SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

Enhancing Social Competence with Children and Adolescents

User’s Guide

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NFER-NELSON
To Claire and Paul
Social Skills Training

User’s Guide
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Programme Components

User's Guide
This book, whose contents are described on pp. 2–5.

Photocopiable Resource Book
Contains:
- Material for assessing the social competence of children and adolescents
- Material for assessing the competence of social skills trainers
- Home Task Sheets to be used with the social enhancement programme suggested in Chapter 4 of the User's Guide.

Research and Technical Supplement
A detailed academic overview of the whole area of social skills training, including a description of the development of the Social Skills Training assessment materials, an evaluation of current assessments available in this field and a critique of the research literature.

Photo Cards
Eight laminated cards, each containing six photographs, to be used in the assessment of perception of emotion from facial expression and posture cues:
- Photo Card 1: Facial expressions (male child)
- Photo Card 2: Facial expressions (female child)
- Photo Card 3: Facial expressions (adult male)
- Photo Card 4: Facial expressions (adult female)
- Photo Card 5: Posture cues (male child)
- Photo Card 6: Posture cues (female child)
- Photo Card 7: Posture cues (adult male)
- Photo Card 8: Posture cues (adult female).

About Social Skills Training
Most children and adolescents will, at some time, experience transient difficulties in their relationships with others. For some youngsters, however, interpersonal difficulties can be a persistent and debilitating problem that results in a great deal of distress and interferes with long-term adjustment. For example, children who have difficulty with peer relationships are more likely to experience a variety of problems in later life, such as delinquency and psychiatric disturbance (Cowen et al. 1973; Roff, 1970;
Roff et al. 1972). We also know that around 11 per cent of children have no friends (Hymel and Asher, 1977) and that difficulty in getting on with teachers and parents is a big problem for many children. There is a good case to be made, therefore, for helping these young people to improve their relationships with others. A great deal of progress has been made over the past two decades in the development of intervention methods for children who have difficulties with social interaction. In many respects this progress reflects an increase in our knowledge about the factors that influence how children get on with other people. This, in turn, has enabled therapists and counsellors to develop methods of assessing social competence in children and adolescents, and to identify those areas that contribute to social difficulties. Intervention programmes can then be designed to tackle these problem areas.

A teacher or therapist has a choice in designing a social enhancement programme. Some may prefer to use a package approach as outlined in Chapter 4. This approach includes several components which are designed to tackle the most common reasons why youngsters have social difficulties. A package programme of this type contains elements that are relevant to most children and should therefore be effective in producing positive changes. The package approach has the advantage that the group leader can follow session guidelines and does not need to start from scratch in designing an intervention programme.

Although the package approach is useful it also has disadvantages. All children are different and the exact reasons why they are having relationship problems tend to differ. Thus, a package approach may miss out some important component or spend time dealing with areas that are not problematic for some children. Ideally, all social enhancement programmes would be designed specially for each group of children. Each child should be assessed carefully, which allows the therapist to identify the areas in which each child needs to change. This approach is very time consuming and requires many skills in cognitive and behavioural assessment. It also takes a great deal of planning in designing the session content to meet the specific needs of the children in the group.

The User's Guide tries to meet both needs. It presents a packaged session guide in Chapter 4 that can be used within schools or child clinics for those trainers who prefer to work this way. It also provides information in Chapter 3 for those who wish to develop individually tailored programmes.

Contents
When I set out to write Social Skills Training, I felt it was important to include what some might regard as academic information, along with more practical guidelines. It seemed to me to be important to ensure that professionals using the practical social enhancement programme also had a good understanding of the nature of social competence, the causes of relationship difficulties, the assessment of interpersonal problems and the effectiveness of intervention methods. I have tried to avoid the User's Guide being regarded as a recipe book for the treatment of interpersonal problems. Ideally, all trainers should have a good background knowledge of the area, so that they can adapt the programme to the specific needs of the young people they
are working with. In presenting some of the more academic information in the Research and Technical Supplement, I have pointed out some of the difficulties and inadequacies of current approaches to enhancing social competence. We are a long way from having all the answers, and efforts are still needed in order to develop better assessment measures and more effective intervention programmes.

The practical material included in the User’s Guide and the Photocopiable Resource Book is the result of the ongoing refinement of a social skills training programme that began with my research with young offenders in 1977. Since then, the approach has undergone many changes, and readers will note considerable differences between the practical methods outlined here and those in my 1980 text, Social Skills Training with Children and Adolescents: A Counsellor’s Manual, also published by NFER-NELSON. Many of these changes reflect the research work of the clinical psychology interns whom I supervised at the University of Sydney. As time went on, it became clear that a purely behavioural approach to the training of overt behavioural responses was not sufficient to produce long-lasting improvements in social competence. Attention also needed to be paid to the many other factors that determine our success in relationships. These factors include social-cognitive skills, interfering thoughts, non-social characteristics of the youngster and the behaviour of others. The new Social Skills Training draws together this information to produce a comprehensive model of interpersonal functioning and an integrated approach to assessment and intervention.

The User’s Guide

Social Skills Training has been written for those professionals, such as teachers, counsellors, psychologists, social workers and psychiatrists, who work with youngsters with interpersonal difficulties. The content is relevant to both children and adolescents: although the term ‘children’ is frequently used in the text, this should be taken as referring to young people in general, including adolescents, unless otherwise stated. Most of the information discussed is relevant to youngsters of all ages. It is acknowledged, however, that some adjustments need to be made in working with different age groups. Thus, in Chapters 3 and 4, specialist sections are included to illustrate the way in which assessment and intervention can be adapted to meet the needs of younger children or older adolescents.

Chapter 1 examines the nature of social competence and how this reflects the consequences of our interaction with others. The most common causes for poor social competence are described, with social skill deficits being just one possible explanation. A distinction is made between overt behavioural social skills (that is, what we actually say and do) and social-cognitive skills, such as social problem-solving ability and social perception. Case studies are used to illustrate the way in which difficulties in these areas may result in problems of social competence. Many other factors that influence the degree to which young people are successful in their interaction with others are discussed. A model of social responding is presented which highlights the many areas that need to be considered during assessment and
intervention in order to enhance children’s social competence.

Chapter 2 provides a model for the assessment of social competence and the factors that influence interpersonal functioning, including behavioural social skills and social-cognitive skills. Practical examples are included to illustrate the content of interviews, questionnaires and direct behavioural observation. Closely related to this chapter is a review provided in the Research and Technical Supplement of the many instruments available for the assessment of social competence and its determinants. There are many limitations with most of the measures available to date and I have included in Social Skills Training some of the ones I have developed myself in order to overcome the inadequacies of existing devices. In addition to some of the material carried over from the 1980 book, I have included a new battery of assessment measures in the Photocopiable Resource Book for completion by teachers, parents and children in order to separately assess the areas of social competence, social skills and social anxiety. This battery provides a badly needed integrated approach to the assessment of interpersonal difficulties in young people. The data available to date confirm that these questionnaires have good psychometric properties and do indeed measure what they were designed to. Normative data from a large sample of school children is provided in the Research and Technical Supplement.

Chapter 2 also includes useful examples of methods for the assessment of social perception skills among children and adolescents with instructions about how to use the Photo Cards.

Chapter 3 describes the practical aspects of methods to enhance social competence. Useful guidelines and illustrations are provided with respect to the major approaches to improving interpersonal responding. Detailed descriptions regarding the teaching and training of behavioural social skills, social perception skills, relaxation, positive, helpful thinking and social problem-solving are included. Examples of exercises and games, many of which can be photocopied, are provided to assist the trainer in the preparation of materials. The chapter concludes with a section concerning general points relating to running social enhancement groups. Issues are discussed relating to increasing motivation, managing behaviour problems in the group, session planning, general trainer skills, transferring improvements into everyday life, involvement of parents and teachers, and class-based activities.

Chapter 4 forms the main body of the text and provides a detailed session-by-session guide to the running of a programme to enhance youngsters’ social competence. An outline of the sessions is included below. The content of the programme takes into account the results of the research evidence available to date, and reflects the gradual adaptation of the original 1980 programme referred to above. I have used the new approach successfully with numerous children in my clinical practice, as have many of the clinical psychology trainees I have supervised at the University of Sydney and the University of Queensland. The approach also includes adaptations made to the original approach by students I have supervised for their research studies, in particular Katherine Tiffen, Barbara Liddle, Janet Milne and Tim Hannan. I thank them for their contribution to the development of the programme and for increasing my awareness of the practical difficulties involved in trying to implement
such an approach with groups of children.

The content of Chapter 4 is designed to help trainers to set up their intervention programmes, by providing them with a structure to follow and materials to use (many of which can be photocopied) within each session. Home Tasks are also provided in the Photocopiable Resource Book for you to photocopy. Similarly, guidelines are given for preparing handouts for parents and teachers to assist in the programme after each session. In some instances it will be the child's class teacher who is conducting the social skills training sessions, in which case the teacher can use these handouts to promote social skill development in the classroom in between sessions.

The programme includes 16 sessions, followed by two booster sessions. Each session focuses on a specific skill area, and sessions progress from the teaching of basic micro-skills to strategies for dealing with more complex social tasks. The teaching methods used are based on social skills training and social problem-solving approaches. Self-instructional methods are used in later sessions to guide students through a social problem-solving model called The Social Detective, adapted from the early work on interpersonal problem-solving described by Camp and Bash (1981). Relaxation training is used to tackle problems of emotional arousal. With adolescents, a simple cognitive restructuring method is introduced in order to increase the use of helpful, positive and optimistic thoughts when negative, unhelpful thoughts interfere with appropriate responding.

Once trainees have mastered the skills involved in the use of basic micro-skills, social perception and problem-solving, they move on to apply these skills to a wide range of commonly encountered, problematic social situations. Parents and teachers are involved with each session (except for older adolescents) through handouts; peers become involved towards the end of the programme through a series of social events to which they are invited by the trainees. These measures are designed to enhance the transfer of new skills to the classroom and home settings.

Finally, Chapter 5 examines the application of approaches to enhance social competence with children with specific difficulties, such as hearing, visual or intellectual impairments. Research studies that have investigated the effectiveness of such approaches are reviewed. The results show clearly that children with disabilities have problems being accepted by their peers, even when they try out their new social skills. Specific measures are therefore needed to change the behaviour of the non-disabled peer group, in order to encourage them to respond more positively to children with disabilities. If this action is not taken, trainees rapidly stop using their new skills. Methods of adapting interventions to meet the particular needs of children with disabilities are also discussed.

**Research and Technical Supplement**

The Research and Technical Supplement contains a review of available assessment instruments in this area, outlines the major approaches to the enhancement of social competence and assesses the research literature relating to the effectiveness of these methods. I have tried to point out the limitations of many of the research studies in
Introduction

terms of inadequacies in their experimental design. These design flaws make it difficult to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the methods being researched. I have also tried to be balanced in my review, by discussing studies that failed to find positive results, as well as those that showed that the intervention was successful. This allows us to be prepared for some of the problems we are likely to experience in carrying out programmes to enhance social competence.

It is clearly difficult to produce long-lasting improvements that carry over into everyday life. Teaching behavioural social skills for a short period of time, in an artificial training setting, is not likely to be particularly helpful in the long term. We need to find ways of promoting the use of new skills in real-life situations and making it more likely that these behaviours will result in positive outcomes. The involvement of parents, teachers and peers seems to be one way to help this process, along with training in real-life situations. It is important that we learn from the research data and try to incorporate these approaches into our training programmes if we are to be effective in our interventions.

In summary, Social Skills Training is designed to provide up-to-date information and practical guidance to assist in setting up programmes to enhance the social competence of children and adolescents. We still have a long way to go, and no doubt this text will not be the final word on the matter. Research continues, and our clinical practice should continue to develop in line with our increasing knowledge.

Susan H. Spence
CHAPTER 1
The Nature of Social Competence

What is Social Competence?

Social competence refers to the consequences or outcomes of a person’s interaction with other people. These consequences may be long- or short-term and may reflect the impact of social responding on other people or on the child him- or herself. In practice, a child’s level of social competence is what determines whether or not there is a social problem that needs dealing with. Let us look first of all at the short-term consequences of how a child behaves with other people.

Short-Term Aspects of Social Competence

Whenever we interact with someone, there are consequences in terms of how the other person feels, how the other person is likely to behave and how we feel. Various problems can result in each of these areas. In terms of the short-term subjective reactions of the other person, our behaviour may influence whether we are liked or disliked and whether our behaviour is judged to be appropriate or inappropriate. Our behaviour may also trigger a range of emotions in the other person, such as anger, sadness or happiness. In addition, our own feelings are influenced by our behaviour and we may experience positive or negative feelings about what happened. Furthermore, the short-term consequences of our social interactions may also be reflected in the outcome of the interaction, such as whether a conflict was resolved, whether an invitation was accepted or whether we were successful in starting a conversation with another person.

Problems of social competence in terms of short-term social consequences therefore need to be considered from each of these aspects. If other people experience negative feelings or judgements after interacting with a particular child, if the child feels negative emotions or if the outcome of the interaction is negative, then that child has a problem in the area of social competence. Generally, socially incompetent behaviour produces a negative effect on all three of these outcomes. For example, Timothy is using his colouring pens in class. Mia asks if she can borrow the black one. Timothy grabs his pens and puts them into his bag and says that she can’t use any of them. In consequence, Mia has feelings of dislike and anger towards Timothy. She turns away from him and ignores him. The other kids at the table tell him that he is selfish and they call him rude names. The teacher intervenes, telling Timothy that his behaviour is mean. Timothy himself feels disliked by his classmates and feels angry about getting into trouble with the teacher.

Long-Term Aspects of Social Competence

Over time, the short-term consequences of our behaviour accumulate to produce longer-term outcomes. These include our popularity with others, the number of
friends we have, how we feel about ourselves generally, feelings of loneliness and unhappiness, and the overall quality of our relationships with other people. In the case of Timothy above, it is likely that repeated behaviour of this type would result in Timothy becoming unpopular amongst his classmates; he may feel lonely and unhappy at school and his teacher may also come to view his behaviour as a problem in the classroom. These long-term, global aspects of social competence can be assessed and can indicate whether there is a problem which warrants intervention.

What Determines Social Competence?

There is now a great deal of evidence to show that it is not just what a person does that determines short- and long-term social competence, but that many other factors are also involved. The same response can produce many different consequences depending on the characteristics of the performer, other people in the interaction and the situation in which it occurs. For example, personal characteristics, such as the physical attractiveness, mode of dress, personal grooming and sporting prowess of children, influence how they are judged by others and the response of other people towards them (Rathjen, 1980). Cultural factors are also important, and behaviour that is appropriate during interactions in one culture may not be so successful with someone from another culture. In some instances, social difficulties may arise during interactions between individuals from different cultures as the result of differences in cultural norms for social responding. This point is particularly important in situations where a child, teacher or peer group is from a different cultural background. The youngster may be successful during interactions in his or her own culture and yet experience negative outcomes at school if the cultural norms are different.

The age and sex of the child and other people in the interaction may also influence whether a particular behaviour will lead to positive or negative consequences. Different behaviours are judged to be appropriate for children of different ages; what is acceptable at six years old is not necessarily appropriate at 12. Thus, there are many factors that need to be taken into account when we examine why a particular child has problems in the area of social competence. We need to assess a wide range of causal factors in addition to what the child actually says and does.

Furthermore, the problem may reflect unrealistic or excessive expectations on the part of others, rather than inappropriate behaviour of the child. For example, if parents or teachers have excessively high expectations about how a child should behave, then they are not likely to view the child's behaviour favourably. In such instances, intervention would be best geared towards education of the parents or teacher about the type of behaviour that is appropriate for a child of that developmental level, rather than trying to change the child's behaviour.
Problems: With Whom and What Type of Situation?

It is important to note that problems of social relationships do not always occur with all people, in all situations. Children have to deal with many different types of people, such as parents, siblings, teachers and classmates, and their relationship difficulties may be limited to certain people, in certain situations. For example, some children have very good relationships with adults, but have difficulties with children their own age. For others, the situation may be reversed and their problems may be limited to interaction with adults. In some instances, children may be fine with people they know well, but have great difficulty dealing with unfamiliar persons. Thus, an important part of the assessment process is to identify the type of people that the child has difficulty with.

Social problems may not just differ according to the type of person, but may also be limited to certain types of interaction. Although there is an infinite number of types of social interaction, it is possible to identify a limited number of categories. Different authors have come up with different ways of categorizing children's social interaction; for example into:

- Conversation skills
- Prosocial, friendly behaviour (for example, sharing, expressing positive feelings, helping, inviting)
- Conflict resolution skills
- Assertion skills (sticking up for one's own rights, for example, saying 'no', expressing negative feelings).

Although some children may have problems in all of these areas, others may only experience difficulty in a few aspects. For example, some children may have good conversation skills and prosocial, friendly behaviour and yet have marked problems with assertion skills. One very useful way of classifying children's interpersonal problems was described by Deluty (1981). This system classified social responding along a dimension as follows:

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submissiveness ←→ assertiveness ←→ aggressiveness
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Deluty suggested that most social problems can be seen as lying at either the submissive or aggressive ends of this dimension, with the most appropriate response being an assertive one, at the mid-way point. Although many children do tend to respond consistently in terms of submissiveness, assertiveness and aggressiveness, this may still vary according to the type of person, location or social situation, as described above. Nevertheless, Deluty's system can still form a useful basis for assessment.

The important point arising from this discussion is that children do not necessarily have problems in all their relationships with people and that their difficulties may be limited to certain types of situations with certain types of people. In designing an intervention programme, it is therefore important to identify who the child has
problems with and in what type of social interaction. Intervention can then be structured so as to cover the main problem areas.

**Overt Social Behaviour**

There are many reasons, in addition to what a child says or does, why he or she may be judged negatively by others or experience negative outcomes from social interaction. Nevertheless, it is clear that a child’s words and deeds do play an enormous part in determining the consequences of social interaction. This brings us on to the area of social skills. McFall (1982) proposed that social skills are the specific behaviours that enable a person to be judged as socially competent by others on a particular social task. Social skills include both the overt behaviour that a person needs to engage in to produce a positive outcome and also the many cognitive skills that determine how we respond. Social-cognitive skills are discussed in greater detail on p. 13; this section discusses the overt aspect of social responding and focuses on what we actually say and do.

McFall suggests that social responding can be broken down into different social tasks, such as starting a conversation, resolving an argument or asking to join in a game. Certain behaviours are more likely than others to lead to successful outcomes from social tasks. For the sake of simplicity these can be broken down into basic micro-skills and macro-skills. Basic micro-skills relate to the simple elements of social interaction, such as eye contact, posture or facial expression. Macro-skills, on the other hand, refer to a more complex level of responding, in which micro-skills are integrated into an overall strategy for dealing with a particular social task. Whenever a macro-skill is performed, it requires careful sequencing and integration of an enormous number of micro-skills.

In many cases there are a variety of different ways of dealing with an interpersonal problem. In other words, there may be several macro-skills that could be used to deal with a situation. For example, in order to deal effectively with teasing, there are several possible macro-skills or strategies that could be used. A successful outcome could result from ignoring the teasing or explaining that the teasing is hurtful or asking politely for it to stop. These strategies of responding can be viewed as macro-level social skills, and incorporate numerous micro-skills in order to be performed successfully. Whichever macro-skill strategy is selected for dealing with teasing, the child would need to use an appropriate tone of voice and facial expression (not excessively aggressive or submissive) and make appropriate eye contact in order to carry out the strategy successfully.

**Micro-Level Social Skills**

There have been many studies that have tried to identify which types of micro-level responses make it more likely that a person will have a successful outcome from social interaction. One of the problems is that each social situation is slightly different and likely to require a different pattern of social behaviour. Fortunately, there is now quite a bit of research that helps us to identify some of the
responses which are common to many situations and make successful outcomes more likely.

My own research with young offenders is one example of the type of study that has been conducted (Spence, 1981). Adolescent male offenders attended an interview conversation which was videotaped. The tapes were then replayed and the use of specific behaviour, such as eye contact, smiling, and time taken to answer questions, was measured. The tapes were also watched by a group of adults, who rated each youth on scales of friendliness and employability. Using this method, it was possible to identify which responses made it more likely that the boys would be rated favourably.

This type of study has been carried out with many different types of children and social situations. The resulting information enables us to make some suggestions about the kinds of micro-level social skills that are important for success in social interaction and that should be taught in social skills training programmes. The following list summarizes some of the most important micro-level social skills:

- Posture and body orientation
- Amount spoken
- Eye contact
- Facial expression
- Voice volume
- Tone of voice
- Head movements (for example, nods during listening)
- Latency of response (time taken to respond to questions)
- Body movements (for example, fidgeting and fiddling)
- Gestures
- Social distance (distance placed between self and the other person during interaction).

The following case study illustrates the negative impact of deficits in basic micro-level social skills. Theo was a ten-year-old boy who was highly disliked by his peers, and was referred to the school psychologist for help with interpersonal difficulties. The assessment revealed the following basic skill problems. Theo’s body posture was poor. He tended to slouch most of the time, laying back in his school seat, with his legs splayed wide apart. When anyone tried to start a conversation with him, he made very little eye contact. Indeed, any eye contact that he made was accompanied by a markedly aggressive facial expression. Theo rarely showed any indication that he was listening to others. He did not use any form of attention feedback or head nods to indicate that he was listening, and typically looked out of the window when spoken to by his teacher. Theo rarely took part in conversations with others and his responses to questions tended to be delayed and very brief. It was also noted that Theo had little awareness of appropriate social distance. When he did interact with people, he frequently moved in too close, which tended to make others feel uncomfortable. Overall, Theo created the impression of being unfriendly and disinterested in what other people had to say. It was extremely difficult for others
to hold a decent conversation with him and, generally, interacting with Theo was not a positive experience for anyone.

Macro-Level Social Skills
Macro-level social skills are strategies for responding to specific social tasks. There are an enormous number of social tasks that children need to be able to perform successfully, and these in turn can frequently be broken down into subtasks. For example, Stephens (1978) provided a detailed outline of 30 subcategories of social behaviour, which are broken down into 136 specific skills. The following list illustrates some of the social tasks required of children – it is not meant to be definitive.

- Giving a greeting
- Receiving a greeting
- Giving criticism
- Accepting criticism
- Asking for help
- Offering help
- Joining in
- Inviting others
- Saying ‘no’
- Refusing unreasonable demands
- Interrupting
- Dealing with teasing
- Dealing with bullying
- Taking turns
- Apologizing for mistakes
- Owning up
- Expressing positive feelings
- Giving compliments
- Receiving compliments
- Expressing anger and negative feelings
- Gaining attention
- Listening to others
- Starting conversations
- Ending conversations
- Maintaining conversations
- Dealing with arguments
- Negotiating compromises.

