



## SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

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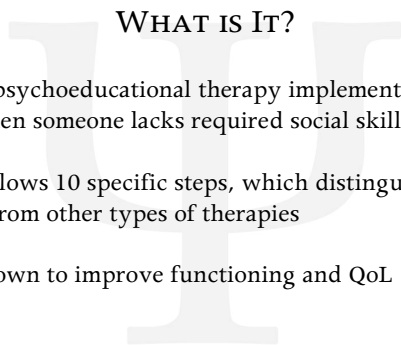
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## WHAT IS IT?

A psychoeducational therapy implemented when someone lacks required social skills

Follows 10 specific steps, which distinguishes it from other types of therapies

Shown to improve functioning and QoL

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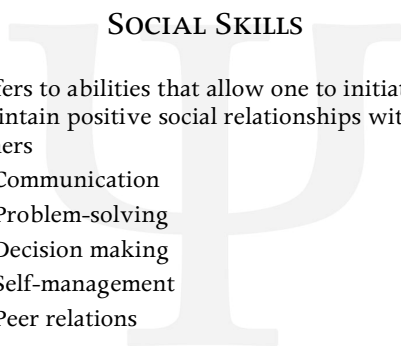
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## SOCIAL SKILLS

Refers to abilities that allow one to initiate and maintain positive social relationships with others

- Communication
- Problem-solving
- Decision making
- Self-management
- Peer relations

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### SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Developed by Bandura (1969) by building on the work of Skinner (1938, 1953)

Refers to a set of principles concerning the development and learning of social behaviors

Says social behaviors are acquired through a combination of observing others' actions and consequences of one's own actions

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### SST FORMATS

Most take place in a group setting, where modeling and feedback can come from peers as well as therapist

Individual is usually used as a supplement to group *or* to prepare someone for a group

Use of significant others or families can often supplement a group and help in generalization

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### SLT PRINCIPLES

Each of these principles is heavily used and guides social skills training

#### Modeling

A person learns a new social skill by watching someone else use that skill

Therapist modeling or peer modeling in SS group

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### SLT PRINCIPLES

#### Reinforcement

Consequences following a behavior that increase the likelihood of that behavior occurring again  
Positive and negative types can occur in SS training

#### Shaping

Reinforcing successive steps toward a desired goal  
Most SS skills are too complex to teach in a single trial, but they can be broken down and shaped

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### SLT PRINCIPLES

#### Overlearning

Repeatedly practicing a skill to the point where it becomes automatic  
Not just becoming familiar with a skill, but practicing until it becomes second nature

#### Generalization

Transferring skills acquired in one setting to another, new setting  
Can take place by using homework assignments or by *in vivo* prompting

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### STEPS OF SST

#### 1. Establish a rationale

Gives the learning of the skill meaning

Can come from the therapist or clients  
Usually a mixture of the two

Should be as brief as possible, and repeated back by the clients

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### STEPS OF SST

2. Discuss the steps of the skill

Breaks down the skill into smaller steps, allowing for shaping of complex skills

Should be written out and displayed

Refer to display when discussing each step

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### STEPS OF SST

3. Modeling the skill in a role play and reviewing that role play

Therapist(s) model the skill to assist in observational learning

Translates abstract steps into concrete actions

Should be brief and to the point, with high relevance to the clients

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### STEPS OF SST

Start by asking clients to observe the role play and which steps the therapist uses

Afterwards, immediately review the steps and have them tell you if it was performed

Then, ask clients if therapist was effective and how s/he could improve

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### STEPS OF SST

4. Engaging client in a role play

After modeling, immediately engage group members in same role play, then move to a new role play

Begin with those most likely to be able to do the skill, so others have more chances for observational learning

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### STEPS OF SST

5. Providing positive feedback

Even for really bad role plays, give praise for something that person did well

Can be given from therapist or elicited from the other clients

No negative or corrective feedback is allowed

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### STEPS OF SST

6. Provide corrective feedback

Should be brief, *non-critical*, and as behaviorally specific as possible

Provided by therapist and other clients, but focus on only one or two critical pieces of the skills

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### STEPS OF SST

- 7. Engaging the client in another role play of same situation

Client makes changes based on corrective feedback at the instruction of the therapist

Allows client to practice skill again and improve performance

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### STEPS OF SST

- 8. Provide additional feedback

Should include both positive and corrective feedback

Praise improvements for Step 7's targeted components first, then praise other parts

Can repeat steps 7-8 as needed to insure adequate learning of skill

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### STEPS OF SST

- 9. Engaging other clients in role plays and providing feedback

Repeat steps 4-8 with each other client in the group

Try to randomize the order in which clients take turns

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## STEPS OF SST

### 10. Assign homework

Use those skills we learned in the "Homework" section to assign activities to perform

Make it concrete, doable, and easily tracked

Review it at the start of next session

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## PACING

No hard and fast rules of how long to spend with each skill to be taught

Before moving to a new skill, consider

Have all clients demonstrated some improvement?

Are the clients becoming bored with this skill?

What is the ability level of the clients?

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## FOLLOWING THE STEPS

Critical to follow the steps in order, as they follow SLT principles to maximize effectiveness of therapy

Difficult at first, but practice and feedback from supervisor(s) makes perfect

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### ADDITIONAL TEACHING STRATEGIES

#### Supplementary modeling

Provided for individual clients during their role plays, when verbal prompts alone don't cut it

#### Discrimination modeling

Highlights a specific component of a skill by modeling it twice: once poorly and once well

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### ADDITIONAL TEACHING STRATEGIES

#### Coaching

Use of verbal prompts as needed during role plays to perform specific components of a skill

#### Prompting

Use of non-verbal signals to improve a component of a skill

Discussed *prior* to role play so that client understands what signals mean

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### IMPORTANCE OF GENERALIZATION

Without generalizing skills from in-session to the real world, therapy is not effective

Includes maintenance, situational generalization, and response generalization

These are all crucial to improvement of skills, so transfer training should be paid careful attention

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## TRANSFER TRAINING

Several strategies facilitate the transfer of skills from therapy to the real world

- Homework
- Involving other people
- Maintaining effects of reinforcement
- Self-management strategies

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## HOMEWORK

- Essential way to establish generalization
- Plan it out concretely
- Use imaginal rehearsal to help prepare for it
- In vivo* practice can give patients extra support provided by therapists or family

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## INVOLVING OTHER PEOPLE

- Family members, friends, coworkers, or other frequently interacted with persons can greatly help in generalization
- Educating these people about symptoms and treatment can help them to shape desired behaviors in clients

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### MAINTAINING REINFORCEMENT

While SLT helps clients gain skills in therapy, operant conditioning keeps it going in the real world

This can be done with token economies, if used on a variable reinforcement schedule

Best ones are natural occurrences, which therapists should highlight if possible

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### SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Have clients make and manage their own reinforcement programs if cognitively able

Self-monitoring is similar to A-B-C logs

Self-evaluation makes them critique their own performance

Self-reinforcement can be covert or overt

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### TYPICAL SST TOPICS

Listening to others

Making requests

Expressing positive feelings

Expressing unpleasant feelings

Conversation skills

Assertiveness training

Conflict management

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