

Social Stories: How to Create a Social Story

This resource is designed to help justice system professionals create social stories for individuals with autism who may become involved in the juvenile or criminal justice system. Read below to learn more about creating social stories.



What is the Purpose of a Social Story?



Helps a person to respond to certain social situations



Describes social situations and prepares a person for situations that may be challenging like appearing in court, being detained or being arrested.



Promotes self-calming, self-promoting, and self-management skills



Shows information through methods such as pictures and words

Two Types of Sentences Can Be Used in Creating Social Stories:

Descriptive Sentences

Reassure the Person or Express an Opinion About a Situation

"That is OK."

Show What Others Can Do to Help the Person

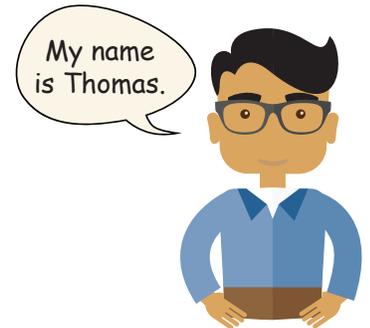
"If I am nervous about going to court, my probation officer can..."

Include Feelings and Thoughts of the Person and Others in the Story

"The detention staff will like it if I follow the rules.",
"The police officer wants to help keep me safe."

State the Facts

"The police officer's name is Officer..."



Directive Sentences

Identify possible responses to a situation

For example:

- If I don't understand, I can ask the officer to repeat what was said.
- First I can raise my hand, and if I am able, say, "excuse me".
- Then if I am able, I can say, "Can you please show me what I need to do?"
- Lastly, I can do what the officer asks.



Tip! The pictures and language of the Social Stories created must match the level of understanding of the individual.

If you are trying to use the First and Then technique, it will be helpful for the individual to learn that sequence, especially if you are using pictures to create the social stories. It is important to follow up with what is going to happen last.

What do I do once I have created a Social Story?

-  Share the accessible Social Story with the individual. If possible, involve the individual in creating it!
-  New Social Stories should be read or shared frequently with the learner.
-  The Social Stories should always be shared with a person before the experience or situation.
-  Social Stories can be faded and may no longer be needed after a person is familiar with expectations for the new situation. They can also be reintroduced and used as reminders.
-  Social Stories may need to be rewritten or paired with more visual support, e.g. a visual schedule, depending on the needs or response of the person.



Tip! Try and incorporate pictures for all routines.

For example:

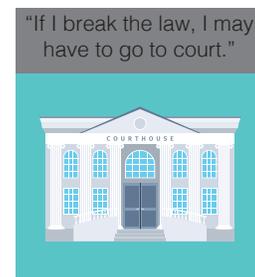
For an upcoming court appearance, help the individual with autism prepare for the court date by providing actual photos of the court process.



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"If I break the law,
I may have to go
to court."

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Try and incorporate pictures for all routines. For example, if an individual with autism is incarcerated or detained, having a visual schedule of the daily routine, the meal menu, the activity choices and making them aware of any changes in the routine will help that individual know what is going to occur and they can be better prepared. For an upcoming court appearance, help the individual with autism prepare for the court date by providing actual photos of the court process. For example, a photo of the outside of the court house, the metal detector, the waiting room and where they will sit in the courtroom. Visuals may also help a probationer understand and follow the conditions of probation so including pictures alongside each rule of probation may help them better understand the expectations of the court.



More ideas and resources can be found at:

www.pautism.org/socialstories

www.phillyautismproject.org/socialstories