Each of these social tasks is important for interaction with a wide range of individuals, such as parents, teachers, peers and strangers. There are many different ways in which these tasks can be accomplished, and alternative ways of responding to a situation are likely to produce different outcomes. Children need to learn how to select the response most likely to lead to a successful outcome for a given social task. This brings us to the area of social cognition.
Social-Cognitive Skills and Processes

Our overt social behaviour is very much determined by a series of social-cognitive skills in which social information is processed and decisions are made about how to respond. Several authors have described the thought processes involved in determining how we behave in social situations (McFall, 1982; Dodge, 1986; Cavell, 1990). Figure 1 summarizes the components of these social-cognitive skills.

**Social perception**
- Receiving information from others and social environment
- Attention to relevant social cues
- Knowledge of social rules
- Knowledge of meaning of social cues
- Correct interpretation of information received
- Social perspective-taking ability.

**Social problem-solving skills**
- Identification of the nature and existence of a social problem
- Determination of goals for the situation
- Generating ideas for possible alternative responses
- Predicting likely consequences of alternatives
- Selecting a feasible response likely to lead to positive outcome
- Planning and executing the chosen response.

**Self-monitoring**
- Observe and correctly perceive outcome of own actions
- Accurate labelling of own behaviour
- Adjust responses where necessary.

Figure 1 Social-cognitive skills

**Social Perception**

Social perception refers to the ability to pay attention to and correctly interpret information gained from the social context and from others in the interaction. These skills are extremely important in order to select the most appropriate response for a particular situation. All social situations have social rules and we need to be
sensitive to the features of each situation that we find ourselves in to be able to select the correct response. Similarly, we need to be able to behave differently according to the emotional states of other people. Different responses are required if the other person is sad, angry or happy, and the consequences are not likely to be very good if we continue to behave in an inappropriate way because we are not aware of how the other person is feeling. For example, if a child is not aware that the teacher is becoming angry, he or she may well persist with a particular behaviour to the point that the teacher becomes extremely annoyed and the child gets into trouble. A more socially sensitive child would detect that their behaviour was making the teacher annoyed and would stop before negative consequences occurred.

There are many sources of information that can be used to tell us how another person is feeling. An obvious cue is the nature of the situation, in that we can predict that particular situations are likely to cause certain emotions. For example, opening a birthday present is likely to cause happiness, one’s cat being run over is likely to cause sadness, being physically attacked is likely to cause anger or fear.

In most instances, a person’s feelings are likely to change according to the content of the social interaction and it is necessary to look carefully at the cues sent out by people to interpret how they are feeling. A great deal of information about how people feel is given out from non-verbal cues, such as facial expression, posture, gestures and tone of voice. The actual content of what people say and do also provides information about how they are feeling. It is important to be able to pay attention to this information and to interpret it correctly in order to respond appropriately.

Failure to interpret other people’s emotions correctly and to adjust behaviour accordingly can lead to all sorts of negative outcomes. Take Philip as an illustration. Philip tends to interpret most social cues as indicating anger and aggressive intentions on the part of other people, both adults and children. If another child approaches Philip with a friendly invitation, he tends to perceive their facial expression and tone of voice as aggressive. He typically responds aggressively to any approaches from others, when the intention is neutral or friendly. During assessment, it was found that Philip tended to label most facial expressions as anger, and had great difficulty in distinguishing happy, fearful, angry and sad tones of voice. Not surprisingly, these errors in social perception resulted in many negative outcomes for Philip, as they tended to trigger aggressive or defensive responses from him.

There are many reasons why a person may have difficulty in correctly interpreting social cues. Children with sensory handicaps such as blindness or deafness may miss a great deal of important social information, as may children with attention deficit disorders. Children with intellectual limitations may also have problems with social perception (Rathjen, 1980).

There are several important skills that are closely linked to social perception which should be mentioned here. These relate to social perspective-taking, role-taking ability and empathic skills. Although there are subtle differences between these terms, they have in common the ability to set aside privileged or personal knowledge and emotions and adopt the perspective of another person (Chalmers and
Townsend, 1990). Interestingly, my own research (Spence, 1987) found that, even in preschoolers, the ability to interpret the emotions of others correctly from social context cues was one of the best predictors of popularity amongst the peer group. Children who were better able to identify how other children were feeling were more popular amongst their peers at the preschool. It was found that children who are more socially sensitive are more able to alter their behaviour according to the feelings of others. For example, socially sensitive children are more likely to behave in a caring manner when another child is sad or hurt.

Social Problem Solving Skills

Although social perception skills are important in determining how individuals behave, good social perception abilities do not necessarily mean that a child will respond appropriately in a situation. There are many other skills that are also important in determining how we behave, and social problem-solving skills, it has been suggested, play a significant role. Social problem-solving involves a series of steps leading up to the decision about how to respond in a particular social situation. Having identified the characteristics and demands of a social situation or task using social perception skills, children need to be able to work out the most appropriate way of dealing with the situation. This involves thinking of alternative responses, predicting the likely consequences of each alternative and selecting the best response. Individuals who are unable to perform these steps are less likely to choose the best response for dealing with a situation and may well behave inappropriately.

Take the case of Maria, who rarely interacts with her classmates. Maria dislikes school and feels very lonely. She desperately wants to be liked by the other children and to have friends amongst the other girls in her class. She never starts a conversation with her peers and does not approach them to ask to join in with their activities. Unfortunately, Maria has very few ideas when it comes to thinking of ways to approach the other children. Her only suggestion is to wait until she is asked and she spends many hours hovering on the sidelines waiting. Her solution is not successful and the other girls rarely notice her. Indeed, many of her peers perceive her as unfriendly and secretive.

Maria's problem can be used to illustrate the way in which social problem-solving steps can be used to solve this difficulty. The first step is to think of a range of different responses that could occur, rather than the current unsuccessful strategy. Here are some options which Maria could try in an attempt to develop friendships among her peers:

- Continue to stand and wait until asked
- Approach the group and ask to join in
- Ask the teacher to help
- Do something to spoil her classmates' activity (for example, take their ball).

Various authors (for example, Dodge, 1986) have suggested that children are at a disadvantage if they are unable to think of different responses or get locked into a particular automatic way of behaving. This is especially problematic for children
who tend to opt for aggressive solutions to social tasks. Such children tend to have
difficulty in finding other ways of behaving. If faced with a conflict situation or
wanting something that is being used by another person, the chosen strategy
tends to be aggressive. Not surprisingly, it is not just the ability to think of different
ways of responding that is important. The social acceptability of the responses
that youngsters propose is also found to be of great significance in determining how
successful children are in their interaction with others (ibid.).

In addition to the generation of alternative solutions, interpersonal problem-
solving also involves the ability to predict likely consequences of different response
choices. This involves a form of consequential thinking, in that children need to be
able to think through a series of events: if A occurs, then B is likely to happen next.
This is important if children are to select the most appropriate response in terms of
that which is most likely to lead to a positive outcome. In the case of Maria above
the following likely consequences could be predicted:

- Continuing to stand and wait until asked is likely to result in being ignored
- Approaching the group and asking to join in is likely to result in acceptance
  into the group
- Asking the teacher to help may lead to inclusion in the group
- Spoiling her classmates' activity is likely to lead to dislike by the peer group.

Having worked out the likely consequences of a range of alternative responses,
the next step of the problem-solving sequence is to select the response which is pre-
dicted to lead to the best outcome. It is also important that the response selected
is feasible and one that the child is able to perform successfully. Having chosen a
particular strategy for dealing with a situation, the response must then be performed.
This involves the integration and sequencing of an enormous range of micro-level
skills as outlined above. For example, if Maria decides that the best strategy for
joining in with the peer group is to approach the group and ask to join in, then
this will require skilled coordination of eye contact, friendly facial expression,
friendly tone of voice, correct wording of the request and appropriate timing for
approaching the group. If Maria is not sufficiently skilled in micro-skill usage, a more
appropriate strategy may be to ask the teacher to help her join in with her classmates' activities.

Self-Monitoring Skills
A further social-cognitive skill involves the monitoring of one's own behaviour and
the response of other people. Changes in the chosen strategy will be needed if the
predicted positive outcome does not occur. So, in the example above, if Maria finds
that her approach to the peer group is unsuccessful and they do not allow her to join
in, then she will need to repeat the problem-solving steps in order to identify a new
solution to try.
Others Sources of Influence Over How Children Respond

Previous Learning Experiences
In reality, each cognitive processing step occurs very rapidly: people do not stop and think through each step in great detail before deciding how to respond. Individuals quickly learn which responses produce the best outcomes from different situations. Future occurrences of a situation are likely to trigger responses which the person found to be successful on previous occasions. For example, if a child finds that ignoring is a successful way of dealing with teasing by a particular classmate, then this strategy is likely to be used to deal with teasing in the future. Children need to be able to use their problem-solving skills, however, to deal with new situations or interaction in which previously successful strategies are not found to work.

Thoughts, Attitudes and Beliefs
Our learning experiences and social-cognitive skills are not the only sources of influence over the types of responses that we choose. Our thoughts, attitudes and beliefs also play an important part in determining how we respond. Frequently, people may be perfectly capable of choosing and performing an appropriate strategy for dealing with a particular social problem, but instead behave in an inappropriate and unsuccessful way. Research with adults has highlighted the way in which unhelpful thoughts and negative attitudes or beliefs may inhibit the use of appropriate social skills (for example, Halford and Foddy, 1982). In such instances, although the person may have the skills needed in order to respond appropriately, these are inhibited by interfering thoughts and attitudes. This type of interference is also likely to occur in children. Recent studies have shown that an optimistic rather than pessimistic thinking style facilitates social competence in children (Garber et al., 1993).

The following case study illustrates this point. Stephen rarely speaks to the other children in his class. He sits alone during free time and reads a book. Stephen is able to speak freely with his family at home and is competent in conversation skills. With his classmates, however, he holds a series of beliefs that inhibit his use of conversation skills. He believes that he is disliked by the group and that he is overweight and unattractive. Stephen’s thoughts when he considers joining in any conversation with his peers include ‘there is no point in trying to be friends with them, they will just laugh at me. I know I will say something silly. They don’t like me and they never will.’ Not surprisingly, self-critical thoughts and anticipation of negative outcomes influence the way that Stephen decides to behave, and he continues to read his book during free time, feeling unhappy and lonely.

Negative and unhelpful attitudes and thoughts are not restricted to feelings of anxiousness or fear of failure, but may trigger aggressive or antisocial behaviour. Take, for example, the case of Michelle, who is well known at school for her rude behaviour towards teachers whenever she is criticized or told to do something that she doesn’t want to do. Michelle holds a series of negative attitudes towards
authority figures, including teachers and her parents. During assessment, she reported the following thoughts in response to being criticized by one of her teachers: ‘How dare he speak to me like that. He is always picking on me. He thinks he is so clever. Well, I will show him that he isn’t.’ Thoughts such as these tended to lead to a range of verbally abusive responses from Michelle, and resulted in a great deal of conflict with the teaching staff.

Thoughts and attitudes or beliefs that tend to trigger inappropriate behaviour are obviously problematic and unhelpful and need to be identified during assessment. Fortunately, there are ways of changing unhelpful thoughts and beliefs, and this forms an important part of intervention with older children and adolescents. Rathjen (1980) suggests that certain patterns of unhelpful thinking are often found. These include:

- Catastrophizing: thinking that an event is far worse than it is (for example, ‘It is awful and absolutely terrible’)
- Overgeneralizing: thinking that one event means that this will be true for all events (for example, ‘Natasha doesn’t want to play with me, and nobody likes me’ and ‘No one will ever like me. I will never have any friends.’)
- Personalization: attributing negative events as referring purely to oneself and not others (for example, ‘That teacher never picks on anyone else. He is always looking to criticize me’).

There are many other forms of unhelpful thinking, but those outlined here give an indication of what to look for during assessment. There is little point in spending a great deal of time in teaching social skills if the child is inhibited from using them as the result of unhelpful thoughts.

**Excessive Physiological Arousal**

When people experience strong emotions, such as anger or anxiety, they typically show physiological arousal. This is reflected in bodily reactions, such as increased heart beat, muscular tension, sweating and various other somatic changes. These physiological responses of emotion are closely linked to the type of thoughts that the person is having and it is difficult to know what comes first, the thoughts or the biological reactions. If a person is having very anxious thoughts, such as ‘This is awful, there is no way that I can talk to the person. I don’t know what to say and I know I am going to make a fool of myself’, then they will probably also be feeling anxious and showing physiological signs of anxiety. It has been suggested that high levels of physiological arousal associated with anxiety can inhibit the use of appropriate social skills (Curran, 1977). Similarly, it has been suggested that individuals who become highly aroused physiologically in anger-provoking situations have difficulty in choosing sensible and successful ways of dealing with conflict situations (Novaco, 1975). Thus, there seems to be a good case for reducing physiological arousal with individuals who become highly emotionally aroused, in order to make it easier for them to use their social skills. One way of reducing physiological arousal is to teach relaxation skills for use in difficult situations.
Children can also learn to use relaxation skills, and this approach is included in Social Skills Training.

Developmental Considerations in Social Skills and Social Competence

It is only recently that we have started to investigate the way in which children’s developmental level needs to be considered in relation to the assessment and enhancement of social functioning. Yeates and Selman (1989), for example, propose that children proceed through a series of stages during their social development. Each stage reflects an increasing realization that other people in a social interaction have a different perspective from one’s own and an increasing ability to work out what this perspective is like. To a large extent, these stages reflect gradual changes in general cognitive development. The early stages of social development are characterized by egocentricism, whereby the child’s desires and feelings dominate those of others in determining how the child behaves. For example, Sarah wants to play with a particular toy, and she attempts to take it from Billy without consideration of his feelings and desires. Subsequent stages then reflect an increasing emphasis on the needs and feelings of other participants in the interaction in determining how the child responds. Thus, at a later stage of social development, Sarah may stop and consider Billy’s feelings before deciding how to obtain the toy she wants to play with. She may decide to ask Billy if he would like to have a turn with a different toy, so that he can hand over the toy she wants to play with.

Yeates and Selman (1989) suggest that children’s ability to use social problem-solving skills reflects their level of social perspective-taking. These authors investigated the type of alternative solutions, anticipated consequences, selection of responses and evaluation of outcomes that children produce. It was clear that children could be grouped according to the degree of social perspective-taking that they used at each of these steps. Children who were highly egocentric in their answers in one of these steps, tended to be so across all other steps on a given social task. Those children who were more skilled at social perspective-taking tended to take the feelings and needs of others into account in their responses to alternative solutions, anticipated consequences, selection of responses and evaluation of outcomes. Although children tended to respond at a consistent level on all four steps on a particular social task, it was interesting to note that they sometimes operated at a better level of social perspective-taking on a different social task. This suggests that social development does not necessarily proceed at the same rate across all types of social situations and some variability may occur.

These findings have implications for assessment and intervention. Yeates and Selman (1989) point out that it is important to take the child’s developmental level into account in designing appropriate intervention programmes. Each child’s level of social perspective-taking ability will influence the way in which he or she is able to solve social problems. There is little point in trying to teach children to use responses that are far beyond their developmental stage. Rather, intervention should
aim to teach skills that are in keeping with the child’s developmental stage. Social skills training programmes therefore need to remember that children proceed from egocentric to a more empathic mode of responding. The assessment process needs to determine each child’s current stage of interpersonal development so that intervention can be designed at an appropriate level. Younger children are likely to have great difficulty in using skills that require a high level of social perspective-taking ability.

Yeates and Selman (1989) also suggest that the teaching methods used during the intervention programme should take into account the child’s current cognitive developmental level. Concrete, external contingency management programmes are proposed as more appropriate for children whose social-cognitive level is relatively undeveloped. Methods such as roleplay and social problem-solving training are likely to be more appropriate for children whose level of social perspective-taking is more sophisticated. This is an interesting proposition which certainly appears to be sensible, although research is yet to be conducted to confirm this view. If the proposal is correct, then younger children should benefit more from a programme in which the use of appropriate social skills is reinforced (for example, talking to peers or ignoring teasing). Older children, on the other hand, would be expected to respond favourably to methods which require a higher level of social perspective-taking, including roleplay and social problem-solving training.

**The Relationship Between Social Competence and General Behavioural Adjustment**

It is often very difficult to work out which aspects of a child’s behaviour are social and which are not social. This problem is important and needs discussion because it influences what we include in social enhancement programmes. For example, it is obviously important for children to learn to tell the truth, and failure to do so can lead to problematic relationships with others. Similarly, children need to learn to sit in their seats in class and to complete the work given to them by their teacher. Children who are disruptive in the classroom are frequently unpopular amongst their classmates and teachers alike. Should social enhancement programmes include attempts to produce behavioural change in areas such as telling the truth or paying attention to the teacher in the classroom?

There is no doubt that there is a close link between moral development and children’s social competence, and similarly there is a close association between disruptive behaviour and social competence. If problems exist in the areas of moral development and general behavioural management then obviously intervention in these areas is needed. There would be little point in ploughing ahead with a social skills programme if significant problems existed in these other domains. Social Skills Training is limited, however, to the social aspect of children’s behaviour. This is not to suggest that the other areas are not important, but this programme aims to restrict the focus to social relationship enhancement through the teaching of skills. The programme can easily be used in association with any other interventions that
may be necessary.

It is also important to make a distinction between social skills and self-care or self-help skills. These terms are frequently confused, and the concept of social skills used here relates to interaction with others, rather than personal care or daily living skills. Again, it is acknowledged that daily living skills can have a marked influence over the quality of relationships with others. Success in many aspects of social functioning, such as employment, family and peer relationships, is affected by factors such as grooming, dress, personal hygiene, toilet habits and many other self-help skills. These areas are not the focus of the present text, but social enhancement programmes can easily be used in conjunction with self-help skills training.

Summary

Social competence reflects the success that children have in their relationships with others. In the long term, social competence is measured in terms of global indications of the quality of relationships with other people, as judged by others and the child him- or herself. Outcomes such as popularity amongst the peer group, number of friends or invitations to parties, and feelings of loneliness are all long-term indicators of social competence. Short-term indicators of social competence reflect the more immediate outcomes from social interaction, such as the satisfactory resolution of a conflict, being accepted to join in a game, or the impression created upon others immediately after an interaction.

Many factors influence the degree to which children obtain positive outcomes from their interaction with others. Some of these relate to the non-social characteristics of the child, such as physical attractiveness or sporting prowess. The characteristics of other people in the interaction can also influence the outcome. For example, unrealistic expectations or inappropriate behaviour of others may lead to a child being judged negatively or to receiving a negative outcome from an interaction. The way in which a child behaves in interaction with others does, however, have a marked impact upon his or her social competence. There is therefore a strong need for programmes that aim to teach children to respond in ways that will make positive outcomes more likely from their interaction with others, and thereby to enhance their social competence.

A range of social skills is suggested to be important in producing positive social outcomes. There are many basic micro-skills that influence the impression created upon other people. These micro-skills form the building blocks of successful social interaction that are integrated within strategies for dealing with specific social situations or social tasks. These strategies are, in turn, determined by a variety of factors. First, our learning history influences how we choose to behave, with responses being more likely if they have previously resulted in positive consequences in similar situations. Responses which led to negative consequences are less likely to be repeated. Of particular importance in determining the behaviour which children choose is a series of social-cognitive skills. These include social perception and social problem-solving skills, which form a progression of decision-making steps.
addition, inhibiting unhelpful thoughts, attitudes and beliefs may also influence how we behave. Finally, physiological arousal levels may inhibit appropriate social responding through excessively high levels of emotions, such as anxiety or anger.

The implications of this model of social responding are that many factors need to be considered during assessment and intervention. The enhancement of long-term social competence (for example, popularity) will be brought about by enabling children to be more successful in terms of short-term consequences of social interaction. In order to achieve this, behavioural change is necessary, and children need to be able to use appropriate micro-level social skills and select successful strategies of responding for dealing with social situations. Children will only be able to choose the best way of responding if they have the necessary social-cognitive skills to allow them to work out a successful strategy. This requires the teaching of a range of social perception and social problem-solving skills. Furthermore, intervention must also ensure that any unhelpful and inhibiting thoughts and beliefs are dealt with and replaced by more helpful ways of thinking. In addition, excessive physiological arousal, resulting from negative emotions such as anxiety or anger, needs to be reduced in order to facilitate the use of appropriate social skills.

Finally, social enhancement programmes need to take into account the developmental level of the child. Social perspective-taking abilities appear to be particularly important in determining the type of approach that should be taken, with younger children apparently responding better to approaches that do not require a high level of perspective-taking ability.
CHAPTER 2
The Assessment of Social Competence and Social Skills

The Assessment Process

The first question to ask during assessment is whether a problem of social competence exists. If it is established that a child does have problems in his or her relationships with others then the assessment proceeds to ask why this is the case. As Chapter 1 highlighted, there are an enormous number of reasons, and lack of social skills is just one possible explanation. The following list summarizes some of the possible reasons for social failure:

- Lack of micro-level social skills
- Selection of inappropriate strategies of responding (macro-level skills) due to:
  a) Poor social perception skills
  b) Poor social problem-solving abilities
  c) Inhibition of responding due to unhelpful thoughts or attitudes
  d) Inhibition of responding due to excessive physiological arousal
  e) Lack of previous learning experiences (reinforcement/punishment)
- Reaction of others is influenced by non-social characteristics of performer, for example physical attractiveness
- Reaction of others is influenced by characteristics of others, for example unrealistic expectations, cultural factors.

There are undoubtedly many other factors that influence children's social competence, but these areas provide a practical summary that can be used to ensure that the most relevant areas are examined during assessment and intervention.

The present programme makes a clear distinction between social skills and social competence, and the approach taken to assessment follows this separation. Social competence is viewed as reflecting the outcome of the child’s social behaviour, such as the child’s popularity, level of social contact with other children, quality of relationships with adults, frequency of conflicts and so on. If problems relating to social competence are found, the assessment process then proceeds to consider why the child is having interpersonal difficulties. The aim is to identify those factors that are causing problems of social inadequacy and to develop intervention programmes to tackle these causes. Social skills (behavioural and social-cognitive skills) are just one possible factor. Thus, separate measures are used for the assessment of social competence and social skills.

During assessment a distinction also needs to be made between skill deficits and skill inhibition. Even if a child is found to behave in an inappropriate manner in a social situation, this may be the result of skill inhibition, where the skills exist but are not used, rather than an absence of social skills. Skill inhibition may result from
excessive physiological arousal or interfering, unhelpful thoughts.

In addition to the possibility of skill inhibition, there are several other factors which need to be considered during assessment. For example, the non-social determinants of social competence should be examined (for example, physical attractiveness or sporting prowess). Also, developmental issues should be considered in order to identify appropriate targets for intervention and age-relevant methods of producing behavioural change. Finally, given that we all tend to behave differently in different situations, assessment measures should provide information about the type of social situations in which problems occur. Chapter 1 demonstrated how children may behave very differently with different people, in different situations. Thus, it is important to identify the exact social situations or social tasks that cause problems for a particular youngster.

