Best Practice Considerations

### 1) Assessment =

*Which students need social skill instruction & what skills are they missing?*

### 2) Planning =

*Curriculum & procedures*

### 3) Lesson Development & Teaching =

*Tell, Show, Practice, Practice, Practice*

### 4) Maintenance & Generalization =

*Consistent use of skills over time & across variety of settings*

Sugai & Lewis, 1996

## *Small Group* Best Practice Considerations

### 1) Assessment

- Review of existing data  
(ODR, minors, review of records)
- Interviews (parent, teacher, student)
- Role plays or situation problem solving
- Direct observation
- Screening results
- Rating scales (parent, teacher, student)



## *Small Group* Best Practice Considerations

### 1) Assessment

- Skill based deficit
  - Direct observation
  - Ask significant others
  - Provide strong incentive to observe if performed under such conditions
- Fluency deficit
  - Student frequently performs skill, but fails to perform under specific circumstances
  - Oblivious to social cues or social demands of situation
- Performance based deficit
  - Motivational deficit
  - Observe if student performs skill following introduction of motivational strategy

(Gresham, 1986)



## *Small Group*

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## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

2) **Planning:** Curriculum

- Social skills curriculum must match the specific need.
- An ideal curriculum does not exist.
- Basic set of “Preferred Teaching Practices” exists.
- Initially, learning how to teach social skills takes time and energy.



## Best Practice Considerations

### 2. **Planning:** Curriculum

#### *Basic Taxonomy of Social Skills*

- Cooperation
  - Active Listening
  - Following Directions
- Self-Management
  - Staying Calm when receiving feedback
  - Compromising
- Assertion
  - Asking for Help
  - Respectful Disagreement



(Gresham, Horner, & Sugai, 2001)

## Small Group

### 2) **Planning:** Curriculum

	All Settings	Hall	Restroom	Cafeteria	Classroom
<b>Safe</b>	Keep hands & feet to self	Walk	Keep soap and water in the sink	Report spills Face forward in line	Use materials appropriately
<b>Respect</b>	Use polite language	Walk quietly	Give others privacy	Eat only your food	Actively listen
<b>Responsible</b>	Follow Directions	Return to class quickly Go only where you need to go	Complete business quickly Throw away trash	Clean up after yourself	Have needed supplies Complete all work



## Best Practice Considerations

### 2. **Planning:** Curriculum

*Considerations for using a packaged Curriculum:*

- What instructional components are included in the curriculum?
- Can the curriculum be used with small groups?
- Can personnel implement the curriculum without specialized training beyond that described in the curriculum?
- Is the cost implementation reasonable and manageable?
- Are strategies included that will promote maintenance and generalization of skills?

(Carter & Sugai, 1989, p. 38)

HO: Social Skills Curricula at A Glance



## Curriculum: Limitations of Packages

- Lack of support for teachers
- Limited involvement of teachers in development and implementation
- Not tailored to school environment



## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

1) Assessment =

*Which students need social skill instruction & what skills are they missing?*

2) Planning =

*Curriculum & **procedures***

3) Lesson Development & Teaching =

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Sugai & Lewis, 1996

## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

#### 2. **Planning** . . . *Procedures*

- Establishing the System for Group Social Skills
  - Who will coordinate
  - Set goal
  - Involve parents/students/staff
  - Decide on a name
  - Team in place to review student data bi-monthly
  - Use existing structures/interventions currently in the school



## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

#### 2) **Planning**: Procedures

- Who & how many in the group?
  - 4-8 (if possible select even number of students)
  - Similarity in age/developmental level
  - Even distribution of boys and girls
  - Common problems/concerns
  - Balance in severity of issues
- Who teaches?
  - Access to 2 adults for each group
  - Clear roles and responsibilities between adults



Sheridan, 1997

## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

#### 2) **Planning**: Procedures

- When & how long meet?
  - At least weekly, 60 minutes
  - may require as many as 10- 20 weeks
- Basic behavior management
  - Attention signal
  - Expectations & routines
  - Incentives (stay within SW system)



(Dowd & Tierney, 1992; Elliott & Gresham, 2008; Sugai & Lewis, 1996)

## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

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*Curriculum & procedures*
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*Tell, Show, Practice, Practice, Practice*
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*Consistent use of skills over time & across variety of settings*

Sugai & Lewis, 1996

## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

#### 3) **Lesson Development & Teaching**

Training Outline for Each Session (60 min)

- Review of Previous Skill
- Teach Weekly Skill
- Group Debriefing
- Social Time
- Establish a Weekly Goal



Sheridan, 1997

## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

#### **3) Lesson Development & Teaching**

##### Training Outline for Each Group Session

- Teach weekly skill (20 min)
  - a) Establish the need to learn the skill,
  - b) Model,
  - c) Role play with on-going feedback
  - d) Additional practice opportunity & homework

Sheridan, 1997



#### **3) Lesson Development & Teaching**

##### **Teach Weekly Skill**

- Establish the need to learn the skill:
- Present reasons for and benefits of using the skill.
- Allow students to identify specific situations in which the skill could be applied.
- Point out potential consequences of using or not using the skill.
- Use examples from television, movies, etc. in which characters use the skills.



