

## Social Stories

For some people, it is difficult to understand rules for social interactions, to manage change or to understand activities with many steps. Social Stories are a tool that can support people with these difficulties.

### What is a Social Story?



J goes to the hairdressers in the car

haircut



J has his haircut with scissors and clippers



J does not like getting his haircut, this is ok. J can watch TV or play on his IPAD when at the hairdressers

milkshake



After J has his haircut he can get a milkshake



J has his haircut, well done J

A Social Story is a clear, accurate and individualised story that describes a situation, concept or social skill using a specifically defined style and format. Carol Gray developed the Social Story philosophy in 1991 and has published many resources to support the creation and use of them.

A common misconception about Social Stories is that they are written with the goal of changing a person's behaviour. In fact, their aim is more around sharing information to support the person's understanding of a situation, and this improved understanding may in turn, result in behavioural changes.

### Key Features:

Some of the key features of Social Stories are that they:

- Share information in a way that is patient, reassuring and easy to understand.
- Have an introduction which identifies the topic, a section which provides more detail, and an ending which summarises the information given.
- Suggest (but do not insist on) appropriate behaviour or responses (often using phrases such as 'I will try to...', or 'I might....' when proposing ideas).
- Contain more sentences which describe a situation, than those which direct.
- They aim to answer some of the 'wh-' questions about the situation or concept e.g. 'who' is involved, 'where' and 'when' it occurs, 'what' happens and 'how', and 'why' this might be the case.
- Can be written using the first person perspective ('I'), or the third person ('he/she/they').
- Use positive language, describing desirable responses, rather than undesirable ones. For example rather than saying 'I will try not hit or scratch', using phrases such as 'I can try to use gentle hands' or 'I can try to keep my hands to myself'.
- Can contain visuals to support the text. These may take the form of photos or drawings. Perhaps the person can even illustrate their own Social Story.
- Also are used to celebrate positive events and successes.
- Can be used with individuals of any age – the content of the story and visuals can be changed to ensure it is age appropriate.

## Who is a Social Story for?

Although Social Stories were originally developed for use with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, they have been effectively used to support people with many different language and learning difficulties. At TalkLink we recommend using Social Stories for many clients with a range of different needs. The length and complexity of the story can be changed depending on the person's language level and attention span. The visuals used in the story can be adapted to ensure they are age appropriate and understandable for the person the story is for. Being able to read the story using various high and/or low tech methods, allows the person to engage with the story in the way they prefer.

## How to write a Social Story

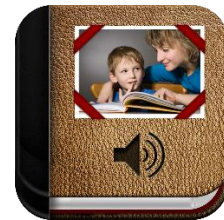
Social Stories can be created on Microsoft PowerPoint or Word and then printed out to be read in a booklet format, hand drawn when you are 'on the go' and need to explain a change or new social situation, or they can be created and read on tablet devices or computers, using various programmes or apps (examples below). The flexibility of presenting a Social Story means that you can choose the medium that will best engage the person you are writing it for. This will allow them to have frequent and multiple opportunities to read through the story in order to enhance their understanding.



Story Creator – free



Book Creator - \$6.50



Pictello - \$25

Many fantastic resources have already been created explaining how to write a Social Story. Here are some useful videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1x7i7HfVow>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjllYYbVlrl&list=PLdtbRx1dk8rKBYINoi3wDeRO\\_wpuFiuKp&index=2&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjllYYbVlrl&list=PLdtbRx1dk8rKBYINoi3wDeRO_wpuFiuKp&index=2&t=0s)

## Why use Social Stories?

Social Stories can:

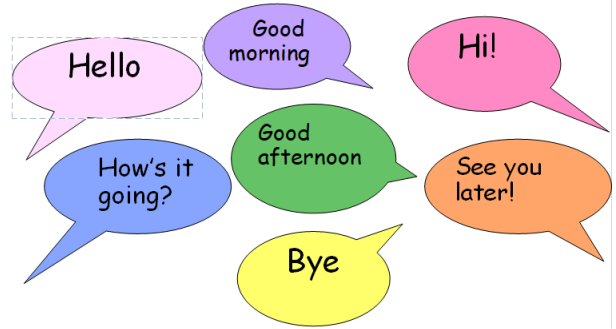
- Help a person to understand more about a situation.
- Encourage a person to complete less-preferred tasks.
- Break down multi-step tasks into smaller, more manageable parts.
- Reinforce or teach abstract concepts, such as time (e.g., next, later), actions, and prepositions.
- Increase a person's independence by improving their ability to complete parts of a routine with less help or prompting.
- Decrease the occurrence of behaviours of concern when the person has more understanding of a situation.