The assessment of social competence and social skills involves the same methods to be found in the assessment of any other type of human behaviour. Information may be obtained from various sources, including reports from significant others (for example, parents, teachers and peers) and the child him- or herself, in addition to direct behavioural observation. Data collection methods include interviews, questionnaires, diaries and observation/coding systems for simulated and roleplay interaction.

Each information source and method of data collection has its own set of advantages and disadvantages. In practice, the assessor needs to use a combination of approaches in order to obtain a full picture of the child's problems. This is important because parents, teachers and children often have different views of the same problem and the information they provide is not always in agreement (Elliott et al., 1989). The use of multiple assessment sources allows a more accurate picture to be developed regarding the child's social behaviour in different settings. Ideally, assessment should include direct observation of the target child during interaction with adults and children in different settings, combined with questionnaire and interview data from parents, teachers and the youngster. Figure 2 summarizes the parameters within which the assessment can vary.

Questions To Be Asked During Assessment
The aim of the assessment is to provide answers to certain questions, the first question being whether there is a problem to investigate. Once it has been established that there is a problem in the area of social competence, then the assessment proceeds to investigate why this is the case. The major questions to be asked during the assessment are summarized below:

1. Is there a problem with social competence? If so,
2. To whom is this a problem?
3. Is it a problem of unrealistic expectations of others?
4. Are non-social variables influencing the response of others (for example, physical attractiveness)?
5. What problem social behaviours occur (if any)?
### Source of information
- Child
- Parent
- Teacher
- Peers
- Significant others where relevant (for example, relatives).

### Type of measure
- Questionnaire/rating scale
- Interview
- Sociometry
- Direct observation (natural/contrived/roleplay).

### Location of behaviour assessed
- Home
- School
- Social
- Clinic.

### Focus of relationships and interactions assessed
- Adults
- Peers/siblings
- Strangers.

### Areas assessed
- General social competence
- Micro-social skills
- Macro-social skills/strategies of responding
- Social-cognitive skills
- Maladaptive cognitions, attitudes and beliefs
- Physiological responses
- Non-social determinants of social competence.

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**Figure 2** Parameters of social behaviour assessment
The Assessment of Social Competence and Social Skills

6 Where, when with whom, how often?
7 What are the consequences of problem behaviour (reinforcing and punishing events)?
8 Is micro-skill usage satisfactory?
9 Is it a problem of skill deficits or skill inhibition?
10 Are social-cognitive skills (social perception and social problem-solving) satisfactory?
11 Are pessimistic/unhelpful thoughts influencing the problem behaviour?
12 Is excessive physiological arousal playing a part?
13 What behaviours are not occurring that are necessary for social competence?
14 What are relevant and socially valid target behaviours for intervention?
15 What interventions have previously been attempted (and how successful were they)?
16 What interventions are feasible, given current home and school circumstances?

Methods of Assessment
The questions outlined above can be answered once the relevant information has been collated from the various sources. The type of assessment measures used will depend on the context in which you are working. In some circumstances, assessment begins with a general screening of all youngsters in a class or school, in order to pick out those who have interpersonal problems and who are likely to benefit from a social enhancement programme. This process requires the use of measures which assess social competence, such as peer sociometric ratings or social competence scales completed by the parent, teacher or child him/herself (see pp. 36–43). Only those children who are identified as having interpersonal difficulties then go on to take part in the more detailed assessment of why the social problems are occurring.

In other situations, the child or adolescent may be specifically referred to a social enhancement programme as the result of interpersonal difficulties. In this case the assessment is likely to begin with detailed interviews with the parents, teacher and youngster; information obtained from the interviews may be supplemented with questionnaire and observation data. The scores obtained from the questionnaire can also be used to determine whether changes occur over time, by asking the questions again at the end of the intervention programme. Where appropriate, the assessment may also include tests of social perception and social problem-solving ability, in order to determine whether skills deficits in these areas account for social behaviour problems. Finally, if the resources are available, the assessment may include direct behavioural observation, either during roleplay or in real-life settings.

Figure 3 summarizes the methods used in the Social Skills Training assessment programme. Guidelines for conducting interviews and questionnaires are given below.
### Interviews
- Structured interview with parent(s)
- Structured interview with teacher
- Structured interview with child.

### Questionnaires
For identification of social competence problems:
- Social Competence with Peers–Parent(s)
- Social Competence with Peers–Teacher
- Social Competence with Peers–Pupil
- Teacher Nomination Form.

Where problems of social competence are found:
- Social Skills Questionnaire–Parent(s)
- Social Skills Questionnaire–Teacher
- Social Skills Questionnaire–Pupil
- Social Worries Questionnaire–Parent(s)
- Social Worries Questionnaire–Teacher
- Social Worries Questionnaire–Pupil.

### Sociometry
For identification of social competence problems:
- Peer Nomination method (see p.39).

### Social-cognitive skills
Where problems of social competence are found:
- Means-Ends Problem Solving Test (Platt and Spirack, 1975)
- Social Perception Tests (see p.50).

### Direct behavioural observation
Where additional information on micro-skills is needed:
- Naturalistic observation
- Roleplay: Revised Behaviour Assertiveness Test – for Children (BAT–CR, Ollendick et al., 1985)
- Basic Social Skills Assessment Chart.

Figure 3 Summary of assessment methods used in Social Skills Training
**Interviews With Parent(s), Teacher and Child**

Interviews provide useful information about whether the child, parents or teacher consider there to be problems relating to social interaction and wished to bring about changes. The first aim is to assess whether the child does experience negative long-term outcomes from social relationships, particularly at school, at home or socially. Questions need to be asked about the quality of relationships in these domains, whether the child is satisfied with them and whether other people view these relationships as problematic. For example, the assessor may ask whether the child has close friendships, whether he or she attends social or sporting clubs, or whether he or she is popular with peers at school. Subjective feelings that reflect long-term dissatisfaction with relationships, such as loneliness, should also be examined.

If problems are identified in any of these or other areas, then it is appropriate to proceed and consider whether these difficulties are the result of inappropriate social behaviour on the part of the child, or whether they reflect other, non-social determinants of social competence, such as the range of social contacts and personal characteristics. The interviews should aim to cover the questions outlined on p.27, in order to identify the factors that are contributing to the problem.

The child is not always the best person to provide information about the way in which he or she is judged by other people or the impact of his or her behaviour upon others. Thus, it is important to obtain information from other assessment sources, such as parents or teachers. If time permits, a detailed interview with the parents and class teacher can provide extremely valuable information to explain why a youngster is having interpersonal problems. If the teacher is conducting the assessment, then the teacher interview format can be used as a questionnaire to collate information for each pupil. When it comes to assessment of social anxiety and attitudes, beliefs or unhelpful thinking styles, the interview with the child is of course very important, as this information can only be obtained from self-report.

The following guidelines are provided purely as suggestions for the structure of the interviews; the exact content will depend upon the unique circumstances of each child.

**Guidelines for Interview With Parent(s)**

Generally, parents are more than willing to discuss any relationship difficulties that their child is having. In many instances it will be the parents, rather than the teacher, who have become concerned about the youngster’s social problems and have requested help through the school or clinic. If the parents have not asked for help and are being approached through the school for the first time, it is important to minimize any anxiety that the contact may produce. The parents will obviously want to know why they are being asked to attend an interview, and you will need to explain the type of difficulties that the young person is experiencing. I find it helpful to point out that relationship difficulties amongst young people are extremely common and that the problems are not a major cause for concern. It is also helpful to point out that parents can provide important information to help set up a training
programme, if the assessment suggests that some form of intervention is needed. These points will help to alleviate any anxiety that parents may have about being approached to discuss their child’s difficulties and should encourage their co-operation.

There are many different ways to conduct an interview and you will have your own preferred way of doing this. It is helpful to keep some record of what is said, whether this be in the form of notes or an audiotape.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE FAMILY

- How does X get on with others at home?
  - a) With parents?
  - b) With siblings?
  - c) Any other people who have regular contact with the family?
- If problems are noted:
  - a) What exactly happens?
  - b) Describe some recent examples of difficulties; who was present, what happened next?
- Who in the family is X closest to? What kinds of things do they talk about?
- Who would X talk to if he/she was having problems?
- Does the family spend much time talking and discussing things with each other?
- What form of punishment do you use when X misbehaves? How does X respond to this?
- What happens if you tell X to do something that he/she doesn’t want to do?

WHAT CONTACT DOES X HAVE WITH CHILDREN OF HIS/HER OWN AGE OUTSIDE SCHOOL?

- Does X have people over to play/visit, to sleep over?
- Does X get invited to parties and to visit other young people’s houses?
- Does X go to any clubs or take part in sports activities outside school? Which? How often?
- Do you ever hold birthday parties for X? When was the last time? Who came along?
(ADOLESCENTS)
• Does X have girl/boy friends? What type of relationships are these?
• Does X go out socially with other adolescents? Where do they go? How often?
• Does X tend to be badly influenced by others to do the wrong thing?
• What about smoking, drinking alcohol, sniffing solvents, for example glue, taking drugs?

WHAT TYPE OF SOCIAL LIFE DO THE PARENTS AND WHOLE FAMILY HAVE?
• Do you go out together as a family? How often? To what type of events?
• How often do you (the parents) have family friends or relatives over to visit?
• How often do you (the parents) visit family friends or relatives?
• Does the family tend to discuss problems openly?
• Do family members openly express their feelings?
• How is affection expressed in the family?

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS AT SCHOOL
• Does X have friends at school? What are their names?
• How long do friendships last? Why do they end?
• Does X ever complain of being bullied or teased? (If so, how do you handle this?)
• Have you ever heard of X bullying or teasing other children at school?
• Does X ever come home miserable or not want to go to school because of problems with peers? If so describe what happens.
• How does X tend to behave with a group of peers his/her own age? Would X join in, try to take over, avoid the group, etc.?

RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS
• How does X get on with the teachers at school? Have there ever been any problems here?
• Has X ever come home from school upset or been reluctant to go to school because of problems with a teacher?
• What kind of reports do you get about his/her behaviour from parent/teacher meetings?
• If problems are noted:
  a) What types of problems are noted? When did these start?
  b) How do the teachers deal with the problems?
  c) Have the teachers contacted you (the parents) to discuss any problems?

GENERAL CONVERSATION SKILLS
• When you have a conversation with X, does he/she show that he/she is listening to you?
• Does X look you in the eye when you are talking to him/her?
• Is X able to hold a long conversation with you? What about with other people?
• Does X have difficulty starting conversations with unfamiliar people, for example other youngsters at a new club?
• When you start a conversation with X, are his/her responses usually very short?
• Is his/her facial expression usually appropriate to the situation?
• What about his/her tone of voice? Have you ever noticed it to be inappropriate?
• Is X sensitive to the feelings of other people? If not, give details.

These areas cover some of the important aspects of interviewing the parents. Depending on the circumstances, you may need to obtain much more information about the family situation and other behavioural problems that may be present. The content outlined above is limited to the interpersonal aspects of the youngster’s difficulties, rather than general behavioural problems. If the parents have referred the young person for help, then assessment should examine why the referral was made. The willingness of the parents to participate in the intervention programme should also be discussed, with a view to involvement in the Home Tasks described in the Photocopyable Resource Book.

Guidelines for Interview With Teacher

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS AT SCHOOL
• How does X get on with peers at school? Have there ever been any problems here?
• If problems are noted:
a) What types of problems are noted? When did these start?
b) What are the main types of situations that cause problems?
c) How do the teachers deal with the problems?
d) Have the teachers contacted the parents to discuss any problems?
• Does X have friends at school? What are their names?
• How long do friendships last? Why do they end?
• Does X ever complain of being bullied or teased? (If so, how do you handle this?)
• Does X ever bully or tease peers at school?
• Does X ever get into fights or disputes with peers?
• Is X popular amongst peers? If not, why?
• How does X tend to behave with a group of young people his/her own age? Would X join in, try to take over, avoid the group, etc.?
• Does X tend to spend free time in the company of peers?
• Does X offer to help other youngsters or say nice things to others?
• How would X respond if peers try to get him/her to do something that X doesn't want to do?

RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS
• How does X get on with the teachers at school? Have there ever been any problems here?
• (If problems are noted:)
  a) What types of problems are noted? When did these start?
  b) What are the main types of situations that cause problems?
  c) How do the teachers deal with the problems?
  d) Have the teachers contacted the parents to discuss any problems?
• Which teacher does X have the best relationship with? Why might this be the case?
• How does X respond to criticism from teachers?
• How does X respond to praise from teachers?
• How does X react when told to do something that he/she doesn't want to do?
• Does X become anxious or avoid presenting work to the class?
• Is X able to tell you when he/she needs help or doesn't understand something?
• Are there times when X appears to be very shy or excessively quiet?
GENERAL CONVERSATION SKILLS

- When you have a conversation with X, does he/she show that he/she is listening to you?
- Does X look you in the eye when you are talking to him/her?
- Is X able to hold a long conversation with you? What about with peers?
- When you start a conversation with X, are his/her responses usually very short?
- Is his/her facial expression usually appropriate to the situation?
- What about his/her tone of voice? Have you ever noticed that to be inappropriate?
- Is X sensitive to the feelings of other people? If not, give (details).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- How is X coping with school work at the moment?
- How does X perform at sports activities?
- What are his/her main strengths at school?
- What are his/her main areas of weakness academically?
- Are there any other areas that might explain his/her relationship problems?

Some of the above information can also be obtained from teacher questionnaires, but this outline demonstrates some of the most important areas to be covered. If the youngster is going to be joining a social enhancement programme, then it is useful to investigate whether the class teacher would be willing to help, by assisting with brief tasks that the pupil may be asked to complete between sessions.

Guidelines for Interview With Child

Children and adolescents are able to provide a great deal of information about their social functioning. An interview also provides a valuable opportunity to assess the child’s basic conversation skills and interaction style, albeit in a rather artificial situation. The assessment of basic micro-skills during interview can be carried out in an informal manner or using a structured rating scale, such as the Basic Social Skills Assessment Chart (see p.57 and Photocopiable Resource Book). The aim is to determine the adequacy of basic skills such as eye contact, posture, facial expression, tone of voice, latency of response (time taken to respond to a question) and listening responses. Although the interview permits observation of basic skills, the situation is obviously very different from everyday life situations and the child will not necessarily behave in the way he or she would at home or school. All information should therefore be checked with data from other sources before conclusions can be drawn.
The Assessment of Social Competence and Social Skills

In addition to the assessment of basic skills, the interview also provides a chance to find out how the young person views his or her relationships and interaction with others.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE FAMILY

• Do you have any problems getting on with others at home?
  a) With parents?
  b) With siblings?
  c) Any other people who have regular contact with the family?
• If problems are noted:
  a) What exactly happens?
  b) Describe some recent examples of difficulties; who was present, what happened next?
• Who in the family are you closest to? What kinds of things do you talk about?
• Who would you talk to if you were having problems?
• Does your family spend much time talking and discussing things with each other?
• Do you go out together as a family? How often? To what type of events?
• What form of punishment do your parents use when you misbehave? What do you do when they punish you?
• What do you do when you are told by your parent(s) to do something that you don't want to do?

CONTACTS WITH PEERS OUTSIDE SCHOOL

• Do you have friends over to your home to play/visit, to sleep over?
• Do you get invited to parties and to visit friends' houses?
• Do you go to any clubs or take part in sports activities outside school? Which? How often?

(ADOLESCENTS)

• Do you have girl/boy friends? What type of relationships are these?
• Do you go out socially with other adolescents? Where do you go? How often?
• Do you tend to be badly influenced by other youngsters to do the wrong thing?
• What about smoking, drinking alcohol, sniffing solvents, for example glue, taking drugs?

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS
• Do you have friends of your own age? What are their names?
• How long do your friendships last? Why do they end?
• How do you get on with your classmates?
• Do you get bullied or teased? (If so, how do you react?)
• Do you ever bully or pick on people at school?
• Do you feel shy with people your own age?
• Do you tend to spend time on your own, rather than being with other young people?
• What do you do at break time (play time/recess) at school?
• Do you get into fights or arguments at school? If yes, give details.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS
• How do you get on with the teachers at school? Have there ever been any problems here?
• If problems are noted:
  a) What types of problems occur? When did these start?
  b) What are the main types of situations that cause problems?
• Which teacher do you have the best relationship with? Why might this be the case?
• How do you respond to criticism from teachers?
• How do you respond to praise from teachers?
• How do you react when told to do something that you don’t want to do?
• Do you become worried if you have to read aloud or answer a question in class?
• Are you able to tell your teacher if you need help or if you don’t understand something?

GENERAL ISSUES
• Do you ever feel lonely?
• Do you wish that you had more friends?
• Are there any particular people who you would like to get on with better?
• Who do you feel you have the best relationships with?
• Who do you feel you don’t get on with very well?
Thoughts, attitudes and beliefs
The interview with the young person can also be used to investigate negative and unhelpful thoughts, attitudes and beliefs. This is best done with adolescents by taking a specific example of an interpersonal problem that has recently occurred and asking the youngster to recall his or her exact thoughts at the time. With younger children it would be more appropriate to use methods such as cartoons with empty speech bubbles to elicit thoughts about particular social situations. The exact content of the interview with respect to thoughts and beliefs will of course depend on the type of problems experienced by the young person. The following example illustrates the type of questions that can be asked.

Samantha (aged 14) reported that she found it very difficult to accept invitations from other girls her own age and, as a result, had very few friendships. She described a recent situation in which two girls in her class had invited her to go along to the cinema to see a movie with them. She had refused. In this case, suitable questions to ask might include:

- How did you feel when the girls invited you out with them?
- Can you describe to me what you were thinking just before you said ‘no’?
- What was the worst thing that could have happened if you had said ‘yes’?
- What did you think after you had said ‘no’?

Responses to questions such as these may provide an indication of the way in which thoughts and beliefs can interfere in social responding. In Samantha’s case, she reported thoughts such as, ‘They are only asking me because they feel sorry for me. They don’t really want me around. There is no way that either of them will want to be my friend.’

Collating the Interviews
When all the interviews have been completed, the information is then collated to produce a detailed picture about the type of interpersonal difficulties a youngster is having: with whom, how often, in what type of situations. It should become clear whether the problem is the result of how the child behaves, rather than of unrealistic expectations or inappropriate responses from others. If the relationship difficulties are thought to result from inappropriate social behaviour, then further exploration is required to determine why the child is behaving in this way.

Questionnaires for Parent(s), Teacher and Pupil
The Assessment of Social Competence
As mentioned above, the first aspect of the assessment is to determine whether there is a problem in the area of social competence, before proceeding to a more detailed assessment of social skills and other possible causes of relationship difficulties. Very few assessment measures focus specifically on social competence. Most child behaviour measures either include a wide range of non-social behaviours or confuse the assessment of social competence with the evaluation of social skills. General child
### Social Competence with Peers Questionnaire - PARENT(S)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Not true</th>
<th>Sometimes true</th>
<th>Mostly true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Has at least one close friend</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Has close friendships with other kids his/her age</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Finds it easy to make friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other kids invite him/her to their homes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other kids invite him/her to social events or activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Has good relationships with classmates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gets invited to parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Is popular amongst other his/her age</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sees a friend or friends socially at weekends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Social Competence with Peers Questionnaire - TEACHER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Not true</th>
<th>Sometimes true</th>
<th>Mostly true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Has at least one close friend</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Has close friendships with peers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Seems like a good person to be around in class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Finds it easy to make friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is chosen by peers to be on their team</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Takes part in social or sports events</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is popular amongst peers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Is chosen by peers as a partner to work on a project</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Has good relationships with classmates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4 Social Competence with Peers Questionnaires**
behaviour questionnaires can provide some indication of interpersonal problems (for example, The Walker Problem Behaviour Identification Checklist; Walker, 1983), but should not be used as the only form of assessment of social competence. High scores on the acting out, withdrawal and disturbed peer relationship subscales of this assessment may reflect difficulties in interpersonal relationships which warrant further investigation. The Parent, Teacher and Youth Report Forms of the Child Behaviour Checklist (Achenbach and Edelbrock, 1991) also provide some information about social competence, albeit of limited detail. My own Staff Questionnaire on Social Behaviour (Spence, 1980) was designed to evaluate the quality of relationships with peers and adults, as well as to assess more specific social skills. Unfortunately, this questionnaire confuses the concepts of social skills and social competence, which limits its value as an assessment instrument.

More recently, I have developed parent, teacher and pupil versions of questionnaires to assess social competence with peers, the Social Competence with Peers Questionnaires, reproduced in figure 4 and available for photocopying in the Photocopiable Resource Book. They assess the consequences of children’s interaction with peers, such as the existence and duration of friendships, or invitations to other youngsters’ parties or homes. These scales have the advantage of focusing specifically upon social outcomes as experienced by teachers, parents and children. Their psychometric properties are generally good and they provide a valuable
method for identifying youngsters who have interpersonal difficulties. Details regarding their development of these questionnaires are outlined in the Research and Technical Supplement.

Teachers can also be asked to rank or rate all children in their class on criteria such as popularity among peers, time spent alone, frequency of peer conflicts or aggressive outbursts. Alternatively, they can be asked to nominate certain children in their class who have problems in social relationships. Informal screening methods of this type are very useful in identifying socially maladjusted children but the reliability and validity of such techniques is questionable. This problem can be reduced by using informal screening methods in conjunction with information from other data sources to confirm the accuracy of the findings. The Teacher Nomination Form in the Photocopiable Resource Book and reproduced in Figure 5 illustrates an informal method for nominating children with interpersonal difficulties at school. Descriptions of problem behaviors and relationship difficulties are provided in order to facilitate the identification of appropriate pupils.

![TEACHER NOMINATION FORM](image)

**Figure 5 Teacher Nomination Form**

Information from peers

Peers can also provide valuable information to identify those classmates who are having interpersonal difficulties. For example, peer sociometry has been widely used as an indication of social competence amongst children. Two major types of
sociometry are typically used, namely peer nomination and roster or rating systems. Peer nomination requires each child in the class to specify a certain number of children whom they like or dislike the most, or with whom they would most like or dislike to take part in a particular activity. The Peer Nomination Form in the Photocopiable Resource Book and reproduced in Figure 6 can be used to obtain information about sociometric status from the peer group and was used in a study reported by Tiffen and Spence (1986). Roster or rating systems can take various

![Peer Nomination Form](image)

Figure 6 Peer Nomination Form

forms. For example, children can be asked to rate each classmate on a scale of like–dislike. Numerous variations of sociometric methods exist and the interested reader is referred to Kane and Lawler (1978) or Asher and Hymel (1981) for useful summaries.

Studies have shown that various subgroups of children can be identified from sociometric methods. These include rejected children who tend to receive a large number of negative votes from their peers, popular children who tend to receive many positive votes, neglected children who receive few votes of any type and various residual categories (Coe et al., 1982). Generally, rejected children are found to show higher rates of non-compliant and aggressive behaviour. Neglected children, on the other hand, tend to spend more time alone and converse less with their peers. Such findings support the use of sociometric methods as a means of identifying children who are likely to experience interpersonal problems. The short-term
The User's Guide

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

test-retest reliability of most sociometric methods is found to be acceptable, further supporting their use in the classroom (Busk et al., 1973).