### 3) Lesson Development & Teaching

#### Teach Weekly Skill

- Model
- Select examples relevant to their natural environment
- Use at least two positive demonstrations of each example
- Use modeling displays that demonstrate all the behavioral steps in the correct sequence
- Depict only positive outcomes
- Use modeling displays that depict only one skill at a time (extraneous content is eliminated)
- Only the teacher models incorrect responses



### Lesson Development & Teaching

#### Teach Weekly Skill

- Role Play with On-going Feedback
- Focus on the relevant features of the skills
- Have students “think aloud” steps that would ordinarily be thought silently
- Teacher can provide coaching during instruction
- Teacher may need to prompt appropriate responses
- Involve all members of the group by assigning tasks (main actor, co-actor, observers)
- Have students self evaluate after each activity



## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

#### 3) **Lesson Development & Teaching**

##### Training Outline for Each Group Session

- Group Debriefing (10 min)
  - Review performance of members,
  - Provide feedback,
  - Prompt peer feedback,
  - Vote on adherence to group rules,
  - Provide reinforcers



Sheridan, 1997

## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

#### 3) **Lesson Development & Teaching**

##### Training Outline for Each Group Session

- Social time (10 min)
  - Allow students to interact in semi-structured play,
  - Prompt students to use skills learned
  - Provide feedback
  - Prompt peer feedback



Sheridan, 1997

## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

#### 3) **Lesson Development & Teaching**

##### Training Outline for Each Group Session

- Establish Goal for the Week (10 min)
  - Set goal for use of new skill,
  - Encourage students to make own goal,
  - Help student decide on goal that is feasible
  - Determine how progress will be documented



Sheridan, 1997

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Sugai & Lewis, 1996

*Small Group*  
Best Practice Considerations

**4) Maintenance & Generalization**

*Strategies To Use During Training*

- Train in the problem setting
- Include peers the at-risk student(s) likely to encounter in the problem setting
- Use a number of trainers or other adults
- Continue training for a sufficient amount of time

Sugai & Lewis, 1996



*Small Group*  
Best Practice Considerations

**4) Maintenance & Generalization**

*Strategies to Use within the Problem Setting*

- Prompt students to display skill (Pre-Corrects)
- Reinforce displays of skills in generalized settings using language of school-wide PBS system
- Enlist a variety of others (peers & adults) to prompt and reinforce skills in generalized settings
- Group contingencies

Sugai & Lewis, 1996



## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

#### 4) Maintenance & Generalization

- Train to mastery
- Make training relevant and meaningful
- Teach behaviors that will maximize student success and minimize failure
- Use real life homework assignments
- Enlist the help of peers, parents, and school personnel with prompting and reinforcing
- Accompany student to generalization setting to prompt and reinforce
- Use precorrects and periodic retraining.



## *Small Group*

### Best Practice Considerations

#### 4. Maintenance & Generalization

- Furnish reinforcers to anyone who comes in contact with the student
- Provide visuals for display at student's desk or in the classroom
- As social skills teachers, frequently touch base with your students outside of social skills class
- Prompt with identical language (verbal cues)
- Be present first few occasions when student is practicing in generalized setting



## Discussion Activity: Verbal Fluency

- *Summarize what you know about “best practice” considerations for small group social skill instruction.*
  - Partner A: 45 seconds
  - Partner B: 30 seconds\*
  - Partner A: 15 seconds\*
  - Partner B: 15 seconds\*

\*=add additional information

HO: Small Group Social Skill Intervention -  
Group Session Training Outline



## Challenges

- Generalizing skills when the regular teacher is not the social skills teacher
- Helping teachers understand that all students are not appropriate for small social skills groups
- Finding people who want to teach social skills



## What the research has demonstrated

- Effect sizes much lower for students with EBD and SLD.
- More effective for children described as withdrawn
- Largest effect sizes on social interaction
- Least effective for children described as aggressive or unpopular.
- Lower effect sizes on aggression and peer acceptance
- Average treatment time of 30 hours of instruction (2.5-3.0 hrs x 10-12 weeks) produces lower effect sizes.



## Choosing and Grouping Students

- Focus on students with challenging behaviors but not necessarily frequent fliers
- Include quiet students who have no friends
- Group according to age as well as type of behavior if possible
- Limit group size to no more than eight with two teachers



## Communicating with Staff

- Present information at staff meetings
- Provide a hard copy of the skill along with tickets/reinforcers to involved staff members
- Invite frequent feedback from the staff on how the student is doing with the skill(s)
- Offer support to the involved staff members as needed
- Get real situations from involved staff members



## Resources

- Carter, J., & Sugai, G. (1989). Social skills curriculum analysis. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 22(1), 36-39.
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- Gresham, F. M. (1986). Conceptual and definitional issues in the assessment of children's social skills: Implications for classification and training. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 15(1), 3-15.
- Gresham, F. M., Horner, R. H., & Sugai, G. (2001). Interpreting outcomes of social skills training for students with high incidence disabilities. *Exceptional Children* 67 (3), 331-344.
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- Sugai, G., & Lewis, T. J. (1996). Preferred and promising practices for social skills instruction. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 29, 1-16.
- Wentzel, K.R. (1993). Motivation and achievement in early adolescence: The role of multiple classroom goals. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 13 (1), 4-20.

