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SOCIAL STORIES

Social Stories 10.4 Criteria

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Please Note: Three things to keep in mind as you review the Social Stories 10.4 Criteria:

- For efficiency, the capitalized terms *Social Story* and *Story* refer to Social Stories and their advanced counterpart, *Social Articles*.
- Whenever the word *Story* is capitalized, it refers to a document that meets all of the 10.4 Criteria.
- To clarify Social Story terms, *Authors* (often parents, family members, friends, or professionals) write Stories for an *Audience* (a child, adolescent, or adult in their care).
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The Social Stories 10.4 Criteria: Overview and Introduction

The Criteria that define what is and what is not a Social Story are periodically reviewed and updated to keep pace with research and experience. Social Stories 10.4 is new on several fronts:

- A reorganization of the 10 Social Story Criteria into four areas - Foundation / Research / Develop / Implement, with updated Criteria titles that translate easily into other languages;
- Increased emphasis on the importance and role of Social Story philosophy, *Social Humility*, throughout the Social Story process;
- Social Story “Sustainability” - the importance of remaining open to the discovery of alternate solutions instead of a Social Story,
- A revised 5th Criterion that requires detailed, comprehensive, and unfaltering respect for the perception, experience, feelings, and rights of the Story Audience;
- A celebrating 7th Criterion that requires that at least half of all Stories for any Audience must applaud achievements or celebrate established talents, abilities, and positive qualities; and
- An 8th Criterion that requires more description and less direction, with a Story Rating of 4 and a limit of one Sentence that Coaches the Audience per Story.



FOUNDATION

1st Criterion: One Social Story Philosophy, Definition, and Goal

One Philosophy, one Definition, and one Goal guide the research, development, and implementation of every Social Story.

- Philosophy: Social Humility (the *Social Story philosophy) acknowledges that each of us has a unique and inherently fallible mind that is prone to make mistakes in response to others, especially children, adolescents, and adults with a diagnosis of autism or other cognitive delay or difference. Social Humility casts assumptions and social arrogance aside to objectively research, develop, and share each Story or social solution. Five elements form the foundation of Social Humility in support of consistently safe, meaningful, and effective communication. They are:
 1. social impairments are always shared;
 2. each person's perception is valid and deserving of respect;
 3. curiosity is confusion with a good attitude:
 4. never argue perception; and
 5. abandon all assumptions.
- Definition: Recognizing that every human experience and perspective is unique and valid, and that social impairments and their solutions are shared, a Social Story accurately describes a personally relevant topic (often a context, skill, achievement, or concept) according to ten defining criteria. These criteria guide Story research, development, and implementation to ensure an overall patient and supportive quality and a format, voice, content, and learning experience that is descriptive, meaningful, respectful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the Story audience (a child, adolescent, or adult).
- Goal: In accordance with Social Humility and the all of the elements of the Social Story Definition, the Goal of a Social Story is to ensure that the intended message remains intact from Author to Audience.

A Social Story never:

- replaces sound judgment or supervision for any Audience in any situation, and
- never describes, explains, or supports a faulty rationale, judgment, concept, decision, opinion, or program.

RESEARCH

2nd Criterion. Discovery: Story or Alternate Solution?

Authors gather information to first

- 1) improve their understanding of the Audience in relation to context a situation, concept, skill, etc. and then
- 2) identify the topic and focus of each Story, or discover an alternate solution or intervention.

DEVELOP

3rd Criterion. Structure: Organize & Describe

A Social Story has one title, a maximum of two types of sentences, and three parts.

- A Social Story title meaningfully represents the topic.
- A Social Story is comprised of Descriptive Sentences and may also have one or more Coaching Sentence(s). All sentences adhere to all applicable 10.4 criteria. Descriptive Sentences accurately describe relevant aspects of context, both external and internal factors, while adhering to all applicable Social Story Criteria. They are free of assumption or bias, judgment, devaluation, or unidentified opinion. Coaching Sentences gently guide via descriptions of effective Team or Audience responses, or structured Audience Self-Coaching, adhering to all other applicable Criteria.
- A Social Story has three parts: An introduction that describes the topic, a body that adds detail, and a conclusion that reinforces and summarizes the information.

4th Criterion. Format: Tailor & Personalize

Authors tailor each Social Story format to the abilities, attention span, learning style and, whenever possible, talents and interests of the Audience

5th Criterion. Tone: Safety & Respect

Every Social Story has a socially humble, safe, patient, positive, unassuming, supportive, and accurate “voice” and vocabulary that is defined by five factors. Every Social Story:

- maintains a socially humble tone & format;
- contains only first- and/or third-person perspective sentences;
- has a consistently patient and positive tone;
- describes the connection between related past, present, and future events; and
- is accurate and meaningful for the audience

6th Criterion. Questions: Consider & Answer

A Social Story™ answers relevant 'WH' questions that describe context, including place (WHERE), time-related information (WHEN), relevant people (WHO), important cues (WHAT), basic activities, behaviors, or statements (HOW), and the reasons or rationale behind them (WHY).

7th Criterion. Celebrate: Praise & Affirm

A minimum of 50% of all Social Stories developed for an Audience praise what the Audience is doing well. Social Stories make celebration a habit!

8th Criterion. Formula: Describe & Maybe Coach

In every Social Story, Descriptive Sentences appear at least *four times as often* as Coaching Sentences, *with a maximum of one Sentence that Coaches the Audience*. The title is always a Descriptive Sentence and is counted in the formula.

See formula next page.

DESCRIBE: Total number of Descriptive Sentences, title is a Descriptive Sentence.

= STORY RATING \geq 4

COACH: Total number of Coaching Sentences, with no more than one Sentence that Coaches the Audience

9th Criterion. Revise: Check & Correct

Every Social Story is checked and corrected until it meets the ten Social Story Criteria.

IMPLEMENT

10th Criterion. Share: Introduce & Monitor

The 10th Criterion structures how each Story is shared with the Audience, ensuring that it is introduced and monitored with the same care that researched and developed it. Ten considerations guide Author efforts:

1. plan for comprehension;
2. plan Story support;
3. plan Story review;
4. plan a positive introduction;
5. monitor;
6. organize the stories;
7. mix & match to build concepts;
8. Story re-runs and sequels to tie past, present, and future;
9. recycle instruction into applause; and
10. stay current on Social Story research and updates.