Peers may also be asked to complete questionnaires which evaluate the behaviour of their classmates. Pekarik et al. (1976) reported the use of the Pupil Evaluation Inventory. All children in the class are asked to identify peers who meet specific behavioural descriptions within three distinct areas, namely aggression, withdrawal and likeability. Unfortunately, the items confound social skill and social competence areas. For example, some items reflect the consequences of behaviour (such as ‘Those who are liked by everyone’; ‘Those who have very few friends’) whereas others concern more specific macro-skill behaviours (such as ‘Those who help others’, ‘Those who are rude to the teacher’).

In practice, you may have some concerns about the ethics of asking children in a classroom to discuss the behaviour of their classmates. Ethical issues should also be considered in the use of sociometric methods to ask children whom they like and dislike in the peer group. Obviously, certain safeguards are important if peer information is to be collected. Peer information should not be used for only one child in a classroom, as this tends to single out a particular child and runs the risk of negative labelling effects. Peer assessment can be useful, however, if all children in the class are being considered and the method is being used to identify those children who have problems with peer relationships. In this case the whole class is the focus of assessment and no one child is singled out. Even so, it is essential that all the information produced is kept strictly confidential. I recall entering one classroom in which the results of the sociometric survey had been put up on the wall of the class on a large poster. This can only have had a detrimental impact upon the unfortunate children who were neglected and rejected by their peers and this action would probably have served to perpetuate their peer problems.

Self-report measures

Children are another important source of information about their own social competence, although their awareness of social difficulties may be reflected in different ways. Some children may feel a desire for certain events to happen more or less often, such as a desire for more friends or less bullying from peers. Others may experience negative emotions such as fear, anxiety or anger in particular social situations. Feelings of loneliness or general feelings of dissatisfaction with certain social relationships (for example, ‘I don’t get on with my parents’) are further illustrations of how children can experience the negative consequences of interpersonal problems.

It is important to remember, however, that self-report information can often be biased as we are not always very accurate in judging how successful we are with others or how other people view us. Some children tend to overestimate their social successes and seem to be oblivious to the negative reactions of others. In contrast, others are much more self-critical and underestimate their own social achievements. Thus, self-report data should always be used in conjunction with information from other sources in order to validate the child’s view.
Figure 7 List of Social Situational Problems

There are several questionnaire measures that can be used to assess how children feel about their social relationships. For example, the Peer Relationship Satisfaction questionnaire was developed by Asher and Wheeler (1985) to assess feelings of loneliness and satisfaction with peer relationships. Self-report scales may also be used to assess children’s subjective distress relating to social interaction. For example, Warren et al. (1984) report the use of the Watson and Friend (1969) Social Avoidance and Distress Scale and the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale with junior high-school students. I developed the List of Social Situation Problems (available for photocopying in the Photocopiable Resource Book and reproduced in Figure 7) to identify specific interpersonal situations that are experienced as difficult, uncomfortable, or hard to handle by children and adolescents (Spence 1980). Children answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ depending upon whether they consider the situation to be a problem for them, with a total score being generated from the number of items marked ‘Yes’. The situations were generated by a group of 11–13 year olds during a discussion session in which they were asked to list the type of social situations that they found to be problematic. The 60 most commonly reported situations were retained in the questionnaire.

Factor analysis of the List of Social Situation Problems revealed eight factors, accounting for a total of 71 per cent in the variance of questionnaire items, each of which reflected a specific type of social problem such as social anxiety/assertiveness, dealing with strangers, temper control, social discomfort, conflict situations, prob-
lems with parents, making friends and dealing with persons of the opposite gender (Spence and Liddle, 1990). These factor scores can be used to identify the kinds of social situations that children find problematic and that may be targeted in social skills training programmes. Scores on the checklist varied minimally across different age groups. Girls, however, reported a greater number of social problems than boys on factors relating to social anxiety/assertiveness and dealing with strangers.

The psychometric properties of the List of Social Situation Problems have been found to be satisfactory, with excellent internal reliability (0.86) and temporal stability (0.90) over a two-week period (Spence and Liddle, 1990). The construct validity of the checklist has also been demonstrated. A comparison of the responses of matched groups of depressed and non-depressed children on the List of Social Situation Problems indicated a higher level of social problems amongst the depressed group, compared to their non-depressed peers (ibid.), particularly on the factors relating to social discomfort and conflict situations. Furthermore, Furnham and Gunter (1983), in a study of 210 English adolescents (with a mean age of 17), found a negative correlation between the List of Social Situation Problems and the extraversion scale of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (r = −0.50), where r is the Pearson Product Moment correlation), and a positive correlation between neuroticism and the List of Social Situation Problems total score (r = 0.57). Finally, the List of Social Situation Problems has been found to be a useful outcome measure in several research studies (Jackson and Marzillier, 1983; Spence and Marzillier, 1981; Tiffen and Spence, 1986).

**The Assessment of Social Skills**

If the information obtained from interviews, sociometric measurement, teacher nomination or questionnaires suggests that the youngster does have interpersonal difficulties, then the assessment proceeds to a more in-depth evaluation of social skills and other possible explanations. Considerable progress has been made over the past decade in the development of measures that focus specifically upon the child’s overt social skills and that have acceptable psychometric properties.

One of the first teacher questionnaires for the assessment of social skills was developed by Stephens (1979). The Social Behaviour Assessment is a 136-item questionnaire that examines 30 subcategories of classroom behaviours, grouped into 4 broad categories (environmental behaviours, interpersonal behaviours, task-related behaviours and self-related behaviours). Teachers are asked to rate each item on a scale which assesses the frequency of occurrence of the behaviour. The scale has been shown to discriminate successfully between samples of emotionally disabled and non-emotionally disabled children (Stumme et al., 1982). A further study by Stumme et al. (1983) reported six major factors on the Social Behaviour Assessment, relating to academic responsibility, social responsibility, cooperation, compliance, adaptive behaviour and participation, which differs from the four dimensions outlined by Stephens (1979). This finding therefore brings into question the validity of the dimensions proposed by Stephens (1979). Unfortunately, the Social Behaviour
Assessment is rather long and tedious to complete and many of the items included on the questionnaire are non-social in nature (for example, ‘To use playground equipment safely’, ‘To drink properly from the waterfountain’) or reflect academic task-oriented behaviours. This tends to limit its usefulness as a method of assessing children’s social skills.

The Teacher Rating of Social Skills—Children (Clark et al., 1985) is similar to the Social Behaviour Assessment, but much shorter. Items were selected from a range of social skill assessment measures and behaviours that had been demonstrated to predict peer acceptance. The fifty-two items are each rated on a five-point rating scale of the frequency of the behaviour. Factor analysis revealed four main factors, relating to academic performance, social initiation, cooperation and peer reinforcement. The latter three factors include a wide range of social skill behaviours, whereas the academic factor includes a variety of responses which are non-social in nature (for example, ‘Keeps desk clean and neat’, ‘Completes classroom assignments within required time’). The scale was found to correlate significantly with teacher ratings on the Walker Problem Behaviour Identification Checklist.

Recently, Gresham and Elliott (1990) developed parent, teacher and child versions of the Social Skills Rating System. Specific prosocial behaviours are rated for frequency of occurrence, providing scores on scales of self-control, assertion, compliance and responsibility, as well as a total score. Separate versions are available for elementary and secondary grades, evaluating behaviour on scales of cooperation, assertion, empathy and self-control. Although the Social Skills Rating System has been well researched and standardized, it unfortunately confounds the assessment of social skills and outcomes of social interaction (that is, social competence) within the one scale. Thus, items about the outcomes of social functioning (for example, ‘is liked by others’) are mixed up with items about how the child behaves (for example, ‘ends disagreements with others calmly’). Furthermore, some of the items are problematic in that they relate to activities that are not interpersonal in nature. For example, items such as ‘I keep my desk clean and neat’ or ‘I finish classroom work on time’ do not really concern interaction with others.

Another commonly used social skills questionnaire is the Matson Evaluation of Social Skills for Youngsters (Matson, Rotation and Helsel, 1983; Matson, Esvedt-Dawson and Kazdin, 1983; Matson et al., 1986), with forms available for pupils and teachers. The scale can be used with children aged 4–18 and describes a wide range of positive and negative social behaviours. It has been found to be valuable in the assessment of a range of special categories including children with visual, hearing or intellectual impairments (Matson and Ollendick, 1988). Although the scale can be commended for focusing primarily on specific behavioural skills, the teacher version has the limitation of including attitudinal items (for example, ‘Thinks that winning is everything’, ‘Always thinks something bad is going to happen’, ‘Wants to get even with someone who hurts him/her’). It does not seem appropriate to request teachers to attribute emotional states or attitudes to children and it would be preferable to limit teacher report to observation of overt behaviour.

Other social skills assessment measures have been limited to specific areas of
social functioning, particularly those situations in which assertive responses are required. Although assertive responding is obviously an important interpersonal skill, scales that focus on this area have the limitation of neglecting other important social situations. One example of such a scale is the *Children’s Action Tendency Scale* (Deluty, 1979 and 1984) that assesses the degree to which children tend to show aggressive, submissive or assertive responses to conflict situations. The original version of the scale consisted of thirteen conflict situations, but a more valid version of the questionnaire was obtained using only ten of the original items (Deluty, 1979). For each situation three pairs of response alternatives are provided. By selecting between aggressive vs assertive, assertive vs submissive and aggressive vs submissive alternatives, the relative tendency towards each type of responding can be assessed. The ten-item version of the *Children’s Action Tendency Scale* is reported to have adequate psychometric properties and normative data is available for Australian as well as US children (Deluty, 1979 and 1984; Spence and Kennedy, 1989). Scores have been found to correlate significantly with direct behavioural observation measures of assertiveness, submissiveness and aggressiveness (Deluty, 1984), thereby confirming the validity of the scale.

Two other assertiveness questionnaires have been developed for use by children. The *Children’s Assertive Behaviour Scale* (Michelson and Wood, 1982) involves a list of 27 items to which children are asked to select one of five alternative responses that best describes their likely behaviour in a specific situation requiring an assertive response. Each alternative response reflects either a passive, assertive, or aggressive action. Acceptable psychometric properties were reported across several independent investigations (ibid.)

Ollendick (1983) reported the development of the *Children’s Assertiveness Inventory*. This measure includes 14 items that depict positive or negative social situations requiring an assertive response and that involve peers of the same age. Children respond to a yes/no format, making the measure suitable for use with children as young as six years. A total assertiveness score is produced, but the measure does not provide additional scores for aggressive or submissive responding as is the case for the *Children’s Assertive Behaviour Scale* and *Children’s Action Tendency Scale*. Ollendick reported good test-retest reliability for the *Children’s Assertiveness Inventory*, but internal consistency was relatively weak. In a subsequent study, Scanlon and Ollendick (1985) compared the *Children’s Assertiveness Inventory* with the *Children’s Assertive Behaviour Scale* and *Children’s Action Tendency Scale*. Only the *Children’s Assertiveness Inventory* was successful in distinguishing children who were nominated by teachers as aggressive from those nominated as assertive.

In order to overcome the limitations with existing measures, I have recently developed the Social Skills Questionnaires, a social skills assessment measure that focuses upon a wide range of social skill behaviours in children aged 8–18. Versions have been designed for parents, teachers and pupils; they are available for photocopying in the *Photocopiable Resource Book* and are reproduced in Figure 8. Details regarding their development are outlined in the *Research and Technical*
The Assessment of Social Competence and Social Skills

Figure 8 Social Skills Questionnaires
Figure 8 Social Skills Questionnaires (cont)

Supplement. The psychometric properties of these scales are generally good and they provide a valuable assessment of specific behavioural skills.

The Assessment of Social Anxiety

The assessment of anxiety relating to social situations is important in order to consider whether problems in social responding may be the result of skill inhibition. Although several questionnaires have been developed for the assessment of social anxiety in adults, very few measures are available for use with children. Although various authors have stressed the need for separate evaluation of the physiological, cognitive and motor components of social anxiety, most attention has been paid to the cognitive and behavioural aspects. Questions have typically related to avoidance behaviour and subjective feelings of fear or anxiety. The pioneers in this area were Watson and Friend (1969), who explored two components of social anxiety in summer school students in Canada: firstly, the tendency to avoid and experience discomfort in social situations; secondly, the fear of negative evaluation by others. This led to the development of two scales, namely the Social Avoidance and Distress Scale and the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale. These scales continue to be used extensively in research and clinical practice with adults and have been shown to have robust psychometric properties.

Although these scales are acceptable for use with older adolescents they are not appropriate for use with younger children. This led La Greca and colleagues (1988...
# The Assessment of Social Competence and Social Skills

## Social Worries Questionnaire – PARENT(S)

**Date:** Young person's name: 

**Class:** School: 

**Parent's name:** Father's age: 

**Parent's name:** Mother's age: 

**Name of parent completing the form:** 

Please put a circle around the rating which best describes your son or daughter over the past four weeks. 

Circle the number 0 if the item is not true. Circle the number 1 if the item is sometimes true. Circle the number 2 if the item is mostly true. 

**Please answer all items:** 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He or she:</th>
<th>Not true</th>
<th>Sometimes true</th>
<th>Mostly true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Avoids or gets worried about going to parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Avoids or gets worried about using the telephone</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Avoids or gets worried about meeting new people</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Avoids or gets worried about sharing work in the class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Avoids or gets worried about attending clubs or sports activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Avoids or gets worried about approaching a group of children to ask to join in</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Avoids or gets worried about being in front of a group of adults</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Avoids or gets worried about being in a shop alone to buy something</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Avoids or gets worried about standing up for himself/herself with other kids</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Avoids or gets worried about entering a room full of people</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Social Worries Questionnaire – TEACHER

**Date:** Pupil's name: 

**Class:** School: 

**Teacher's name:** Father's age: 

**Teacher's name:** Mother's age: 

**Teacher's name:** Child's age: 

**Teacher's name:** Child's age: 

**Teacher's name:** Child's age: 

**Teacher's name:** Child's age: 

Please put a circle around the rating which best describes this pupil over the past four weeks. 

Circle the number 0 if the item is not true. Circle the number 1 if the item is sometimes true. Circle the number 2 if the item is mostly true. 

**Please answer all items:** 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He or she:</th>
<th>Not true</th>
<th>Sometimes true</th>
<th>Mostly true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Avoids or gets worried about presenting work in the class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Avoids or gets worried about attending parties or sports activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Avoids or gets worried about approaching a group of children to ask to join in</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Avoids or gets worried about standing up for himself/herself with peers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Avoids or gets worried about answering questions in class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Avoids or gets worried about reading aloud in class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Avoids or gets worried about asking questions in class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Avoids or gets worried about telling a teacher if he/she doesn't understand something</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Figure 9 Social Worries Questionnaires**

48
and 1993) to develop a similar measure for 8–12 year olds. The Social Anxiety Scale for Children involves 18 items that relate to factors of fear of negative evaluation, social avoidance and distress in new social situations, and social avoidance and distress in general social situations. To date, the use of the La Greca measure is limited to 8–12 year olds, but it provides a valuable assessment of the main aspects of social anxiety.

The sparsity of measures for assessing social anxiety with youngsters led me to develop the Social Worries Questionnaires, available for photocopying in the Photocopiable Resource Book and reproduced in Figure 9. These scales were designed for 8–18 year olds and examine social anxiety from the perspective of avoidance and worry about specific social situations that form the basis of social phobia and anxiety disorder in youngsters (Silverman, 1991). Teacher, parent and pupil report versions were developed and provide an indication about the severity and nature of social anxiety problems in youngsters. Details regarding the development of these scales and their psychometric properties are provided in the Research and Technical Supplement.

**Self-Report Assessment of Unhelpful Thoughts, Attitudes and Beliefs**

The final area of the use of self-report questionnaires to be mentioned here is in the assessment of unhelpful attitudes, beliefs and thoughts. The development of methods
for children to assess their thoughts and attitudes relating to social interaction is in its infancy. Some of the measures designed for use with adults may be helpful with older adolescents (Arnkoff and Glass, 1989). For example, questionnaires such as the Social Interaction Self-Statement Test (Glass et al., 1982), the Social Anxiety Thoughts Questionnaire (Hartman, 1984) and the Irrational Beliefs Test (Jones, 1969) may be useful with the 14–18 age group.

With younger children, various methods can be used to help identify children’s thoughts and beliefs about themselves and social situations. For example, cartoons with empty speech bubbles can be used to ask youngsters to fill in what they would be thinking in a particular situation (Kendall and Chansky, 1991) Those who are old enough to write down their thoughts independently can be taught to use a self-monitoring sheet to record their thoughts when they encounter a difficult social situation in daily life (for example, Beidel, 1991). Alternatively, you can generate some social tasks within a clinic setting or at school and then ask the child to describe his or her thoughts during the task. This method has been used effectively to identify fearful and negative thinking in anxious children (for example, Prins, 1985 and 1986; Zatz and Chassin, 1983 and 1985). In our own clinic, we are using a method in which children are videotaped while they take part in role-played tasks. The tapes are then replayed to the child, who is asked to describe what he or she was thinking at specific points (Arnkoff and Glass, 1989).

Recently, a few standard questionnaires have been developed for identifying unhelpful thinking styles in children. These include the Children’s Anxious Self-Statement Questionnaire (Ronan et al., 1988) and the Children’s Cognitive Error Questionnaire (Leitenberg et al., 1986). The latter measure was constructed to assess four types of negative cognitive errors derived from Beck’s cognitive theory of adult depression: overgeneralized predictions of negative outcomes; catastrophizing the consequences of negative events; incorrectly taking personal responsibility for negative outcomes; and selectively attending to negative features of an event.

Several measures are available to assess attributional style in children. The most commonly used is the Children’s Attributional Style Questionnaire (Kaslows et al., 1978). This questionnaire consists of 48 items, each of which describes a particular situation (for example, ‘You get good grades’). Half of the situations describe an event with a ‘good’ outcome and half involve ‘bad’ outcomes. Two possible explanations are given for why each situation occurred (for example, ‘I am a hard worker’ vs ‘School work is simple’). The alternative explanations differ on internal/external, specific/global and stable/unstable dimensions. Children are instructed to choose the alternative that describes best why the event in question happened to them. Slaby and Guerra (1988) reported a method for the assessment of adherence to beliefs that: aggression is a legitimate solution to interpersonal problems; aggression increases self-esteem; aggression helps to avoid a negative image; victims deserve aggression; and victims don’t suffer.

The Assessment of Social Perception Skills
Various measures have been developed to assess the child’s ability to correctly
interpret the non-verbal cues of others. For example, my own research (Spence, 1980) presented a practical method for assessing children’s ability to label correctly the cues of posture, gesture, facial expression and tone of voice. Most other measures of social perception ability have been developed for research purposes and there is a marked lack of information concerning their reliability and validity as clinical assessment tools.

Two forms are included in the Photocopyable Resource Book and reproduced in Figure 10 for the assessment of perception of emotion from facial expression and posture cues, intended for use with the eight laminated Photo Cards. The facial expression stimuli on Photo Cards 1-4 were generated through simulation, by developing a series of vignettes that described a situation which was likely to trigger emotional reactions. These vignettes were then read out to the models, who were asked to imagine how they would feel in that situation and to demonstrate what their facial expression would be. The posture stimuli on the Photo Cards 5-8 depict six feelings through body position.

Normative data is not provided here for these stimuli. My previous research (Milne and Spence, 1987) demonstrated that most children over the age of eight are able to decode facial expressions and postures correctly. This produces a ceiling effect in that the majority of older children achieve maximum scores. Nevertheless, the stimuli can be used to identify those children who do have specific difficulties with social perception. The facial expression and posture stimuli on the Photo Cards are included in Social Skills Training merely as an informal method of assessing social perception skills. They are not presented as psychometric tests as such.

There are also many assessment measures that have been developed to assess the child’s abilities in the areas of social perspective-taking, role-taking or empathy. Numerous methods are available to assess the different aspects of social perspective-taking, although few have been demonstrated to have satisfactory psychometric properties. For example, the Social Perspective-Taking Task (Chandler, 1973) involves six cartoon sequences in which an early experience of the main character shapes his or her later behaviour. A person arriving later does not see or know about the events that precipitate the behaviour and the child is asked to tell the story from the perspectives of different characters in the situation. The degree of egocentric explanation is scored from 0 (advanced social perspective-taking) to 4 (completely egocentric, failing to differentiate the knowledge and emotions of separate characters). Test-retest reliability of the measure is reported to be high (ibid.). A further method of assessing social perspective-taking is the structured interview measure developed by Selman (1980), which has now been widely used in research studies.

The area of empathy has also received considerable attention, with tests such as the Affective Situation Test for Empathy (Feshbach and Roe, 1968) and the Index of Empathy for Children (Bryant, 1982). These tests assess the child’s vicarious emotional response to the perceived emotional experiences of others. The Borke Test (Borke, 1971) also provides a simple measure of role-taking ability, which is useful in practice although there appears to be a lack of research into its psychometric properties.
### Assessment of perception of emotion from FACIAL EXPRESSION

#### SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

**Name:**  
**Age:**  
**Date of birth:**

**Answerer:**  
**Date of test:**

---

#### SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

**Name:**  
**Age:**  
**Date of birth:**

**Answerer:**  
**Date of test:**

---

---

### Figure 10 Assessment of perception of emotion from facial expression and posture cues
Assessment of Social Problem-Solving Skills

Very few methods of assessing social problem-solving skills have been researched to establish their reliability and validity; the measures developed by Spivack and Shure have received the most attention. The *Preschool Interpersonal Problem Solving Test (PIPS; Spivack and Shure, 1974)* evaluates the ability to generate alternative solutions to interpersonal problems among three to five year olds and has been found to be useful with children up to eight. The test involves two sets of age relevant problems, one dealing with a peer conflict and the other concerning a conflict with a parent, to which children are asked to produce possible solutions without regard to the social acceptability of these responses. An adaptation of the *PIPS* test, which takes into account the quality of the solutions offered rather than just the quantity, was reported by Rubin et al. (1984). In addition to the *PIPS*, Spivack and Shure (1974) also described the What Happens Next? game, which was designed to assess children's ability to predict the consequences of behaviour. Platt and Spivack (1975) developed the *Means-Ends Problem Solving Test (MEPS)* to assess the child's ability to produce step-by-step methods for reaching solutions to interpersonal problems. Each story presents a beginning and an end to an interpersonal problem and the child is asked to fill in the middle to indicate various ways in which the problem may have been solved. An adaptation of this measure, called the *Open-Middle Interview (OMI)*, was produced by Polifka et al. (1981). This method presents the child with hypothetical age-relevant social problem situations in a cartoon format and asks the child to generate as many solutions to the problem as possible. A free-response format is used and answers are scored for the number of different solutions generated, the preferred solution and the effectiveness of each solution. Inter-rater reliability was reported to be good and the measure was found to differentiate between socially rejected and popular boys (Waas and French, 1989).

