



Five Social  
Stories™ About  
Think & Return

(Previously  
known as  
Time Out)



# Carol's Club CAROL GRAY SOCIAL STORIES

Custom Social Stories™ Resources Created by Carol Gray for Members - May 7, 2019

As mentioned in the project published April 9, 2019, there are echoes between this project and a new Ted Talk by Amy Laurent and Colleagues:

["Compliance is not the goal: Letting go of control and rethinking support for autistic individuals"](#)

I encourage you to watch it!

## Guide to the Stories

This is the conclusion of a three-part series of related projects. The first, “Abandon All Assumptions Except One” (April 9-2019) reviewed some of the biggest mistakes in my career. Those mistakes and others led to genuine social humility, a recognition of my risk in “getting it wrong” as I responded to the students in my care, and a gradual change in how I perceive and respond to people with - and without - autism. Shortly after that was published, a Carol’s Club member, asked me to look at the Time Out controversy in light of Social Humility, and “Think & Return: The Time Out Controversy Meets Social Humility,” was subsequently published on April 23, 2019. This project contains five Social Stories to help ensure that children understand the rationale for - and the steps involved in - “Think and Return.’

This discussion of the definition of Time Out appeared the last project:

The definition of Time Out varies a bit from author to author as well, from formal to informal to assumed-and-not-stated. Three elements are frequently mentioned: 1) a positive and reinforcing environment, where 2) a child demonstrates a harmful or unsafe behavior, and is 3) removed for a period of time to regain control and consider the error and alternate responses. According to an article on WebMD, Time Out is “removing a child from the environment where misbehavior has occurred to a ‘neutral,’ unstimulating space” (Shaw, Web M.D. archives), or to put it in more practical terms a non-punitive “break’ from fun” (Ortiz, 2019). Regardless of how we define it, Time-Out “...certainly sounds like a brilliant fix: A child spends a few minutes sitting alone, and emerges calm and cooperative” (Gragg, 2019). Of course, it doesn’t always work that way.

Think and Return is framed by the three elements of Time Out mentioned above, with the addition of three additional considerations. The first is a recognition that - considering what we know about autism - understanding the (often unstated) rationale for removal from a reinforcing environment, independently thinking back on and reviewing a problematic behavior, and developing a new and effective way to respond, may be far more difficult for a child with autism than his typical peers. Second, Think and Return values parent and parental judgment of a child’s needs over rigid adherence to a defined procedure. Recognizing that many children with autism thrive on routine and predictability, does not necessarily translate into adherence to any strategy that does not look like its intended goal in practice. In other words, Think & Return doesn’t have to look the same each time and may vary in response to a child’s needs while keeping the goal in mind. (For example, the “time-in” approach, where a parent or professional remains with a child, perhaps silent at first, to play a supportive role, may be indicated if a child seems overwhelmed by time away from the group.) Finally, Think and Return includes a pre-requisite effort to share information to ensure that a child with autism meaningfully understands Think and Return and its rationale, concepts, steps, and processes before it is needed.

That's where Social Stories come in. Think and Return is introduced to a child or group of children with a collection of Stories reviewed in a comfortable setting with a positive tone. The theory is that by sharing information about Think and Return in advance, when everything is going well and in good control, helps to demonstrate the desired tone for its use in real time. The Stories in this collection cover the following concepts:

1. Everyone stops and thinks now and then and it is okay to do that (Story: ["Sometimes People Stop and Think"](#)),
2. Adults make mistakes all the time and know a lot about fixing them (Story: ["Adults Know About Mistakes and How to Fix Them"](#)),
3. Adults are on hand to help children when they make mistakes (Story: ["Adults Help Children Fix Mistakes"](#)),
4. Why some mistakes lead to Think and Return, and others do not (Story: ["Think and Return Mistakes"](#)), and
5. Information about Think and Return (Story: ["Think and Return"](#)).

Similar to every Social Story in the ClubHouse, this collection of Stories is designed to be tailored to your audience. The illustrations for the Stories are not final, nor is any of the content, and additional Stories - or a totally new set - may be developed. The goal is to make them as meaningful and relevant as possible to those in your care, and the context in which the Stories will be used.

You'll notice there are no illustrations in the final Story about Think and Return. I retrieve almost all of my Stories from Depositphotos.com. I could not find any photos that I felt were a good fit for this Story. It does not mean that none exist, or that illustrations should not be used.

If you'd like a set of the Stories in WORD format, simply send an email indicating that you are a Carol's Club member to: [TakeThisToCarol@gmail.com](mailto:TakeThisToCarol@gmail.com). We've done this before. Often I can respond immediately. If that is not the case, you will likely have the Stories within 24 hours.

I wish you all the best! Thank you for being a member of Carol's Club.

## References

Gragg, P. (2019). Common time-out mistakes and how to solve them. Parents Magazine. Retrieved online <https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/discipline/time-out/common-time-out-mistakes-and-how-to-solve-them/>

Ortiz, C. (2018, November 30). Timeouts get a bad rap, but they work - - when used correctly. The Washington Post. Retrieved online [https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2018/11/30/when-used-correctly-timeouts-are-an-effective-tool-parents-young-kids/?utm\\_term=.eb660d281045](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2018/11/30/when-used-correctly-timeouts-are-an-effective-tool-parents-young-kids/?utm_term=.eb660d281045)

Shaw, G. (WebMD Archives). Disciplining toddlers: Time in or time out? WebMD. Retrieved from <https://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/disciplining-toddlers#1>