

Carol's Club CAROL GRAY SOCIAL STORIES

Custom Social Stories™ Resources Created by Carol Gray for Members - August 6, 2019



A Lockdown Drill Social Story™

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I recently received a request for a Social Story to prepare elementary students for a lockdown drill. In schools around the world, lockdown procedures are employed to protect staff and students when there is an armed or dangerous person in the area or within the school building. Lockdown drills have common elements, with regulations and procedures varying from one locale to the next. I developed the Story in this project for a school in Illinois. I've included a list of suggestions for you to keep in mind as you research, write, and implement a Story for those in your care.

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Suggestions for Authors

It is not likely that you will be able to use, “Our Lockdown Drill” right “out of the box!” There will be revisions and improvements that will make your Story applicable to your setting and audience. Below is a list of ideas and suggestions to help you get started.

- A sample Story can make it difficult to see where edits can be made. Keep in mind that within every sample Social Story is a shorter, simpler one. The opposite is also true - a sample Story can serve as an outline for one with more detail. Keep your audience front and center in your mind, and make revisions accordingly.
- I know that the volume and sound of a school alarm is severely uncomfortable for many children. For some children, a Story that acknowledges that discomfort and explains the purpose of the alarm may help. I contacted Future Horizons, publisher of “The New Social Story Book 15th Anniversary Edition” (Gray, 2015) and asked for permission to reprint the text from Story #160, “Why Schools Have Fire Alarms.” In the process, I ended up revising it to apply to any alarm, whether fire, storm, or lockdown. You’ll find it here. My sincere appreciation to Future Horizons for their support.
- In the process of gathering details about lockdown drills in your area, contact the administrative staff at your school for information regarding their guidelines and procedures for lockdown drills, and involve them in the process of developing the Story. This will bring everyone “on board” and create a Story that is in sync with consistent vocabulary and accurate, relevant, and reliable Story content.
- In terms of vocabulary selection for Stories about drills, use the word “practice” and avoid “pretend.”
- If you are working within a school setting, inform parents that a Social Story is being developed to describe lockdown procedures to students.
- Consider developing a set of Stories to build the concept of safety drills, with the first Story describing safety drills and their purpose, and three additional Stories devoted to a detailed description of each type (fire, storm, and lockdown).
- Create a notebook for the classroom reading area that includes all of the safety drill Stories mentioned above.
- Create comprehension questions or activities to add meaning to the Story.
- There is a tendency to regard Social Stories as something that we develop for people with autism. Many Social Stories, and this one, in particular, is likely best shared with an entire group. Some students may benefit from additional review or comprehension activities.
- When the first lockdown drill for the year occurs, if possible, assign a photographer or two to take photos. These can be inserted into the original document in place of the initial “generic” illustrations, to add realism and meaning for future use of the Story.
- After the lockdown drill, write a second follow-up Story that describes what the students did well, and if needed, areas that “we will try to improve” next time.

My sincere and heartfelt hope is that the skills learned in any safety drill will never need to be employed. If you have any questions, or I may be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me at TakeThisToCarol@gmail.com. I wish each of you a safe and successful school year.

References

Gray, C. (2015). Why schools have fire alarms. In *The New Social Story Book 15th Anniversary Edition* (p. 170). Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.