**Self-Monitoring, Self-Recording and Diaries**

Self-monitoring, self-recording and the keeping of diaries can provide valuable information to aid in the assessment process. Detailed information of this type is particularly useful in clarifying the nature of the problem and exploring causal factors. Information can be obtained regarding success in different situations, emotions, specific thoughts and the frequency of occurrence of various behaviours.

**Direct Behavioural Observation**

Observation and recording of behaviour in naturalistic or contrived situations can provide a great deal of useful information about the child's strategies of responding and use of micro-skills in social situations. Naturalistic situations provide the best indication of how a person usually behaves, assuming the observer's presence does not cause a change in behaviour. Several methods of observing and coding child behaviour in naturalistic settings have been developed (for example, Furman and Masters, 1980; Scarlett, 1980). These methods typically require considerable training and practice on the part of the observer before adequate levels of accuracy can be
achieved. Such difficulties have led to the development of rating scales in which adequacy of performance of specific micro-skills is rated, based on the subjective judgement of the assessor rather than empirical measurement of responses (see the section on the Basic Social Skills Assessment Chart on p.57).

Practical difficulties relating to observation in naturalistic settings have led to the development of a range of controlled methods of assessment, such as roleplays or simulated play situations to make observation an easier task (Bornstein et al., 1977; Tiffen and Spence, 1986). For example, the Behavioural Assertiveness Test for Children (Bornstein et al., 1977) and its revision (Ollendick et al., 1985) involve a series of standardized roleplay situations. A narrator describes a vignette of a social situation and the child is then asked to respond to a prompt presented by an assistant. The youngster’s response is then assessed in terms of verbal and non-verbal micro-skills and an overall rating of assertiveness. Inter-rater reliability for component behaviours and the general assertiveness rating were reported to be good (Ollendick et al., 1985).

Whereas the Behavioural Assertiveness Test scenes focus on situations demanding an assertive response, the Social Skills Test for Children (Williamson et al., 1983) examines a wider range of social situations. These include giving praise, accepting praise, giving help, accepting help and assertiveness. The assessor is required to rate each response in terms of component behaviours.

A variation of the roleplay method of assessment was reported by Rinn et al. (1986). This analogue measure involves a series of pictorial situations with matching narratives and prompts to which children are asked to respond. Responses to the 17 social situations are rated for the presence and acceptability of a range of social skills. Inter-rater reliability was reported to be good and the total score for social skilfulness was found to correlate significantly with peer sociometric measures (ibid.).

Although evidence suggests that the micro-skills assessed through roleplay tasks correlate significantly with overall ratings of social competence (Williamson et al., 1983), some authors have suggested that roleplay behaviour is not necessarily representative of real-life responding (for example, Bellack et al., 1978). In one study, little correlation was found between roleplay ratings of specific behaviours and measures taken of the same behaviours in ward-group situations (Van Hasselt et al., 1981). Given the questions raised regarding the validity of roleplay, it should be used cautiously. Wherever possible, the information obtained should be cross-checked against other data sources.

Other authors support the use of roleplay, and point out that valuable data can be obtained regarding global judgements of social competence and the use of specific social skills. Furthermore, the client can be questioned regarding feelings of anxiety and occurrence of unhelpful thoughts in specific roleplay situations. Wessburg et al. (1979) provided data that suggest that roleplay assessments may be valid in some situations. The response of college students was compared in two simulated, opposite-sex interactions and in two waiting-room situations. A good correlation was found for global judgements of social competence between the simulated opposite-sex interactions and the naturalistic waiting-room situation. However, it is debatable
whether a waiting-room setting is equivalent to a natural, day-to-day situation, and the reservations of Bellack et al. (1978) should still hold.

The Basic Social Skills Assessment Chart
Observation in real-life situations may provide a more valid alternative to roleplay or simulated interaction. For example, it is often informative to observe the youngster in a classroom and break period in order to examine how he or she interacts with teachers and peers. There are many coding systems to facilitate observation of this type but, unfortunately, they generally require intensive training before the observer can produce reliable recordings. A more simplistic method is to use the structured rating scale in the Basic Social Skills Assessment Chart, available for photocopying in the Photocopiable Resource Book and partly reproduced in Figure 11. These ratings provide useful information about basic micro-level social skills, but do not cover more complex strategies of responding in social situations.

The Basic Social Skills Assessment Chart was developed by me (Spence, 1980) to assist in the identification of specific basic social skill problems. It can be used by the assessor to rate basic skill performance during interviews, or during periods of observation in naturalistic settings, such as the classroom or home. It is recognized that basic skill problems are not always the result of insufficient use of a particular behaviour: it is also possible to engage in excessive amounts of a particular response. For example, too much eye contact can be just as problematic as too little eye contact. Thus, the descriptions which accompany each rating take into account excess as well as insufficient behavioural responding. The chart assesses the performance of thirty-two basic social skills. Each large segment is concerned with a certain group of social skills, for example, perception of emotions, basic non-verbal skills. Each of these groups concerns four individual social skills. There are five levels of performance of each specific skill. The inner circle represents the lowest level of functioning. If this level has been achieved by the client on a specific skill, then that segment is shaded in, as far as the inner circle line. Each subsequent circle represents progressively higher levels of performance. Each skill is assessed independently, and the rating of performance attributed to the client is shaded in. An outline profile of the client’s social skill performance is therefore produced. Each response is scored on a 1–5 rating on the score sheet with descriptions being provided to assist in making judgements about the adequacy of skill usage. Ultimately, the judgement of a deficit or excess in a particular area of social skill is dependent upon the subjective judgement of the assessor, which is an obvious limitation of rating scales such as this one.

Physiological Assessment
As discussed in Chapter 1, there is a need to investigate the ability to regulate and control various physiological response systems, such as those involved in anxiety, fear and anger. Excessive responding in these areas is likely to interfere with competent social responding (McFall, 1982) and intervention may be necessary. In
Figure 11 Basic Social Skills Score Sheet and Assessment Chart
practice, most practitioners will not have access to psychophysiological measuring devices, but individuals can be asked about their physiological reactions in different situations. If it seems likely that social behaviour is being influenced negatively by high levels of arousal relating to anger or anxiety, appropriate questions can be asked during interview. Youngsters may be asked to describe what is happening to their body during particular situations. For example:

"Can you tell me what was going on with your body when you were asked to stand up and speak during assembly? What was your heart doing? How about your muscles? Did you have any other feelings in your body, like in your stomach? Did you feel dizzy? Were you sweating?"

Assessment of Non-Social and Other Determinants of Social Competence

It is important to examine whether non-social or environmental factors are contributing to the child's problems of social competence, as outlined above. Parent, child and teacher interviews, in addition to direct behavioural observation, provide valuable data concerning personal characteristics of the child, antecedents and consequences of social behaviour, characteristics of persons making judgements regarding social competence, and the child's social networks and opportunities for social interaction. The following checklist may be used to guide assessment of non-social factors which may influence social functioning:

**CHECKLIST OF NON-SOCIAL FACTORS**

- **Characteristics of the child:**
  a) Physical attractiveness
  b) Sporting prowess
  c) Academic achievements
  d) Cultural differences
  e) Physical or intellectual disability
  f) Personal grooming and cleanliness
- **Characteristics of others:**
  a) Unrealistic expectations
  b) Cultural differences.

**Integrating The Information to Develop Targets for Intervention**

The assessment process described above makes use of information from multiple sources, whenever this is possible, including the parent, teacher and child. A variety
of assessment methods are also used, involving interviews, questionnaires and
direct behavioural observation. The initial aim of assessment is to determine if a
problem exists in the area of social competence. If problems of social competence
are found then the assessment proceeds to determine why this is the case.

The ultimate aim of assessment is to identify the reasons why a person is experi-
encing difficulties in their relationships with others and to pinpoint the changes that
are needed in order to improve social competence. The type of intervention that is
most suitable for a particular youngster will depend upon the reasons for their inter-
personal problems. If the assessment reveals that the young person is behaving in an
inappropriate way with others, then a change in behaviour is warranted. This may
involve the learning of new, positive ways of responding, which in turn can be
achieved by various means. Training in basic micro-skills, social problem-solving
skills and social perception skills may be beneficial if abilities in these areas are poor.
Similarly, relaxation training may be needed to reduce physiological arousal relating
to anger or anxiety, where this area is contributing to skill inhibition.

Alternatively, the assessment may suggest that the youngster is behaving appropri-
ately, but that his or her performance is being judged in a negative way by others
because of some non-social factor as outlined above. In such instances, intervention
may be better focused on changing these aspects, rather than teaching new skills. For
example, if conflict between parent and child reflects unrealistic expectations on the
part of the parent, it would be preferable to spend time discussing developmental
information with the parent, rather than implementing a social enhancement
programme for the child.

The assessment process also provides important information that can assist in the
design of an intervention programme for a youngster. For example, it is important to
know whether the parents and teachers would be willing to help with home-based
tasks in between sessions. Similarly, information about the child’s developmental
level will assist in selecting developmentally appropriate training goals and interven-
tion methods (as outlined in Chapter 1).
CHAPTER 3
Practical Aspects of Improving Social Competence

Overview

This chapter describes methods that may be used in the enhancement of social competence. It is important that the trainer has a good background knowledge of the basic intervention techniques that are typically used in social enhancement programmes. The following chapter outlines these approaches and provides practical guidelines for their use. In this chapter, information is provided to enable professionals with the skills, time and resources to design and implement individually tailored programmes. Chapter 4, on the other hand, is written for those practitioners who prefer the structure and guidelines of a session-by-session manual. There is inevitably some overlap between Chapters 3 and 4: many of the examples and exercises in this chapter also appear in Chapter 4. This enables the trainer to use Chapter 3 on a stand-alone basis without the need for cross-referencing.

In line with the model of social functioning proposed in Chapter 1, it is suggested that social enhancement needs to include the following components:

1. Training in performance of specific basic social skills, for example eye contact.
2. Social perception skills training.
3. Training in social problem-solving skills.
5. Replacement of unhelpful thoughts with positive, helpful thinking.
6. Application of these skills to specific social problems, for example, making friends, dealing with teasing or dealing with disagreements.

This approach should be reflected in the organization of the sessions of a social enhancement programme. It is recommended that the early sessions commence with the teaching of the basic social skills that are the building blocks of all social interaction. Social perception skills are also an important component of the early sessions. Once these skills are established, social problem-solving and cognitive restructuring strategies can be taught, using self-instructions to guide these processes. This may take several sessions. Children can then be taught to apply these skills in a sequence to deal with a range of social situations that commonly cause problems.

Behavioural Social Skills Training

The training of social skills typically includes those techniques that have been found to be effective in teaching other forms of skill, such as hitting a ball or riding a bike. These methods include instructions, discussion, demonstration (modelling), practice
Practical Aspects of Improving Social Competence

and feedback. The use of praise for correct performance and home-based practice outside teaching sessions is also important. The following information describes some of the practical aspects of using these methods.

Instructions and Discussion
We all learn a great deal from the instructions given by others. In social skills training, it is important that children play an active part in learning that particular social behaviours are important, rather than just being told to do something. This phase of the learning process should encourage children to identify which behaviours are important in their interaction with others and why this is the case. In the session guides for the social enhancement programme proposed in Chapter 4, you will note how the trainer involves children in this process. For example, in teaching children to use eye contact during conversations, the trainer might ask children to think of how they know when someone is listening or interested in what they are saying. The trainer can steer children to identify ‘looking’ as an important skill and can illustrate the problems produced if eye contact is insufficient. Pictures, videotapes and role-plays may be used to illustrate these points and to provide material for children to discuss. The aim of the discussion component of each session is to identify specific skills, to work out the rationale for why they are important and worth learning and finally to describe exactly how the skills should be performed.

Modelling
Another way of learning is through the observation of other people. Modelling refers to the demonstration of the skill to be learned and may take various forms. It may consist of pre-prepared videotapes or audiotapes that show someone using the target skill. These tapes can be prepared in advance by the trainer using children who are skilled at performing the target behaviour. Alternatively, commercially available tapes could be used, such as the audiotapes from the Structured Learning Therapy programme of Goldstein et al. (1986). Although the preparation of your own video modelling tapes might seem rather daunting at first, they are actually very easy to make. Children can be selected out of the classroom to help you and provided with very simple scripts and instructions. One child could be given a vignette such as, ‘You are asked to look after a new classmate at school and you decide to find out a few things about him/her’. Another child could be given the script, ‘You have just started a new school and the teacher asks another classmate to look after you. You decide to find out a few things about him/her’. The children then act out the situation while being videotaped, trying to make it as realistic as possible. Other useful tapes can be designed to illustrate dealing with teasing, criticism from a teacher, an argument with a parent, asking to join in with a game at school and so on.

If modelling tapes are not available, then an alternative is to use other children from the group or the group trainers as models. There is some evidence, however, that children learn the most from certain types of modelling. It has been suggested that the model should ideally be of similar age to the child, should be shown to receive some positive outcome after performing the target skill and should be
competent but not extremely skilled. This latter point is important, as children appear to learn best from models whom they see struggling slightly and who show how they coped with the situation, rather than an extremely confident and competent performer. Perhaps children just dismiss the very skilled performer as being so different from themselves that they do not attempt to copy the behaviour.

If the model is demonstrating a complex skill, such as joining a group of peers, then it is important that the various steps are identified, discussed, modelled and practised before being brought together. In the case of joining a group of peers, the steps could include approaching the group, waiting for an appropriate moment and then making a request to join in. It is also helpful to discuss strategies for dealing with unsatisfactory outcomes. For example, it is helpful to discuss methods of dealing with the situation if other children refuse to play with you when you approach them.

Ideally, the use of skills across a range of settings and with different individuals should be considered. For example, in sessions on dealing with conflict situations, the trainer could include modelling situations from the home, school and social settings. It is also important that modelling examples are made as vivid and realistic as possible. As much information should be obtained from the group about the characteristics of the situations that the children have to deal with and these details should be woven into the modelled demonstration. Props should be used to create a situation that seems as realistic as possible and which closely resembles that experienced by the child or children in the group.

Roleplaying

Roleplaying provides an opportunity for children to practise the skills observed during modelling, before they attempt to use them in real-life situations. The aim of roleplay is to act out the situation as it would occur in real life. Thus, it is important for the group leader to try to make the cues and content of the roleplay as realistic as possible.

Before the roleplay starts, the trainer asks one of the children to think of a real-life example, relevant to their own situation, in which the target skill or social problem would occur. The trainee is asked to describe the details of the situation, where it would happen, who would be present, and what the other people involved would be likely to say. The trainer reviews the steps and skills that the trainee should try to use in the situation. The trainee and others involved in the roleplay then act out the situation, with the trainee attempting to use the skills discussed, and should try to create as much realism as possible by using props and rearranging furniture. Ideally, the co-actors should be selected so that they resemble the real people involved in the situation in terms of age and gender. At the end of the roleplay, the trainer then provides feedback regarding the performance (see p.64).

The aim is to provide a realistic, but relatively unthreatening situation in which children can practise the skills they are learning. Not only does roleplay furnish an opportunity to practise skills and learn from feedback, but the protected environment of the group allows children to build up their confidence and reduces anxiety about using their skills. When a particular trainee has completed a roleplay, other group
members are then asked to describe a situation relevant to their own experience and the next roleplay proceeds.

Roleplay may be adapted in various ways to produce some valuable results. It may be possible and helpful to bring other relevant people into the group to take part in the roleplays. For example, parents or teachers could be invited to attend the group in order to play themselves in the roleplays. Similarly, it is sometimes helpful to invite other children along, so that the children in the group get a chance to practise their skills with as wide a range of people as possible. This will increase the chance that the positive results of training will carry over from the group setting into everyday life.

Reverse roleplay is another valuable tool in teaching social skills. This method involves the swapping of roles so that the trainee plays the part of the other person in the interaction while someone else plays the role of the trainee. This gives trainees a chance to experience what it is like to be the other person in the interaction. When the roleplay is finished, the trainee and other performers may be asked about the feelings they experienced during the simulation. This is a valuable way of developing empathy skills in children. For example, with one adolescent who was having a large number of conflicts with his father, the father was asked to attend one session. The roleplay focused upon dealing with criticism, and a situation was selected in which the father had criticized his son for not cleaning his room properly after he had been asked to do so. In the reverse roleplay, the son played the role of the father and vice versa. This task produced some interesting results for both of them and they reported having a better understanding of each other's perspective.

**Giving Feedback**

Feedback is important whenever we learn a skill and provides the trainee with information about the degree to which the performance resembles what is being aimed for. It also provides information about the changes that are needed for improvement. As with any type of skill, children learn in stages and gradually become more proficient at a task. It is important, therefore, to break social skills down into steps and try to produce gradual improvements in target skills.

There are several guidelines for providing feedback to children. First, feedback should be given immediately after the practice or roleplay. Second, the feedback should be clear and specific, highlighting the exact behaviours that are good and those that need improvement. Third, feedback should be as positive and constructive as possible, so that the group remains a non-threatening place. The trainer needs to focus initially on the good points of the performance and to give negative feedback in a constructive and positive way. This should provide instructions regarding ways in which the performance could be improved. Fourth, feedback should be accompanied by praise and other forms of social reinforcement. This makes it more likely that the positive behaviours will be repeated in the future. The following example illustrates these points: "Tony, I really liked the way you looked at Sarah when you were talking to her. That was excellent. Now, I would like you to try that again and see if you can ask your question just a little bit louder so that
we can hear you.’

Some group leaders involve the other group members in giving feedback, which can be valuable if carefully controlled. It is important that other group members are not permitted to be critical of a trainee’s performance and questions should be phrased so as to encourage positive comments from the group, such as ‘Can anyone tell me what they think Tony did really well that time?’ The type of feedback used may also vary and may include video- or audiotaped feedback as well as verbal feedback from the trainer or group. If taped feedback is to be used, the roleplay sessions are taped and replayed for the trainee to observe or listen to. I have found videotaped feedback very effective with some children and adolescents who enjoy seeing themselves on TV and who also enjoy filming each other. If tapes are replayed in front of the group, it is again important to ensure that comments are kept constructive and positive. Some children are highly anxious about being videotaped or watching themselves during playback, and the use of this method is not recommended with such children. In some instances this may also be a problem with audiotape.

Setting Home Tasks
A characteristic of behavioural social skills training is the use of home tasks to encourage skill development between sessions. Home tasks are also important in teaching other aspects of social competence, such as social perception skills, but the general procedures will be discussed here. It is worth investing a good deal of time in the development of home tasks, and their completion should be seen as extremely important by trainer and trainees alike. There is a limit to the amount of learning that can occur during skills training sessions, and repeated practice outside sessions is therefore essential for competent skill performance. Home tasks are also one of the most important ways of encouraging children to learn to use their new skills in real-life situations. The effectiveness of many social skills training programmes has been severely limited by the lack of carry-over of new skills from the training session to everyday life: this problem is discussed in the section ‘Transferring the improvements into everyday life’ (see p. 100). One of the best ways of making sure that children do learn to use their skills in real-life situations is to have them practise at home or school between sessions. They will then be more likely to carry on using their new skills once the training sessions end. Photocopy masters for a set of Home Tasks are provided in the separate Photocopiable Resource Book.

Given the importance of home tasks, the trainer needs to use a variety of methods to make sure that the home practice is actually done. First of all, children often resist the idea of homework and it helps if a different term is used, such as ‘home task’ or ‘home-based task’. Second, the trainer should explain the reason for the tasks and the benefits that can be produced through regular practice outside sessions. Each session should always begin with a review of the previous session’s hometasks and these should be taken seriously and discussed with appropriate attention. All children should be given the chance to discuss the outcome of their home tasks and to outline any problems that they experienced. Praise should be given even if the
Practical Aspects of Improving Social Competence

efforts did not produce a successful outcome. If problems were experienced with the home task, the trainer may need to review the skills involved and provide the opportunity to roleplay the target skill again. A further attempt at the home task may be required prior to the next session, until a successful outcome is experienced. If children do not complete their home assignment, then this should be discussed as a serious matter and the expectation for successful completion in the future should be established.

Each session should end with the setting of home tasks, with enough time reserved to do this properly rather than being crammed in at the last minute. It helps if all home assignments are written down so that children do not have to rely on memory. A written record also acts as a prompt to remind trainees to do their tasks and provides information for parents and teachers about each child’s assignment. Instruction sheets for home tasks can be pasted into the children’s scrap books or folders which should always be brought to each session. Alternatively, pre-prepared home-task booklets can be used of the type outlined by Tiffen and Spence (1986). These booklets include cartoons that illustrate the use of particular skills and also incorporate outlines for home tasks for each session.

In addition to writing down the details of each task, trainees should be asked to write down the outcome of their assignment. This material can then be used as the basis for the discussion of the home task at the next session. Tasks should always be very clear and specific, outlining the exact target for each trainee, stating what, where, when and with whom. The assignment may involve skill practice with another person or may include a written task of some form. For example, children may be asked to complete a set of open-ended sentences in order to learn more about emotions (for example, ‘I feel angry when . . .’ or ‘I feel guilty when . . .’). Tasks that concern the practice of specific skills during a social interaction require clear guidelines. For example, Tony’s home task for one session was to ask his father if he could invite a friend over to stay the night. He agreed to practise this task on Wednesday evening. Tony’s home-task sheet recorded exactly what he was to do, when and with whom. The home task followed on from the skills practised during the session.

Home tasks may involve pre-prepared materials or may be assigned at the end of the training session after consultation with each group member. During this consultation process it is a good idea to pre-empt non-compliance by asking the child how confident he or she is that the task will be completed and whether any problems are anticipated. This process gives the trainer a chance to make any alterations to the task so that completion will be more likely. It is also important with interaction tasks to forewarn children of possible negative responses from other people. For example, in the setting of a target to approach a group of peers during the lunch break to ask to join in their game, it is feasible that the group could be very rejecting even if the child used an appropriate strategy. It is therefore important that the child learns strategies for dealing with failure experiences of this type. In addition, the trainer could set up situations outside sessions that are likely to result in positive outcomes. For example, it may be possible to encourage a small set of peers to respond positively to the child’s attempts to enter the group. A further guideline for making
a positive outcome more likely is to make sure that the tasks selected are likely to lead to success and are not too difficult for the child. Children are more likely to learn and use new skills if their attempts lead to successful outcomes.

**Teaching Social Perception Skills**

There are many different approaches to the teaching of social perception skills and the method outlined here is an extension of the programme developed by Milne and Spence (1987). The elements of the programme include:

- The ability to recognize and discriminate one's own emotions or feelings
- The ability to recognize and discriminate other people's emotions or feelings from their verbal and non-verbal cues
- The ability to identify the characteristics of social situations, such as the social rules and the aims of those involved
- The ability to understand how others may interpret or view social situations
- The awareness that a social problem exists.

