


**Social Thinking Vocabulary
 and Concepts Drive Social
 Attention**


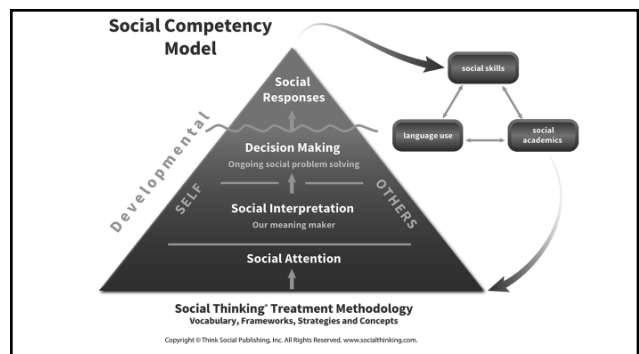


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**We often teach social skills by telling people
 what we expect, without helping them to
 make sense of our expectations.**

- Negotiate
- Cooperate
- Show respect
- Pay attention
- Be polite
- Be friendly, etc.

**Social Thinking's
 Methodology seeks to
 unpack the social
 experience while also
 seeking to explain how
 many parts move
 together.**

SELF and OTHERS

Social Attention

Social Interpretation Making meaning

Social Problem solving to decide

Social Response(s)

**What have we learned about
 social attention?**

By 14 months, if a child
attends to geometric shapes
69% or more of their time,
100% are autistic.

Pierce, K., Conant, D., Hazin, R., Desmond, J., & Stone
A preference for geometric patterns early in life as a risk
factor for autism. Archives of General Psychiatry. 68
(1):101-9, 2011

People with strong social attention can't help
but attend to it all.



People with strong attention to geometric
shapes, are likely to focus on non-social
aspects of a scene.



Assessment of 28 year old diagnosed with
social anxiety but not ASD (yet).
"Where was this taken and what is that? "



Traditionally, when teaching social skills, we
teach students to use "eye-contact". Many
students seem to learn that the entire
social experience is about eye-contact.

How does a more literally minded person
make sense of the social world when their
primary cue is to use eye-contact?

I noticed that if I taught my students a
different way to conceptualize the social
world, I could better help them respond
socially.

I also have learned to assume my students
may not attend to or understand core social
concepts most of us, including the social skills
teacher, take for granted.

With clients (kids and adults) who have solid language skills, using language to distinguish between different aspects of the social experience helps them attend to social information differently.

It also seems to help with motivation during treatment.

A teenager said to me, upon complaining about a different therapist, "you make me feel smart, she makes me feel stupid"

For example, through Social Thinking's Methodology we teach Think With Your Eyes as the dynamic action we each do to rally social attention and related social interpretation.

First, we assess one's capacity for social attention (basic joint attention) in a highly structured environment.....

We also ask them to guess what a person might be thinking about, based on what they are looking at.

"I wouldn't presume to guess what you were thinking about!"

We then encourage students to practice noticing what others are doing, planning, possibly thinking as part of our many frameworks, strategies and activities.

If not born to strong social attention, language can help students to focus on (attend to) social information once it is explained to them through language.

There are over 50 different Social Thinking Vocabulary concepts.

For example, students in a classroom and adults in team meetings are expected to notice:

- *People have thoughts and feelings*
- *Read the group plan*
- *Body in the group*
- *Brain in the group*
- *In each situation there are expected and unexpected behaviors, etc.*

This type of language, once learned by both interventionists and students/clients can be used in teachable moments.

To teach: *Read the group plan*

Think with your eyes to see the group of students in the room and try to figure out what they are doing together.

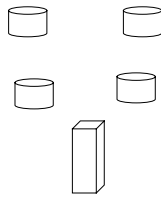
- Circle time
- Maths
- Language arts
- Standing in line
- Listening to the teacher's announcement

Is my body in or out of the group?

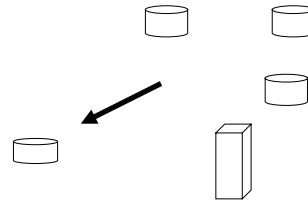
Is my brain in or out of the group?

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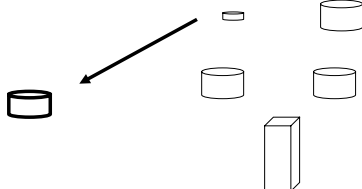
Activity to teach physical presence:
Is your body in the group?



Is your body out of the group?



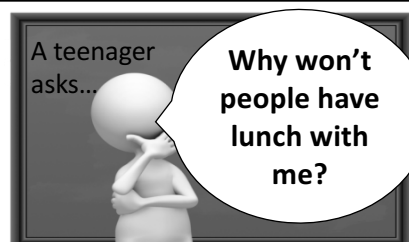
Is your brain *in* the group or *out* of the group?



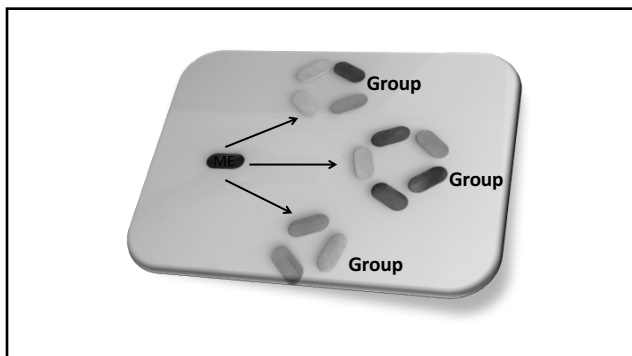
Many of our students are detail focused
and may have to practice figuring out
what is going on in the room.

Treatment starts with observing situations,
people, group plans prior to expecting
students to modify their behavioral
responses in those contexts.

As you, the interventionist,
notices the finer points of
our social expectations in
context, we can also help
our students problem solve...



Teaching point: Groups don't go
to people; people go to groups.



We have materials that help to explain this information to different age groups.

For example, when using our book *You Are a Social Detective*, we teach core aspects of social competencies:

- Social attention (be a detective)
- Making smart guesses to interpret by figuring out basic social expectations
- Problem solving the social-emotional-chain-reaction



You Are A Social Detective

SELF and OTHERS

Social Attention
Observation

Social Interpretation
Smart guesses & hidden rules

Social Problem solving
Consider response based on other's thoughts & feelings

Ultimately, this book leads students to learn a core treatment framework:

The Social Emotional Chain Reaction

Social Emotional Chain Reaction



How someone behaves affects how others feel & think
Which likely affects how these others react & respond
Which can affect how that someone feels about others and them self

Social Thinking's
Treatment Frameworks
help teach individuals of all ages
to learn more about complex
social concepts.

Four Steps of Perspective Taking

1. I think about you and you think about me
2. I think about your motives and intentions.
3. I think about what you are thinking about me.
4. I monitor my behavior and possibly adapt it to try to keep you thinking and feeling about me the way I want you to think and feel about me!

4 Steps of Face-to-Face Communication

1. **Thinking** about where we are and who I may want to talk with.
2. Establishing a **physical presence** to show intention to communicate.
3. Use **eyes to think about others**.
4. **Language** to relate to others.

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...the *Friendship Pyramid* and
more....

Which ultimately help them develop
social competencies for moving towards
a lifetime of well-being.

We have many free articles
on our website.