## How to introduce a Social Story

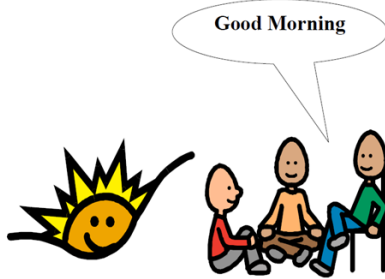
- Read the story in paper form or on the computer or iPad in a quiet/non-distracting location.
- Read it each day, including before the activity that the Social Story relates to.
- Read it both at home and school (if it is for a school aged individual).
- Ensure that the Social Story is accessible and available to the person at all times.

Note: It is important not to take the Social Story away once you think the person understands the situation, keep it available to be read again in future.

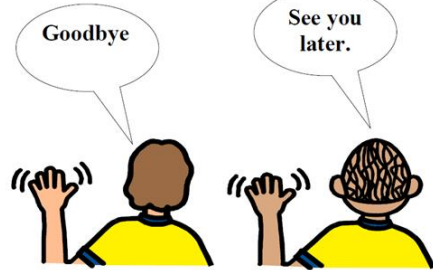
## Saying "hello" and "goodbye"



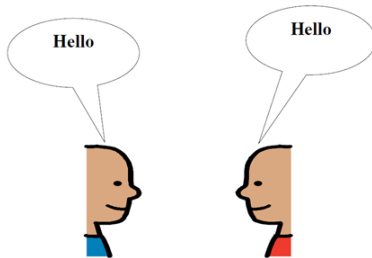
There are lots of ways to say 'hello' and 'goodbye' to people.



In the morning, people might say "hi" or "good morning!".

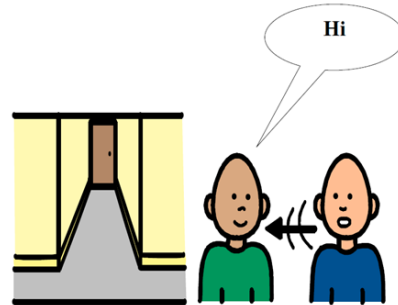


At the end of the day, they might say "goodbye" or "see you tomorrow!"



When I see someone I know, I could smile and say "hi" or "hello". They might say "hi" or "hello" back to me.

I can ask someone "How are you today?" They might stop to talk with me.



Sometimes, if people pass someone they know, they might smile, wave, or just give a little nod of their head.



When people say "hi" or "good-bye" to someone, it makes that person feel happy. People like to feel happy.

 When I go to the movies 

When I go to the movies, I wait in line to get my ticket.  

 Sometimes we buy snacks. Sometimes we buy drinks.

It can be a good idea to use the bathroom before we sit down. 

  In the theater, we pick a seat and sit down.

The theater might be dark. The theater might be loud.  

  I can take breaks if I need to. I can ask to take a walk.


When I am in the theater, I am sitting in my seat with a quiet voice.  

 Going to the movies is fun! 

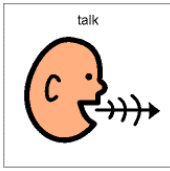


## Taking care of my talker


Issued Communication Device




This is my talker.  
It is mine to keep.

 talk

I can use it to talk to my friends and family.  
They like it when I use my talker.



I can touch the symbols on the screen.  
They will speak.  
People will listen to me when I use my device.



This talker is like my core board.  
It will help me to talk to people at school.

 like

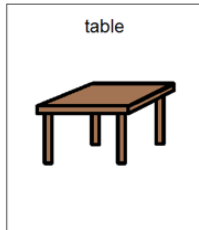
I really like my talker, so I need to take good care of it.



I will try to take care of my NovaChat.  
I will try not to hit it or throw it.  
I will try to be gentle with my NovaChat.



If I loose it or break it, I won't have it anymore.  
It will be sad.



I will keep my talker on the table in the classroom.



I will put my talker in my bag when I take it home.



It is really cool to use a talker to talk to people!