The aim of social perception training is to teach these five areas of social sensitivity. In practice, it is difficult to separate out the training of each of these elements and it is more sensible to teach them simultaneously. For example, while children are learning about their own feelings they can also be learning about the feelings of others. The first step in the teaching of social perception skills is to provide children with a better understanding of different emotions and the types of situations likely to cause them. The second step then looks at the non-verbal cues that tell us how other people are feeling.

**Learning About Feelings**

The ability to be aware of one's own feelings and the feelings of others is an important element of social perception. This skill involves an awareness of the different types of emotions and the types of situations that are likely to cause such feelings. Several techniques are helpful in teaching children about feelings. These range from pictures or videotapes that depict people in different situations, to sentence-completion methods and stories that outline the different emotions and perspectives of those involved. The following tasks illustrate some of these methods.

**Feelings lists**

Children are asked to list as many different feelings as they can think of and then sort them into good and bad. These are then displayed on a board. The actual words used by the children should be retained, rather than translating them into adult terms. Each group tends to come up with a different list, but a typical example could look something like this:
Good feelings
- Happy
- Excited
- Bouncy
- Nice surprise
- Wow
- Peaceful
- Loving
- Proud of myself

Bad feelings
- Guilty
- Sad
- Worried
- Scared
- Bored
- Tired
- Hate
- Embarrassed

Sentence completion
There are various ways that the sentence-completion exercise can be adapted. Trainees may be asked to take turns to complete the sentences in the group or may work on them as a home task (see Home Task Sheet 2 in the Photocopiable Resource Book). The aim is to encourage youngsters to think of particular situations that actually apply to them. With younger children the sentences can be read aloud and discussed with the group, whereas older children can complete their list alone. Suitable sentences might include the following, which are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheet 2 in the Photocopiable Resource Book:

- I felt angry when . . .
- I felt sad when . . .
- I felt happy when . . .
- I felt afraid when . . .
- I felt bored when . . .
- I felt embarrassed when . . .
- I felt surprised when . . .
- I felt proud when . . .
- I felt guilty when . . .
- I felt disgusted when . . .

The answers given by the children can then be discussed in terms of the type of situations that produce different feelings.

Learning about emotions from stories
You will be able to think of many different stories that illustrate different feelings and how these change over time. The following example includes pauses where the trainer can stop to discuss the emotional content of the story.
TOM’S BIRTHDAY FEELINGS

It was Tom’s birthday. He woke up early and wondered if his parents were awake yet. He jumped out of bed and quickly got dressed. He was thinking about all the presents that he hoped to get. He was feeling _____________. He ran through to his parents’ bedroom. They were still asleep. He tiptoed around their room but could not see any presents. He sat down on the end of their bed, but they still did not wake up. He crept out of their room and looked through all the other rooms in the house, but could not find any presents. Then he slipped quietly back into this parents’ room and waited at the bottom of their bed. They were still fast asleep. For the next 30 minutes Tom sat at the end of their bed waiting for them to wake up. He was feeling _____________.

Suddenly his mother woke up. ‘Happy birthday Tom,’ she said and gave him a big hug. ‘Are you ready to open your presents yet?’ said his father. ‘Have a look in the cupboard over there.’ Tom opened the cupboard and there was a huge pile of presents all wrapped up. He felt _____________.

Just then, his younger sister Lisa walked in. She sat on the floor next to him as she watched him rip off the paper from each present. There was a beautiful new cassette player, just what he wanted, with some cassettes to go with it. One of them was by Lisa’s favourite singer. Then he opened the next present to find a big box of chocolates. Then a construction kit, a large box of crayons and art materials and a bed-side light for his room. Lisa sat silently as she watched Tom open his presents. She felt _____________.

That day, Tom took his new cassette player to school to show his friends. He didn’t tell his parents, because he knew they would say no. At lunch time, he took it out of his bag and played the new cassette. ‘Wow,’ said his friend, ‘That is terrific.’ Tom felt _____________. Just then, one of the older boys came over to look. ‘Hey, I’ll have that. Give me a turn,’ said the older boy, and he grabbed the cassette player from Tom. Tom felt _____________. Tom swatched at the cassette player and pulled hard to get it back. He shouted loudly at the boy to let it go. Suddenly the other boy let go and the cassette player fell to the ground. It landed with a crash and smashed on the floor, with a bit broken off and wires hanging out. Tom felt _____________.

A teacher heard the noise and came over to see what was happening. Tom explained and the teacher called the bigger boy over. She sent him to see the
school principal. The bigger boy walked over to the office. He felt ____________. Tom put the broken cassette player in his bag and went back to class. On his way home from school later that afternoon he started to wonder what he should tell his parents. Tom felt ____________. When he told his mother what had happened she felt _______________.

Teaching Children to Understand and Use Non-Verbal Social Cues

The exercises outlined above are helpful in teaching children to be more aware of emotions, but it is also essential to be able to identify the meaning of non-verbal cues of facial expression, gestures, posture and tone of voice. It is sensible to teach the use of non-verbal cues at the same time as teaching awareness of these signals in other people. That way, you can have some children observing and decoding social cues, while the rest of the group practise their use of non-verbal signals.

There are many tasks that can be used to teach the decoding and use of non-verbal social cues. Pictures of people (or cartoons) that show facial expressions or postures are useful here and children can be asked to identify the emotions depicted. You can use the eight individual Photo Cards provided with this programme, or you can develop your own materials, either from photographs or pictures from magazines. In addition, a useful set of facial expressions is provided in the Towards Affective Development kit (Dupont et al., 1974). You can also make short audiotapes that depict different emotions through tone of voice. In my 1980 text I suggested making a tape that contains two adults (one male and one female) and two children (one male and one female) speaking the numbers 1 to 10 in a manner that expresses the four main feelings of fear, happiness, anger and sadness. Trainees can then be asked to identify each emotion. Audiotapes of this type are relatively easy to make and provide a useful resource for teaching youngsters to discriminate different emotions through tone of voice. The content of the tape can involve any stimulus material which is neutral, such as the alphabet or numbers. This ensures that emotions are decoded from the tone of voice and not from the content of what is being said.

A more detailed guide to the teaching of non-verbal perception and skill is provided in the following chapter. Once children are able to label the major emotions correctly, the following exercises can then be used for further practice in demonstrating and decoding emotional expressions.

The miming task

Miming is a wonderful way to have children practise emotional expressions using non-verbal cues. The group is split into two for this task, with one subgroup doing the mime and the other observing and trying to work out the emotions being shown. You can design your own scripts, but an example is provided below. The miming subgroup are not provided with the script in advance, but are required to listen to
the script as it is read out by the trainer and carry out their mime simultaneously, altering their non-verbal signals in accordance with the story. The trainer calls a ‘Stop’ at intervals in order to discuss the non-verbal cues being shown.

Trainer: David and Sarah are on holiday. They are walking down to the beach. They are both feeling really happy. It is a beautiful, sunny day. They are carrying their towels and wearing their swimming costumes. They lie down on the beach and feel the warm sun on their skin. They are both feeling peaceful and relaxed.

Stop. [Discuss emotions, posture, gestures, facial expressions]

Suddenly, they both feel sand land on them. They look up and see two older kids kicking sand at them deliberately. David and Sarah both feel really angry. How dare these kids just come up and start annoying them like this. They both sit up and tell the kids to stop kicking sand.

Stop. [Discuss emotions, posture, gestures, facial expressions]

The other kids go away, but when Sarah lies down again, she realizes that her purse is missing. She searches under her towel and all around in the sand. She is feeling really worried now. She has to find that purse, it has all her holiday money in it. She is feeling really worried.

Stop. [Discuss emotions, posture, gestures, facial expressions]

Sarah now begins to get upset. David tries to make her feel better and offers her some of his money, but they go home to tell their parents. Their father calls the police and they all have to go down to the police station. They have never been into a police station before and when they walk in they see a large policeman in his uniform behind a high counter. He is not very friendly towards them and tells them to sit down and wait. Sarah and David both feel rather scared.

Stop. [Discuss emotions, posture, gestures, facial expressions]

There is a very long queue of people in front of them. They wait for an hour and are then asked to fill in a form that asks what happened. Then they are told to sit down and wait for another policeman to interview them. They wait and wait. Sarah and David start to feel bored. They wish it could all be over so that they could get back to the beach.

Stop. [Discuss emotions, posture, gestures, facial expressions]

Miming with a difference

Although miming is helpful in teaching facial expression, posture and gesture cues, it omits the valuable information provided by tone of voice. In this task, children are
allowed to use the numbers 1 to 10 in order to speak in a tone of voice that communicates emotion. Children work in pairs for this task and are given a script that outlines the situation to be acted out for the rest of the group. At the end of each scene, the various non-verbal cues are discussed. Possible scripts are listed below:

- Your dog has been killed by a car and you have to tell your sister when she gets home from school.
- You and your parents get home late and the house is all dark. There is a power cut and the electricity will not work. Your parents go off to look for a candle, leaving you alone. Just then, you think you hear someone moving about behind you. You call to your parents.
- You are working neatly on a piece of work in class. Another classmate deliberately walks up behind you and gives you a push, making your pen mess up your work. You tell the person not to do it again.
- You are walking along a footpath with a friend when you step in some dog’s mess. It goes all over your new shoes. You tell your friend how disgusting it is that people let their dogs do that on the footpath.
- You are getting off the school bus when you drop your bag and all your pens and papers fall out. You have to ask the bus driver to wait while you pick up all your things. Everyone else has got off the bus.

After completing these vignettes, children can be asked to produce their own examples of situations that depict specific emotions, which can then be mimed.

**Relaxation Training**

There are many occasions when our emotions interfere with our behaviour. Emotions such as anger, guilt and fear often prevent children from using their social skills. For example, a child may feel so afraid of walking up to a group of peers and asking to join in that he or she avoids other children, even though he or she may know exactly what to say. Similarly, high levels of anger make it more likely that children will respond in an aggressive way to any form of conflict, rather than using their social skills. For these reasons, it is important to teach children methods of controlling their emotions, so that they will be more likely to use the skills that you teach them in the social enhancement group.

Relaxation is a state that is incompatible with emotions such as anger and fear. It is very difficult to be angry or anxious at the same time as being relaxed. Thus, if we can teach youngsters to relax when social problems occur, this is likely to reduce negative emotions and make it easier for them to use their social skill.

There are many types of relaxation exercises that can be taught to children and adolescents. The most commonly used method includes a combination of muscle
tension and relaxation, along with relaxing images and thoughts. This is the approach used in Social Skills Training. Detailed scripts for relaxation exercises with children are given in the session guides of Chapter 4. The scripts are shorter than those normally used for adults, in order to accommodate a more limited attention span. It is important to capture the youngsters’ attention, which can be hard with those who fidget and fiddle. Try to make the sessions interesting and make sure the trainees realize why relaxation is important and helpful. The use of vivid images also helps them to attend to what is happening.

When you are giving the instructions, try to talk slowly and make your voice sound quiet and gentle. Your voice should have a hypnotic, calm quality to it. Pause in between the different instructions so that the children have time to follow them. Try to carry out the relaxation sessions in a quiet place with space to lie down or comfortable chairs to sit in.

Relaxation training generally involves six to eight sessions, with home-based practice in between. A relaxation practice record form is included in Home Task Sheet 1 in the Photocopiable Resource Book (reproduced in Figure 12). The duration of the scripts should tend to decrease with each session, as the youngsters become more skilled and able to relax faster. After they have become proficient at relaxation exercises, children can be taught faster ways of relaxing. Initially, relaxation practice should take place in a quiet situation; when the skills are well learned, they can be tried out in more difficult situations that cause negative emotions, such as anger or anxiety. This is called applied relaxation practice. It is also important to have children discover the kinds of situation that tend to trigger negative emotions. A home-based record can be used to help children identify these situations (see example below). Once relaxation skills have been learned, trainees can then be asked to practise relaxing in these difficult situations.

**RELAXATION PRACTICE**

Practise your relaxation exercises once every day for ten minutes. Try to tense up and relax each muscle like you did in the session. Pick a quiet time when you are alone. Find a comfy place, like your bed or a big chair.

Please fill in your record form each day. Put a circle around your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you do your practice?</th>
<th>How relaxed did you feel?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday Yes No</td>
<td>Not at all A bit Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday Yes No</td>
<td>Not at all A bit Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday Yes No</td>
<td>Not at all A bit Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday Yes No</td>
<td>Not at all A bit Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday Yes No</td>
<td>Not at all A bit Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Yes No</td>
<td>Not at all A bit Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Yes No</td>
<td>Not at all A bit Very</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write down any problems you have when you do your relaxation practice.

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From the Photocopiable Resource Book sold as part of Social Skills Training: Enhancing Social Competence with Children and Adolescents (Code 4320 97 61). Once the invoice has been paid, this sheet may be photocopied for use within the purchasing institution only.

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Figure 12 Home Task: 'Relaxation practice'
Identifying difficult situations
If there is any time that you feel bad, for example sad, angry, guilty or afraid, write down what is happening on this form.
What emotion are you feeling?

Where are you?

With whom?

What happened?

Teaching Positive, Helpful Thinking

Even when children are able to behave in a socially skilled way, they may not do so because of interfering factors. The way in which negative emotions and feelings interfere was mentioned above. Another closely related factor that determines how we behave is our thoughts. This area was discussed in Chapter 1, but a brief summary will be given here.

There are many types of thoughts that may prevent us from behaving in a socially skilled way. Imagine that a child approaches another to start a conversation and is thinking thoughts such as, 'I don't know what to say, this is awful. I know I will say something really stupid.' This type of self-talk is not likely to be helpful in dealing with the situation. It is quite likely that the child will avoid the situation or may perform badly if he or she makes the approach to the other child. It is possible to make children aware of their unhelpful thoughts and to replace them with more positive, helpful thinking. This area of work has been called cognitive restructuring. What is presented here is a very simple form of cognitive restructuring, as children have difficulty with some of the more complicated methods that are used with adults.

The method outlined below involves three components. The first is educational and teaches children what negative or unhelpful thoughts are and why they are problematic. The second step teaches youngsters to identify when they have unhelpful thoughts. Finally, children are taught to replace negative or unhelpful thoughts with more positive and helpful ways of thinking.

Step 1: What Are Unhelpful Thoughts?
First, children are taught some examples of negative, unhelpful thoughts and given a rationale as to why such thoughts are unhelpful. For example: 'Unhelpful thoughts
are those that stop you from solving a problem, that make you feel bad or make you behave in a way that leads to a bad outcome; ‘Helpful thoughts make you feel good, help you to solve problems and make it more likely that there will be a good outcome.’ It is useful to provide examples of unhelpful and helpful thoughts, and ask children what the person is likely to do or what the outcome will be. For instance:

- Tom is visiting some new neighbours with his mum. He thinks, ‘I don’t like meeting new people. It is really scary and I don’t know what to say. They won’t like me. I want to go home.’
  How does Tom feel?
  What is Tom likely to do?

- Sam is visiting some new neighbours with his mum. He thinks, ‘Oh, these people might have some kids who I could play with. I might ask them if I could come over and play in their tree-house sometimes.’
  How does Sam feel?
  What is Sam likely to do?

- Esther is told off by her teacher for talking in class. It wasn’t her.
  She thinks, ‘That teacher is always picking on me. I hate teachers. How dare she talk to me like that and make a fool of me in front of the class.’
  How does Esther feel?
  What is Esther likely to do?

- Jenny is told off by her teacher for talking in class. It wasn’t her.
  She thinks, ‘That wasn’t fair; it wasn’t me. Oh well, I might tell her after class. No one else in the class seemed to notice much.’
  How does Jenny feel?
  What is Jenny likely to do?

Home tasks or group activities can be used to encourage children to work out how different thoughts can produce good or bad feelings and whether they are helpful or unhelpful. Home Task Sheet 4 (Adolescents) in the Photocopiable Resource Book contains a suitable example, reproduced in Figure 13.

Step 2: Learning to Identify One’s Own Unhelpful Thoughts
In this second step, children are taught to identify where and when unhelpful thoughts occur. Most of us have unhelpful thoughts at some time or other, so it is usually possible to get children to identify a number of situations. This may be done partly in the group by asking children to recall a time when they had to face a
difficult interpersonal situation and where they felt really bad. They are then asked to remember the types of things they were thinking at the time and how this influenced their behaviour. A home-based task can be set for this purpose if youngsters have difficulty with the exercise in the group, as shown in the example below.

**DISCOVERING YOUR OWN UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS**

Try to think of a time when you felt bad in some way (such as angry, sad or afraid):

- Where were you?
- With whom?
- What happened?
- How did you feel?
- What were your unhelpful thoughts?
- What did you do next?

Sentence-completion tasks can also be used to illustrate the use of helpful or unhelpful thoughts. The example below can be set as a home-based task and discussed during the following session. The aim is to make the trainees aware of how their feelings and behaviour are influenced by their thoughts and that different thoughts are possible in the same situation.

**WHAT DO I THINK?**

Write down exactly what thoughts would go through your mind if each of these things happened to you.
When the teacher tells me off in front of the class I say to myself:

______________________________

How does this thought make you feel?

______________________________

Is this a helpful thought or an unhelpful thought?

______________________________

When I go up to a group of classmates to ask if I can join in their game I say to myself:

______________________________

How does this thought make you feel?

______________________________

Is this a helpful thought or an unhelpful thought?

______________________________

When someone in my class has a party and I am not invited I say to myself:

______________________________

How does this thought make you feel?

______________________________
Is this a helpful thought or an unhelpful thought?

When the teacher asks me to read out my work to the class I say to myself:

How does this thought make you feel?

Is this a helpful thought or an unhelpful thought?

When a parent tells me that I can't do something I really want to do I say to myself:

How does this thought make you feel?

Is this a helpful thought or an unhelpful thought?

When someone in my class teases me I say to myself:
Step 3: Changing Unhelpful Thoughts to Helpful Ones

Once children are able to tell the difference between helpful and unhelpful thoughts, they can be taught to alter the type of thoughts that they engage in when social problems occur. There are various ways in which this can be attempted, but you need to be very skilled at cognitive therapy if you are going to use the type of cognitive challenging methods that are frequently used with adults. Cognitive therapy with adults typically involves a complicated process of demonstrating that certain thoughts are irrational or incorrect and identifying more rational, logical interpretations of events. Many trainers will not have the therapy skills necessary to carry out cognitive therapy of this type; furthermore, many children have great difficulty with cognitive therapy.

The approach taken here is easier for children to follow. Once children are able to identify thoughts that make them feel bad, they are asked to think of positive alternatives, thoughts that would make them feel more positive emotions. This process begins with written examples of potential situations in which unhelpful thoughts are likely to occur. Examples of unhelpful thoughts are provided and the group are asked to suggest alternative, more helpful thoughts. Once this process has been learned, it is then applied in all future sessions when specific problem situations are discussed. Thus, for all future sessions, children are asked to identify some likely negative thoughts that would occur in each situation and to think of thoughts that would make it more likely they would behave in a way that would produce a positive result and make them feel good. The following tasks can be used to teach the basic principle of changing negative/unhelpful thoughts to more positive and helpful ones:

FINDING HELPFUL THOUGHTS

Try to think of some different thoughts that would make you feel better. Write them down in the spaces below.

Someone in your class is having a party and lots of your friends are going, but you are not invited.

Unhelpful thoughts: You think,
'This is awful. No one likes me. I am going to lose all my friends.'
Practical Aspects of Improving Social Competence

How are you feeling with this thought? ____________
What would be a more helpful thought? ____________

The teacher tells you off in front of the class for something that you didn’t do.

Unhelpful thoughts: You think,
He is always telling me off. He doesn’t like me. He never tells anyone else off.

How are you feeling with this thought? ____________
What would be a more helpful thought? ____________

Your mum won’t buy you a new computer game that you really want.

Unhelpful thoughts: You think,
This isn’t fair. All my friends have that game. It is really terrible if I can’t have it. My mum has to buy it for me.

How are you feeling with this thought? ____________
What would be a more helpful thought? ____________

In addition to written examples, the information from previous sessions, in which children recorded times when they felt bad, can be used to identify unhelpful thoughts. The group can then work out alternative thoughts that would make them feel better and produce a better outcome.

Social Problem-Solving

Several authors have adapted social problem-solving training for use with children, but each approach stems from the writings of D’Zurilla and Goldfried (1971). The most well-known social problem-solving programmes for children are those developed by Spivack and Shure (1976) and the Think Aloud programme (Camp and Bash, 1981). A further adaptation of this approach was described by Petersen and
Gannoni (1992) in their *Stop, Think, Do* programme. All these methods have in common the aim to teach children to use a series of steps in their thinking in order to respond in an appropriate way to social problems. As outlined in Chapter 1, this approach assumes that the way we behave is decided by our thought processes and that we go through a series of steps in our thoughts before deciding how to behave in social situations. These steps involve:

1. Identifying the existence and nature of a social problem
2. Thinking before acting, rather than being impulsive
3. Thinking of alternative possible ways of behaving to solve the problem
4. Predicting the likely consequences of these alternative solutions
5. Selecting and performing the best solution.

One of the characteristics of social problem-solving training is that it frequently uses **self-instructions** to teach children to guide themselves through the problem-solving steps. It is therefore worth spending a few minutes here to discuss the use of self-instruction training and how this fits into the social enhancement programme.

**Self-Instructional Training**

The concept of self-instructional training stems from the work of Vygotsky (1962) and Luria (1961), who pointed out that much of our behaviour is controlled by our thoughts or internal speech. When children begin to learn to control their behaviour this is initially the result of external influences, such as parents or other people who reward and punish behaviour and provide instructions as to what behaviours should and should not occur. As children become older it is suggested that they begin to control their behaviour through their own verbal instructions: thus they can be seen to talk out loud as they guide their behaviour. Gradually this control shifts to silent, inner speech (that is, thoughts) and it is now well accepted that we all continually talk to ourselves covertly and control our behaviour in this way, until a level is reached when the response becomes automatic.

Meichenbaum and Goodman (1971) were among the first therapists to make use of this approach for teaching children to gain better control over their behaviour. They used a series of steps that mirrored the normal pattern through which children develop behavioural control. The first step involved an adult model who performed the target task while talking out loud. This step is known as cognitive modelling, in that the model illustrates the type of self-talk that the child must ultimately learn to do him- or herself. In the second step, the child is asked to perform the same task under the direction of the adult’s instructions. This step is known as overt, external guidance. The third step requires the child to perform the task while instructing him- or herself aloud (overt self-guidance). In the fourth step, the child is asked to whisper the instructions to him- or herself while performing the task (faded, overt self-instructions). Finally, the child performs the task while using silent, inner speech to guide his or her performance (covert self-instruction).

