

## Social Skills Groups/Social Skills Training (SST)

Adapted from Griffin, W., Sam, A., & AFIRM Team. (2015). *Social skills training*. Chapel Hill, NC: National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder, FPG Child Development Center, University of North Carolina. Retrieved from <http://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/Social-skills-training>

### SST...

- Is an evidence-based practice for adolescents with ASD that refers to adult-directed instruction in which social skills are targeted for improvement.
- Typically occurs in a group format but can be used with individual sessions.
- Often involves multiple strategies including direct instruction of skills, cognitive behavioral interventions, modeling or video-modeling, facilitated practice with feedback, use of visual cues, peer models, reinforcement, and/or social narratives.

### Why Use SST?

- Students with ASD struggle with social impairments and that make social interactions and other social skills challenging.
- SST has been found effective in improving social competence, communication, behavior, and cognitive skills.
- ***Social skills groups are typically led by a psychologist or special education teacher trained in the intervention (for example, the SENSE Theatre or PEERS programs) in schools, clinics, or community organizations. General education teachers can support the learning, generalization, and maintenance of social skills targeted in the intervention by reinforcing these skills in the classroom.***

### Tips for Teachers Supporting Students Participating in a Social Skills Group

1. Provide opportunities for the student to practice social interactions in the classroom.
2. Provide positive reinforcement when a student is using appropriate social behaviors.
3. Create opportunities for the student to practice social skills with peers through activities such as clubs or other extracurricular activities.

Learn more about SST here:

- National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders. (2015). Evidence-Based Practices. <http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/evidence-based-practices>
- Corbett, B. A., Key, A. P., Qualls, L., Fecteau, S., Newsom, C., Coke, C., & Yoder, P. (2016). Improvement in social competence using a randomized trial of a theatre intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 46, 658-672.
- Laugeson, E. A., Gantman, A., Kapp, S. K., Orenski, K., & Ellingsen. (2015). A randomized controlled trial to improve social skills in young adults with autism spectrum disorder: The UCLA PEERS® program. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 45, 3978-3989.