This approach has been used successfully to teach children to use social problem-solving strategies. For example, the *Think Aloud* programme makes use of self-
instructional training in order to teach the problem-solving steps outlined above (Camp and Bash, 1981). Initially, children listen to the instructions for each problem-solving step as modelled by an instructor. Then they are asked to talk aloud as they give themselves the instructions for each problem-solving step. After practising out loud, children are taught to talk to themselves silently as they instruct themselves through the problem-solving sequence. The Think Aloud programme uses a series of exercises, the first of which are non-social, such as solving mazes or colouring shapes for younger children. These are followed by a series of interpersonal tasks. The Think Aloud programme teaches children to ask four questions whenever they are presented with a problem:

1. What is the problem?
2. What can I do about it?
3. Is it working?
4. How did I do?

The Social Detective
In Social Skills Training, children are taught to use self-instructions to guide themselves through social dilemmas. Unlike the Think Aloud programme, it does not begin with academic or non-social problems, but applies the skills to interpersonal problems right from the start. It also instructs children to use their social perception, relaxation and cognitive restructuring skills in association with problem-solving skills. Prior to the introduction of social problem-solving skills, children cover material relating to basic social skills, social perception, relaxation and cognitive restructuring. These skills are then combined with the problem-solving steps in order to provide an overall strategy to guide children through difficult social situations.

The self-instruction method is used to teach children three main steps in dealing with social problems. The steps are tailored into a game called The Social Detective and are used to cue children to apply the skills that they learn in the sessions. This teaching technique is adapted from the ‘Be a Detective’ model of Camp and Bush (1981). There are three steps, namely Detect, Investigate and Solve. Each step triggers a series of self-instructions that are important for solving social problems. These are summarized below:

THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

**STEP 1: DETECT**
- Step
- What is the problem?

**STEP 2: INVESTIGATE**
- Relax
- What could I do?
• What would happen next?
• Which of these would be best?
• Watch for unhelpful thoughts (older children and adolescents)

**STEP 3: SOLVE**
• Make a plan
• Remember social skills
• Do it
• How did I do?

The following section outlines each of the steps and components in more detail, with examples of how they might be applied to solving a social dilemma.

**Step 1: Detect**
This step involves looking for clues, by watching, listening and feeling, in order to detect social problems. Trainees are taught that social problems can be detected by finding clues that someone is feeling bad (for example, lonely, upset, angry, guilty, afraid) and that someone can be oneself or another person. If a social problem is detected, youngsters are taught to **stop** before acting further and to work out what the problem is. This aims to reduce impulsive responding and give the person a chance to work out an appropriate way of dealing with the situation. In working out what the problem is, the feelings of each person in the situation need to be examined.

**Step 2: Investigate**
In this step, children are taught to investigate ways of dealing with the problem. The first thing is to relax, as this helps to reduce feelings of anxiety or anger that might interfere with sensible problem-solving. The next component is to think of alternative ways of responding, to work out what is likely to happen with each of these actions and to select a solution that the child is able to perform. This stage also encourages older children and adolescents to look for negative, unhelpful thoughts that might inhibit a response or make one feel bad and to produce helpful, alternative thoughts.

**Producing alternative ideas for responses**
Many children require practice in learning to produce alternative ideas for ways they could behave, and similarly they often find it difficult to work out the likely outcomes or consequences of behaviour. Before applying self-instructions to this step, it is helpful to carry out some exercises to practise thinking of alternatives and working out consequences. A series of scenarios may be used for this purpose. For example:
You are not allowed to leave the school grounds, but one of the older boys tries to persuade you to go with him down the street to the shops during your lunch break.

Some likely alternative responses that youngsters will present could include:

- To go with the boy
- To explain that you do not want to break school rules, but would like to go with him after school
- To tell the teacher what he is doing
- To tell him off angrily for leaving the school grounds
- To ring the police.

The idea at this point is to think up several possible alternatives without worrying about how realistic or appropriate they are. This task may be carried out at home or in the group.

The ‘What can I do?’ game provides more scenarios that can be used to investigate different possible ways of responding. Some of the examples below are also available for photocopying on Home Task Sheet 6 in the Photocopiable Resource Book.

**THE WHAT CAN I DO? GAME**

- You took your new pens to school and they have disappeared from your bag. Another boy in your class is using some pens that look just like yours. What different things could you do?
- You are playing with some friends and you kick the ball through the window of the house next door. The window smashes. What different things could you do?
- You promise a friend that you will go to the cinema to see a movie with them on Saturday, but you are invited to a party that you really want to go to. Your friend is not invited to the party. What different things could you do?
- A new kid has just started in your class. You are playing with your friends and the new kid is watching you. What different things could you do?
- Your dad won’t let you go out to your friend’s house until you have tidied up your room. What different things could you do?
- Your teacher is carrying a large pile of books and is having trouble
picking up some papers she has dropped. What different things could you do?

- You are in class and everyone is working quietly. You badly need to go to the toilet. What different things could you do?

- Your teacher asks you to read out your work aloud to the class. You make a mistake and get your reading all muddled up. What different things could you do?

- A boy in your class keeps picking on you. Whenever he walks past, he kicks or pushes you. What different things could you do?

- Your mum comes back from having her hair done. It is cut very short and you don’t like it. What different things could you do?

Predicting likely consequences

Once children are able to work out alternative ways of dealing with a situation, they are asked to think about the likely consequences of each alternative response in order to learn about cause-effect relationships. For example, the trainee might suggest the following outcomes in response to the alternative solutions generated in the example above:

You are not allowed to leave the school grounds, but one of the older boys tries to persuade you to go with him down the street to the shops during your lunch break.

**Alternative**

- Go with the boy.
- Explain that you do not want to break school rules.
- Tell the teacher.

**Likely outcome**

- May get caught and get into trouble at school.
- You do not get into trouble and boy may still like you.
- Boy will get into trouble and will not like you but he could be harmed being out alone.
- An argument.
- They tell you to stop wasting their busy time.
Various exercises and activities can be used to practise the prediction of likely consequences. These involve the presentation of scenarios in which children are asked to make suggestions as to what is likely to happen next. For example:

**WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS NEXT?**

Write down what you think might happen next in each of these stories.

1. You spill some paint at school. You go and tell the teacher you are sorry but you spilled it accidentally and need a cloth to clean it up.

   What do you think happens next?

2. You trip over and hurt your knee. Another kid comes over and tries to help you. You say, 'Go away and leave me alone. I don't need any help.'

   What do you think happens next?

3. You are watching your favourite TV show and your dad calls you and tells you to come for your meal. You ignore your dad and carry on watching TV.

   What do you think happens next?

4. You are given a box of chocolates for your birthday. In the evening, you are watching TV with your family and you take out the chocolates and offer them around.

   What do you think happens next?

5. You are standing in line at the school shop. A bigger boy pushes in front of you. You give him a kick.

   What do you think happens next?

6. You are having difficulty understanding how to do some maths problems at school. You go up to the teacher at the end of the day and tell him that you do not understand how to do your homework and need some help.

   What do you think happens next?
7 You really want a turn on the computer game that your sister is playing with. You go over, push her out of the way and grab the controls.

What do you think happens next? ____________________________

8 A boy in your class is bragging about how good he is at sport and tells you that you are useless. You walk away and ignore the boy.

What do you think happens next? ____________________________

9 Your mum has bought a new dress and walks into the room wearing it. You tell her that it looks awful and that you don’t like the colour.

What do you think happens next? ____________________________

10 A new family moves in next door to you at home. You can hear their children playing in the garden. You go round and knock on the door and ask if they would like to come over to play at your house.

What do you think happens next? ____________________________

Some of the above, as well as additional examples, are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheet 7 in the Photocopiable Resource Book.

Selecting the best response
There are several ways to help children decide which is the best response. It is important to explain that often there is no correct answer and that some solutions have both good and bad points. First of all, the trainee needs to work out what he or she wants to happen, and what a good outcome would be. Some discussion of people’s rights is useful here, which should emphasize children’s own rights as well as the rights of others. For example, it is helpful to explain that all people have the right to feel OK and not to feel negative emotions such as fear, anger and sadness. Children are then asked to select the response that they feel comes closest to producing the outcome they desire. In coming to this decision, children need to learn to check that they have the ability to carry out the response they choose and that it is realistic. They are then taught to form a plan of how the response is to be performed.

Watching for unhelpful thoughts
Older children and adolescents can be taught to check for thoughts that have a negative influence on their choice of response and behaviour. In particular, they can be trained to look for thoughts that trigger negative emotions such as fear, sadness, guilt or anger. These thoughts can then be challenged and replaced with more constructive alternatives. A detailed outline of techniques for teaching young people
to reduce unhelpful thinking and to shift to more positive, helpful thoughts was presented on page 74.

Step 3: Solve
Having formed a plan, children are then asked to perform their chosen strategy, making sure that they use their basic social skills and monitor the outcome. Most importantly, children are encouraged to praise themselves for trying. Even if the plan does not succeed in producing the desired outcome, it is important that trainees reward themselves for having gone through the steps and attempted a solution.

This sequence of responses is taught in relation to a series of interpersonal dilemmas, selected according to the needs of the children involved. Although each group may vary slightly, some common themes are usually found, such as dealing with criticism, making assertive requests, asking to join in with peer activities and friendship-making skills (for example sharing, invitations, offering help).

An illustration
When the principle of The Social Detective is presented to the children, the trainer illustrates its use by talking through each of the steps to solve a social problem. For example:

\[\text{THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE}\]

\textbf{THE SOCIAL PROBLEM}
Your father will not let you watch TV until you have finished your homework. Your programme starts in 15 minutes and your homework will take 30 minutes, so you will miss some of the programme.

\textbf{STEP 1: DETECT}
- \textit{Stop}
  - There is a problem. I am feeling annoyed and my dad is angry
- \textit{What is the problem?}
  - I feel angry because I will miss some TV and I do not really want to do my homework. My dad feels angry because I have been playing in my room and have not done my homework.

\textbf{STEP 2: INVESTIGATE}
- Relax
- \textit{What could I do?}
  - a) I could scream and shout
  - b) I could sulk and not do my homework
  - c) I could get on with my homework and watch the last 15 minutes
d) I could ask him politely if I could do the rest of my homework later and do 15 minutes now.
e) I could run out of the house and go to a friend’s house to watch the programme.

• What would happen next?
a) If I scream and shout I will be sent to my room and miss my programme. I will still feel angry and so will my dad.
b) If I talk, I will miss my programme and still have my homework to do. I will still feel angry and so will my dad.
c) If I do my homework and watch the last 15 minutes of the programme I will be a bit sad, but my dad will feel OK.
d) If I ask him politely if I can do the rest of my homework later and do 15 minutes now, he might agree. I would feel good and he would feel OK as long as I stick to my side of the deal.
e) If I run out of the house and go to a friend’s house to watch the programme, I will be in real trouble. My dad will call the police and I will feel really bad, and so will my dad.

• Which of these would be best?
Asking my dad politely if I can do 15 minutes now and the rest of my homework later would solve the problem if he agrees. If not, then the next best outcome would happen if I got on with my homework and missed the first 15 minutes of the programme.

• Watch for unhelpful thoughts (Older children and adolescents)
I keep thinking that I really hate doing my homework and that it is a waste of time. A more helpful thought might be: ‘I don’t like homework, but all kids have to do it and it doesn’t really take very long. It might be worth it some day.’

**STEP 3: SOLVE**

• Make a plan
I will go and ask dad if he will do a deal so that I can do 15 minutes of my homework now and the rest later.

• Remember social skills
Remember to keep my voice calm and friendly so that I don’t sound angry.

• Do it

• How did I do?
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Dad is not agreeing to my plan, I have got to use my back-up plan and just get on with my homework. Well done. I kept calm and didn't get angry and make things worse.

Social problem-solving with younger children
The Social Detective steps can be used with children as young as five years old; however, five to ten year olds tend to have difficulty understanding the concepts involved in cognitive challenging and positive thinking. Nevertheless, they are usually able to remember the three steps of Detect, Investigate and Solve. Younger children are usually able to learn the relaxation and basic social skills and these can be integrated into the problem-solving approach. The following script gives an example of how the trainer can model the steps for younger children. These steps can be illustrated on a large card and displayed while the trainer reads the steps aloud.

THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

SITUATION
You are playing at a friend's house and he or she keeps teasing you and calling you a baby.

STEP 1: DETECT
- Stop
- What is the problem?
  I feel upset because my friend keeps teasing me.

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE
- Relax
- What could I do?
  a) I could tell his or her mum
  b) I could cry
  c) I could run home
  d) I could tell him or her politely to stop
  e) I could punch him or her on the nose
- What would happen next?
  a) If I tell his or her mum, she might not believe me
  b) If I cry he or she will call me a baby even more
  c) If I run home I will be in trouble with my parents
  d) If I tell him or her politely to stop, he or she might stop
  e) If I punch him or her on the nose I will get into trouble with his or her parents
Which of these would be best?
I think it would be best to tell him or her politely to stop.

**STEP 3: SOLVE**
- Make a plan
  I will tell him politely to stop
- Remember social skills
  Remember a friendly face and voice
- Do it
- How did I do?
  I did really well. Maybe he or she will stop teasing me now.

**Integrating Social Skills to Deal with Social Problems**
Once the trainer has demonstrated the steps involved in social problem-solving and how these are to be used along with social perception, relaxation, helpful thinking and basic social skills, the trainees then begin to practise the steps involved. At first the trainees are asked to instruct themselves through the steps out loud. During this phase of training, the group leader will need to prompt the use of appropriate questions. Cue cards or a large poster outlining the Social Detective steps can be used to help with prompting; Home Task Sheets 10, 11 and 13 in the Photocopiable Resource Book provide further practice of the Social Detective steps. After the trainee has practised the steps and self-instructions out loud, the trainer provides feedback as to the positive aspects of the trainee’s attempt and comments constructively upon any steps that need improvement. Each trainee will need to practise the steps several times before progressing to silent self-instructions. At the end of the problem-solving sequence, the trainee should then practise their chosen solution and be given feedback regarding their performance. Trainees are subsequently encouraged to use self-reinforcement to praise themselves for their efforts.

Once the basic problem-solving steps have been learned, the sessions can proceed to cover a range of social situations. These can be selected from a range of hypothetical scenarios, or may be set according to the problem areas faced by each child in the group.

**Roleplay Games for Skills Consolidation**
There are a variety of games and exercises that can be used to provide children with the chance to practise their new skills. Some are commercially available, such as Stacking the Deck (Foxx et al., 1983). I prefer to use my own materials, which have been developed over the years; two of these (Spence, 1980) are reproduced below. Roleplay Spinner and Roleplayopoly are games in which children are required to select roleplay cards according to chance outcomes. They are then required to roleplay a solution to the social dilemma on the card, using the Social Detective steps of Detect, Investigate and Solve.
Both games require a selection of roleplay cards, which should describe a social dilemma or interpersonal problem and should also identify the person with whom the roleplay is to be conducted (for example, the person on your left, the person on your right, the trainer or any person in the group). The following list provides a range of examples from which roleplay cards can be designed (you will need to supplement these with additional ones of your own to play the games):

**ROLE PLAY CARDS**

- Imagine you have just started at a new school and are sitting in the playground. Another child comes over, sits down next to you and asks you your name.
  
  Prompt: *Hi. My name is Chris. I just started here today.*

- Another child your age bullies you into lending them your favourite possession. You are worried that they will break it and you really want it back.
  
  No prompt

- Your mother tells you off for breaking a window, but you didn’t do it.
  
  Prompt: *Come here. Look what you’ve done. You will have to pay for this.*

- You borrow a ball from a kid in your street and lose it.
  
  Prompt: *Hi, can I have my ball back today please?*

- Try to find out more about the person on your left. Ask three questions.
  
  No prompt

- You meet someone for the first time. Introduce yourself and find out their name.
  
  No prompt

- You want to go out and play with your friends but you have to ask your mother first.
  
  No prompt

- You drop your mother’s favourite plate in the kitchen and it breaks. She walks in while you are clearing up the bits.
  
  Prompt: *What are you doing down there?*
• You really want to watch your favourite TV programme but your dad is already watching something else.
  No prompt

• You are playing a game with some friends and they tell you that you are out. You think they have made a mistake.
  Prompt: 'You're out!'

• You are playing a game with a friend who keeps cheating and changing the rules.
  No prompt

• You have your hair cut and another kid comes over and starts teasing you.
  Prompt: 'Who's had a hair cut then? What happened, did they use a knife and fork?'

• There is a bigger kid in your class who doesn't like you. Everytime you walk past, he or she trips you up.
  No prompt

• Your teacher sets you some work in class and you do not understand what you are supposed to do.
  No prompt

• You are sitting quietly and the classmates next to you are talking. The teacher suddenly shouts at you in an angry voice and tells you to be quiet.
  Prompt: 'Be quiet over there. Get on with you work.'

• You are sitting at school eating your lunch and you notice that the child next to you is not eating. He tells you that he has forgotten to bring his lunch today and has no money to buy anything.
  Prompt: 'I went and forgot my lunch today and I can't even go and buy anything.'

• You go to see a film with some friends. Your mum has given you some extra money to buy a large tub of popcorn.
  No prompt
- You want to invite a friend over to stay for the weekend, but you must ask your mother first.
  No prompt

- You really want to go and see a movie at the cinema with your friends, but your parents say 'no.' You have already been out twice this week.
  Prompt: 'No, you can't go out to the cinema to see a movie tonight. You have been out twice this week already and that is enough.'

- You answer the phone and no one else is home. It is someone ringing to talk to your parents.
  Prompt: 'Hello. Can I speak to your mum or dad please?'

- The teacher asks you to put the class TV away in the store cupboard. You cannot find the key. When you come back, he or she is talking to another teacher.
  Prompt (one teacher to another): 'What time is the meeting this afternoon?' and teachers continue their conversation.

- You want to invite a friend over but your dad says 'no.'
  Prompt: 'No, you can't have Sam over for the night. We just want a quiet evening with the family.'

- Your mum walks into your room and tells you off for leaving your dirty clothes all over the floor.
  Prompt: 'This room looks like a rubbish tip. Get these clothes picked up and put them in the washing bag.'

- Your sister comes home from the hairdresser with a new haircut that looks really nice.
  No prompt

- You are walking along the street, when the old lady in front of you drops her shopping and apples roll all over the place.
  No prompt

- You get some new clothes for your birthday. Your friend tells you how nice you look.
  Prompt: 'Hey, you look great in those new clothes!'
• A group of your classmates are playing a game and you would like to join in.
  No prompt
• You have a spare ticket to the cinema and would like to ask someone in your class to go with you.
  No prompt

Roleplay Spinner
In this game the roleplay cards should be divided randomly into eight piles (numbered 1–8), with at least four cards in each pile. The roleplays outlined on the cards should be relevant to the age group and problem areas of the children concerned. Make an eight-sided spinner from card, divided into eight sections, as shown in Figure 14. Place a pin through the centre of the card and number each section. Each child takes a turn to spin the spinner. A roleplay card is then selected from the pile which matches the number on which the spinner lands.

![Figure 14 The Roleplay Spinner](image)

Roleplayopoly
This roleplay game is adapted from Monopoly, but here the squares on the board state particular locations in which a social interaction occurs (see Figure 15). Roleplay cards should be produced that fit the locations around the board and outline a variety of social dilemmas which could occur in each situation. You can adapt this game to fit the needs of your group and pick the locations and social tasks accordingly. Locations could be home, the classroom, the playground, a friend’s house, the swimming pool, the shopping centre, a party, the sports club, the beach, a park. The social tasks for each setting should include a range of people, such as parents, classmates, teachers, relatives, siblings and strangers. Similarly, the type of situation should vary and could include dealing with criticism, saying ‘no’ to an unreasonable request, offering or accepting help, offering or accepting compliments, holding a
conversational, making requests, dealing with arguments, asking to join in, dealing with teasing or bullying, apologizing, owning up, giving invitations and so on.

You can make the board out of stiff card and divide the perimeter into sections to cover the locations you choose. Several positions are left free on the board, for 'Free parking' and 'Free Choice', and you may also like to use 'Go to jail' cards and 'Jail' square as in Monopoly. If a player lands on 'Free parking', no action is taken and play moves on to the next person. If a player lands on 'Free choice' he or she may choose to move to any square that has roleplay cards. If a player lands on 'Go to Jail' he or she must move direct to 'Jail' and miss a turn. Similarly, landing on 'Jail' causes the player to miss a turn. You could also use a pack of Chance cards for miscellaneous roleplays. Before play begins the roleplay cards should be sorted according to their situations to match the squares on the board (for example one pile for 'Cinema', one for 'Swimming pool' and so on). All players begin at the start and take it in turns to shake the two dice and move around the board. When they land on a square, they are given the top roleplay card for that square by one child acting as banker. The roleplay instructions may provide a prompt, if desired, and should state who is to take the part of the other person in the situation (for example, the trainer or the person on your left/right). The rules of the game can be varied to meet the needs of the group.

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**Figure 15 Roleplayopoly board design**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jail</th>
<th>Class Room</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Chance</th>
<th>Swimming Pool</th>
<th>Free Parking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Choice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping Centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Break (Recess)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cinema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Friend's House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start</td>
<td>Class Room</td>
<td>Chance</td>
<td>Free Choice</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Go to Jail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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During the game, the trainer should prompt the use of the Social Detective steps and provide feedback about the roleplayed response. It may be appropriate for the trainee to repeat the performance in order to improve aspects of his or her response. The aim of the game is not to produce a winner, but to provide an interesting setting in which to practise new skills.

General Points Relating to Running Social Enhancement Groups

There are a great many general skills that are required of trainers and that underlie the effective teaching of social skills and making the groups an enjoyable experience for all involved. There is really no evidence that there are right or wrong ways to run your groups, but I have suggested the following guidelines, based on a good deal of trial-and-error learning on my part.

Increasing Motivation

One of the most important skills of the trainer is to ensure that the groups are enjoyable and fun, and not frightening or off-putting to trainees. It helps if you can try to imagine what it would be like to be a child attending one of your groups. Some youngsters may be very anxious and worried about making a fool of themselves or performing in front of the group. Others may be more generally disruptive and hold negative attitudes about any type of educational experience. Different trainer skills are needed to deal with these different types of children. For the more anxious ones, it is helpful to use games and activities that are not threatening and do not make a frightened child the centre of attention. Try to avoid attaching any one problem to a particular child, and emphasize that the problem is experienced by many children. For example, each session should be introduced in terms of the target skill to be focused on, rather than any one child’s problem area. With very anxious children you may also need to introduce the idea of roleplays rather gradually, rather than launching into them in the very first session.

Motivation to take part in the groups and to learn skills can be enhanced by providing a very clear rationale to the children as to why a particular skill is important. Children need to understand that a skill is relevant to them and that the effort to change is worthwhile. It is helpful if children can produce their own reasons for change. For example, the trainer could ask, ‘Can anyone tell me why they think sharing things with others might be a good thing? ... Now, can someone else tell me what is likely to happen if someone doesn’t share things with others?’ Ideally, the rationale for the sessions and the use of particular skills should be explained in a way that relates to the children’s own lives and problems. For example, in the introductory session it is helpful to explain the purpose of the groups in simple terms and in a way that allows children to see the value and relevance. Depending upon the type of children involved, the trainer might say something like, ‘In these groups we are going to be talking about ways of getting on better with people. Lots of children find it hard to make friends; some tend to get into arguments with other people rather a
lot and others might feel very shy. We are going to learn some ways of making more
friends and dealing with other people so that things work out well for us. Can any-
one think of a time when you found it hard to get on with someone? This example
also illustrates how the trainer can normalize social problems so that the children
do not feel badly labelled or inferior. Emphasizing that many other children have
problems in making friends and getting on with others helps to reduce feelings of
stigmatization which may interfere with motivation.

Another important trainer skill for maintaining motivation is to ensure that all chil-
dren in the group are involved in the process and are not left sitting quietly for long
periods. Trainers should alternate questions throughout the group and include as
many people as possible in the roleplays. Once one set of children have completed
their roleplay, another set should practise the same skill. Even when children are
already competent at a particular skill, a roleplay exercise is still valuable, as it
provides an opportunity for modelling to other children who are not so competent.

Managing Behaviour Problems in the Group

If children are highly motivated to take part in the groups and the content is made
interesting and enjoyable, the trainer is unlikely to experience much difficulty in
managing the behaviour of the group. Thus, the methods outlined above, such as
involving all group members in activities, careful planning of sessions and using in-
teresting materials or videotape equipment, are likely to facilitate group participation.
This of course depends upon the characteristics of the participants, and a group
of six, aggressive, disruptive youngsters can be extremely difficult to keep on task.
Several suggestions can be made to overcome behavioural problems in the group.
One of the most important factors is to make the group more appealing than the al-
ternative activity that the group would be engaged in. It is difficult to get children to
attend and participate if they do not want to be there because they are missing their
favourite activity. If possible then, try not to organize sessions during recess
(break/play time), sports activities or video shows. It should be feasible to find some
less enjoyable, but not essential, activity with which to compete.

A variety of incentives for participation, attendance, and cooperation may also be
used to encourage appropriate behaviour. Methods such as certificates of merit,
stamps, tangible rewards (such as stickers or sweets), special visits (for example, to a
film or a party) and token rewards may be used here. In one very disruptive group
that I ran, all the boys had a card placed on the coffee table in front of them and each
person received a stamp on their card whenever they completed a home task, took
part in modelling or a roleplay, or gave a sensible answer to a question. A record of
the number of stamps was kept each session and every boy had to earn 40 stamps
during the 12 sessions in order to attend a special party put on by the trainer. This
method was very effective in reducing disruptive behaviour, which had included
locking the trainer’s keys inside her desk (having picked the lock closed!) and a
high level of non-compliance and verbal abuse. Praise for participation, attempts at
answering questions and completion of home tasks also facilitate appropriate behav-
iour. In addition, it helps if the length of sessions is tailored to meet the attention
spans of the participants, as disruptive behaviour tends to increase once attention begins to wander.

**Setting the Rules of the Group**

The session should always begin with a discussion of the rules for the group. Ideally, children should be encouraged to come up with their own rules, rather than having rules imposed upon them, but the trainer needs to steer this process to ensure that certain essential guidelines are set up. Of greatest importance is the need for confidentiality, so that children feel free to express their feelings, thoughts and behaviour in the knowledge that this is safe to do and information will not be divulged to the rest of the school. Younger children, in particular, need to discuss this issue in terms that they can understand, and they need to be aware of the reasons for a rule of this type. Words such as ‘secret’, ‘private’ and ‘only we will know’ will need to be used, as very few younger children will understand the concept of confidentiality.

If the group is to be a non-threatening experience, then it is also important to emphasize the need for making positive comments to each other and not putting each other down or saying hurtful things when someone makes a mistake. Further rules should include stating that all children must take part in the group, that only one person at a time should talk and that children should take turns at the activities.

**Session Planning**

One of the most crucial trainer skills is to be well prepared for each session. Social enhancement sessions are more enjoyable if they include a variety of stories, exercises and games to facilitate the practice of skills. Each session should focus on a specific skill and should not aim to cover too much material. It is preferable to learn skills one at a time and ensure that a few skills are learned well, rather than trying to teach many skills at a low level of competence. One of the hardest things for new trainers is sticking to the structure of the social skills training approach. It is very easy for sessions to digress into general counselling or a group discussion of social problems and fail to cover the essential teaching steps. In order to ensure that each session covers these important components, it is helpful for the trainer to plan out each session in advance and take along a brief agenda for the session. Examples of brief session plans are provided in the Chapter 4. These demonstrate how each session should include, where appropriate, a review of the previous session and the home task that was set, discussion of the rationale for and content of the target skill, modelling, roleplay practice, feedback and setting of a relevant home task for that session.

**General Trainer Skills**

In addition to being able to stick to the teaching steps of skills training, there are several other qualities that a trainer needs to have. Goldstein et al. (1986) suggests that the trainer needs to have a good knowledge of social enhancement methods and the theoretical background to the use of the techniques. They also stress that it is important for the teacher to be able to think in specific behavioural terms, being
able to break social interaction behaviours down into specific responses rather than thinking in global ways. An example of this would be to be able to think of Tom’s difficulties in making friends as being due to his poor conversation skills rather than poor self-esteem and maladjustment. Other skills suggested to be important include the ability to initiate and sustain roleplays, provide feedback in a sensitive manner and organize support from staff and parents outside sessions in order to reinforce the children’s learning (ibid.).

In addition to those skills that are specific to social skills training, trainers also need to have a range of more general qualities that are important in group work. Listening and communication skills are important, for example, and enthusiasm and humour help to make the groups more enjoyable for children.

The Social Skills Trainer Evaluation Form is available for photocopying in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 16), and is a means of assessing your own abilities to run social skills training sessions. I use this scale myself in assessing clinical psychology trainees. It can be completed by someone you ask to observe and rate your performance, or you can use it yourself as a checklist to evaluate your own skills.

**Transferring the Improvements Into Everyday Life**

One of the most difficult tasks in social skills training is to ensure that the improvements in skills you produce within your sessions carry over into real-life situations.

![Figure 16 Social Skills Trainer Evaluation Form](image-url)
There has been a great deal of research which shows that social skills can be taught and improved within a group training setting, but children frequently fail to use these skills when they interact with other people outside the training sessions. For example, children may roleplay how to deal with teasing from peers and be able to produce very good solutions and perform these responses very competently within the group. Then half an hour later, you can observe the same child shouting and screaming in the playground in response to teasing from a classmate.

New skills need to carry over into untrained situations, into real-life settings, and must also be continued in the future, once the training sessions stop. These forms of carry-over have been termed **generalization**, and a wide variety of methods have been suggested to make transfer or generalization more likely. Many of these stem from the theory that certain cues in our environment tend to act as signals to trigger behaviour: this model is known as **stimulus control of behaviour**. It has been suggested that the training situation develops certain stimuli which act as triggers to behave in a socially skilled way. Many of these cues are not present in the real world, which could explain why people frequently fail to use their new skills outside the training sessions. In order to get round this problem, many therapists have suggested that we need to include cues or stimuli within the training sessions that are also present outside the sessions. That way, when the children leave the sessions, they will be more likely to come into contact with cues and stimuli that will trigger socially skilled behaviour.

There are several methods of using real-life cues in training. One such method is the involvement of people from the child’s life, such as parents, teachers or peers, within the training sessions. Another method is to make the training setting resemble real-life as much as possible. Thus, roleplays should be made as realistic as possible, using props and moving the room around to resemble the actual situation. Similarly, it may be possible to run sessions in a realistic situation rather than a clinical or therapy type of setting. For example, Jackson and Marzillier (1983) ran their adolescent social skills training groups in a youth club and had the children practise their skills during the regular youth club activities that followed the training sessions. Home-based tasks between sessions are also an important method of linking skill use to cues within the natural setting. It may be possible to involve parents and teachers in these tasks. Wiig and Bray (1983) used a system in which prosocial communication skills were taught within a classroom setting and children took home a work sheet that outlined the home-based target behaviours and gave instructions to parents as to how they could help with the programme at home. A similar approach may be used to encourage teachers to prompt and reward skill usage outside the training sessions. In the programme outlined in Chapter 4, parents and teachers are involved in home tasks between sessions. Peers can also be involved in facilitating the transfer of training benefits. Various methods have been reported in the literature and include peer pairing programmes and the involvement of socially skilled peers in training sessions.

Another method that has been proposed to increase the transfer of new skills is the selection of socially valid and relevant target skills. This means that skills should
be taught that are likely to produce benefits for the young person and be rewarded by other people outside the session. As trainers, we therefore need to be aware of what skills are important and relevant for trainees. There is little point in spending a great deal of time teaching skills that are not very relevant for youngsters and which are not likely to be of great benefit to them. One such example here is the training of the use of gestures for emphasis during conversations. It is often suggested that the use of gestures of this type is an important conversation skill, but there is very little evidence that this is of value to children. There would be little point, then, in including this skill as a target for training in a social enhancement programme. Wherever possible, the trainer should attempt to select skills that have been demonstrated in research studies to affect how children get on with other people. Quite a bit of evidence is available here and we no longer have to rely purely upon our personal intuitions. The type of skills that have been found to be important for children are discussed in Chapter 1.

Children are more likely to apply their skills to new situations if they learn some general strategies that help them to work out how to deal with novel, untrained problems. The basic skills involved in conversation, such as eye contact, posture and tone of voice, are relevant to most situations and form an important foundation. There is also a series of social-cognitive skills which help children to work out how to deal with new situations. These include social perception, social problem-solving skills, self-monitoring and self-instructions. If children are able to talk themselves through these social-cognitive steps whenever they encounter a new, difficult setting then this will encourage socially skilled behaviour across a wide range of situations.

Once skills have been established, it is important to maintain and continue them once training ends. There is a great danger that children will rapidly stop using their new skills without the encouragement to do so from the group. Several methods have been suggested to prevent this. One way is to fade out any reward system that is being used gradually, rather than ending the system suddenly. Ideally, the new skills should begin to produce their own rewards and positive outcomes in real-life situations. This, in turn, should make it more likely that children will continue to use their skills in the future. If relevant skills have been selected then this process is more likely to occur. If the trainer has organized rewards to be given by parents and teachers outside the session, contingent upon the child using the target skills, then again this system should gradually be withdrawn. If tangible rewards have been used, these should gradually be replaced by more natural, social rewards, such as praise and attention from others. Children should also be encouraged to reward and praise themselves for good performance of skills, so that skill use is more likely to continue.

Finally, it is a good idea to fade out the sessions gradually rather than end them suddenly. You may prefer to hold the last few sessions on a fortnightly rather than weekly basis, and then hold a series of booster sessions at monthly, two-monthly and then three-monthly intervals. The importance of booster sessions cannot be over-emphasized. Baggs and Spence (1990) showed very clearly that with adults the benefits of assertion training were superior if booster assertion training sessions were
used, and it is very likely that this will also be applicable to children. A technique called over-learning also helps to reduce deterioration in skill use after the end of training. This approach continues the practice of a specific skill repeatedly even after it has been competently performed. The review of skills learned in previous sessions helps to produce this over-learning process. Children may also be asked to practise their new skills in a wide variety of different situations of increasing difficulty and to anticipate future situations that may arise, in order to increase this over-learning effect.

**Selection of Children for Your Group**
Children with interpersonal difficulties will be identified during the assessment process as outlined in Chapter 2. The question remains, however, whether they will be suited to group forms of intervention or would be better off attending one-to-one sessions with a trainer. Some children will occasionally be identified who have such severe social skills deficits or are so anxious that they are not able to cope with a group situation. Generally, some individual work will get them to a level where they are able to cope with a group format.

The type of children who will be most suitable for your group depends upon where you are working. Trainers often ask whether children of different ability levels or different types of skill problems should be placed in the same group. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, although Goldstein et al. (1986) suggests that it is preferable to select children for groups with similar degrees of skill deficiency and common types of skill problems. Where this goal is possible, this is probably the ideal way of forming your group. Liddle and Spence (1990) reported difficulty in running social enhancement groups, when withdrawn, quiet children were combined in the same group with disruptive, rejected children. It was difficult to produce a group environment in which the withdrawn children felt comfortable and non-threatened in the presence of their more aggressive peers. Clinical experience here suggests that it is preferable to separate these types of children, although in some settings this is not always possible.

**Group Size**
The size of your group very much depends upon the type of children you are working with. It is feasible to run social enhancement programmes on a class basis (see ‘class-based activities’ on p.106) where the aim is improvement in social functioning for children generally. The small group approach, on the other hand, tends to be used when intensive skills training is needed for children with interpersonal problems. If you are working with children who have been selected on the basis of interpersonal difficulties, the size of the group depends on the type of children. It is difficult to manage a group of more than six if the children show non-compliant, aggressive or disruptive behaviour. It is also difficult to give children enough individual attention in a larger group if they require intensive skills training. The optimal group size is therefore generally around six children.
**Number, Duration and Spacing of Sessions**

Again, the ideal number, duration and spacing of sessions depends upon the needs of the children involved. This is generally determined by the attention span and learning capacity of the children. Those with learning disabilities and short attention spans will require short, frequent sessions. For example, many social skills training programmes for youngsters with intellectual impairments involve daily sessions, lasting around 10–15 minutes, combined with ongoing prompting and reinforcement from teachers and parents between the sessions. Social skills training therefore becomes part of the daily life. This type of approach is feasible in special education settings where all teaching staff and parents may be involved on a daily basis. In many school situations, however, this method is not realistic, but attempts should still be made to develop short, frequent sessions, ideally with some involvement from parents, teachers and perhaps peers in between sessions. Even with children who are not hampered by learning or attention problems, it is suggested that sessions should occur twice a week, allowing enough time between sessions for completion of home tasks. Sessions should typically last between 20–40 minutes, being shorter for younger children. The number of sessions should also vary according to the needs of the children.

**Involvement of Parents**

Parents play an extremely important role in the development of their children's social behaviour. This influence stems partly from modelling, prompting and praise from parents, but also reflects the social opportunities that parents create for their children. For example, parents may actively encourage other children to visit or may take their children to join in social, sporting or recreational activities, such as Scouts, Guides, soccer or netball, all of which increase the opportunity for learning about social skills. Children who do not have these types of social experiences miss out on many learning opportunities.

It is debatable whether social enhancement programmes run in schools or clinics can be effective if the children are returning home each day to a family situation that does not provide opportunities for social interaction with peers and where little attention is paid to the appropriate use of social skills. Even worse, some families may even model, prompt and reward inappropriate social behaviour. There is therefore a strong case for involving parents in the programme, so that they are more likely to prompt, model and praise the use of desirable social skills. Parents could also be asked to encourage their children to participate in social activities with peers outside school.

There are different ways in which parents can be involved. In some cases, it may be sufficient to involve parents through a written sheet which children take home after each session. This sheet may describe the skills being taught in the session and suggest ways in which parents could help their child at home. In other cases, it may be necessary to ask parents to attend sessions or to work on a family basis if particular problems are noted in family interaction skills. There are many examples of the effective teaching of communication skills to families. The work of Alexander
and Parsons (1982) and Robin and Foster (1989) are particularly valuable. These programmes teach family members the skills needed to communicate better with each other and emphasize negotiation skills for dealing with adolescent–parent conflict.

The programme outlined in the Chapter 4 provides examples of the types of session sheets that children can take home to parents in order to encourage participation from the family. It is important be aware that some parents may have difficulty reading any handouts that you prepare. If this is the case, then you may be able to use telephone contact to encourage parental involvement in home tasks.

**Teacher Involvement**

Teachers are involved in a large proportion of the lives of children and have a great deal of influence over their social skill development. In some instances, it will be the class teacher who is conducting the social skills programme. In others, however, it will be another professional, such as a psychologist, who will be running the sessions, in which case it is important for that person to liaise closely with each child’s class teacher. Most teachers are willing to assist if the purpose and rationale for the programme are described and the benefits to the child are pointed out.

Teachers generally have highly stressful jobs and the last thing they need is another task to complete in the classroom. Thus, the involvement that a consultant requests of a child’s teacher must be limited to brief amounts of time, must not disrupt class activities and should ideally not single out the child as being different from his or her peers. The types of teacher inputs outlined in Chapter 4 are therefore relatively simple and easy to perform and yet extremely valuable to the child’s development of social skills.

There are two main ways in which teachers can assist in skill development in between social enhancement sessions. First, teachers can be of enormous help if they are able to provide prompts and rewards for target skills. This can be achieved if the teacher receives a brief handout after each session which describes the target skill that the child is working on and ways in which the teacher could assist. The second type of teacher assistance in between sessions involves the inclusion of special activities or games, designed to facilitate social interaction between peers and provide the chance for the child to practise his or her social skills. This is particularly important for children who are unpopular and who are often left out or avoided by other children. Examples of class activities are discussed below.

It is worth discussing a couple of rather obvious, but important points here. Teachers are only likely to put in time and effort to a programme if they perceive its value. Thus, it is worth spending some time with teachers prior to the start of the programme in order to describe what would be involved and why their participation is so important. A brief handout describing the programme and the type of teacher inputs can be useful in illustrating that the assistance required will not produce marked creases in work load or disruption to the class. You then need to set up a system to communicate to the teacher the input required after each session; this may be done through written sheets that each child takes back to their classroom. Teachers will also need regular prompting to maintain their involvement. Similarly they are
more likely to continue to participate if you keep in regular contact with them and provide positive feedback, thanks, praise and so on regarding their involvement.

**Class-based Activities**

Classrooms provide one of the most important environments in which children learn social skills; indeed, Oden (1986) suggests that all classrooms have social skills training programmes operating, even if the teacher is not aware of it. Furthermore, Oden suggests that much of children’s social skills is shaped by the structure of the social environment within the classroom, with some structures helping to enhance and others acting to inhibit the development of social cognition and skills. The ideal class structure should set up activities that produce varying social experiences within dyads, triads and groups, in order to provide different social learning experiences and relationship development. Oden also describes the ways in which teachers can use stories, roleplays and drama to teach social perception and empathy skills.

It is clear that different types of activities in the classroom also influence the type of social behaviour shown by children. Aggressive and antisocial behaviour is more likely to occur in situations of competitiveness or activities that encourage aggression. Sapon-Shevin (1986) wrote a wonderful chapter describing the types of games and activities that are likely to trigger negative behaviour in children and pointing out how we really need to encourage teachers to make use of activities that promote co-operative, prosocial and helpful behaviours in children. She also provides evidence to show that a large proportion of games and activities for children are based on competitiveness, exclude children if they lose and encourage physical aggression in the form of pushing, shoving or ridiculing others. Competitive activities also tend to make the losers feel bad about themselves and generate negative feelings towards others.

Unfortunately, many classroom activities do promote competitiveness and antisocial behaviour rather than the development of prosocial skills. There are, however, a great many activities and classroom structures that promote prosocial behaviour and these can easily be integrated into the curriculum. Indeed, many teachers already put a great deal of effort into achieving this goal. A brief summary of some of these methods may be useful here. They can be broken down into joint tasks and small group activities.

**Joint tasks**

Peer pairing or setting of joint tasks has been found to be an effective way of increasing the children’s popularity amongst the peer group, if the activities are designed to elicit a variety of social behaviours that promote friendship. These behaviours include giving invitations to others, offering help, taking, co-operation and verbal communication. The types of tasks used will vary according to the age of the child, but some suggestions are provided here. Younger children can be asked to work in pairs to construct objects or pictures, taking turns. For example, children could be asked to draw a house or a person, taking turns in drawing each line. Picture Consequences is another useful method, which involves a sheet of paper folded over
Figure 17 *Picture Consequences*

into three sections with only one part visible at a time. Children take turns to draw a creature's head in the top section, which is then folded over. The other child then draws the torso in the middle section, which is also folded over, and the first child then draws the legs. A completed example is shown in Figure 17. Older children can play a written variation in order to generate a story. Another example is *The Magic Bag*, in which children take turns to feel inside a bag that has certain objects hidden in it. They have to identify one object at a time from its feel and shape and then describe it to their partner, who has to guess what it is. Alternatively, blocks and beads can be used, with one child producing a pattern that has then to be copied by their partner.

Older children may be asked to work in pairs during the ‘Blind copying’ task. During this activity, one of the children is blindfolded and asked to copy a shape which they cannot see. The other child, who can see the shape, is asked to describe it and give instructions regarding the position of the shapes so that their partner can produce the copy. The pair then swap roles, with a new design being used. The designs can be relatively simple, such as a square and two circles drawn in various positions in relation to each other. Suitable examples are shown in Figure 18.

There are an enormous number of similar activities that involve two children working together. You can no doubt think of many more which promote prosocial
behaviour and do not produce winners and losers. Sapon-Shevin (1986) suggests that these activities should involve sharing and turn-taking, gentle physical contact and positive, rather than critical, comments.

Figure 18 Blind Copying Patterns

Small group activities
The characteristics of group activities that promote social skill development are the same as those outlined for peer pairing tasks, but should aim to include all group members. Groups should be assigned by the teacher in order to avoid the humiliation for any child not selected by a peer group. Activities may be assigned to groups of around six children, with each group participating in the activity. Various suggestions can be made for group activities, such as The Never-ending Story, in which children take turns in adding to a story as it is told around a circle. Groups may also be asked to construct something, with each child playing a part in the creation. I have found ‘Making a shirt’ a good exercise here (for groups of five children). Each group is provided with scissors, sticky tape, large amounts of newspaper and a thick marker pen. Children are assigned the roles of model, designer, drawer, cutter and taper, and are asked to make a shirt from the materials provided. This task produces a great deal of communication between children, although there is often a tendency for natural leaders to emerge, which may inhibit the involvement of shy, quiet children.
CHAPTER 4
A Session-by-Session Guide to
Enhancing Social Skills and Social Competence

Overview

This chapter describes a programme that may be used in the enhancement of social competence with children and adolescents. A session-by-session guide is provided, the content of which takes into account the results of research evidence and current knowledge of methods for enhancing youngsters' social competence. The chapter is designed to provide a structure for trainers to follow and materials to use within sessions. It is assumed that the reader has thoroughly read Chapter 3, in which the methods and techniques that form the basis of social enhancement programmes are described.

The intervention programme outlined here is designed for children and adolescents, aged 5–18. Although this covers a wide range of years, the session guidelines concentrate on core elements suitable for all ages, and then identify ways in which the sessions can be adapted for adolescents. The core programme omits the cognitive restructuring component, which is difficult to carry out with younger children. The time can be spent more fruitfully in greater coverage of basic social skills and social problem-solving skills. With older children and adolescents, the sessions are adapted to be more age appropriate and include components to teach youngsters to identify any negative and problematic thoughts that interfere with their social behaviour and replace them with more helpful alternatives.

The programme was designed for use with youngsters who are either shy and withdrawn or who are more aggressive in their dealings with others. Both types of children may well have difficulty in their relationships with adults and peers. The approach taken is based upon the theoretical model outlined in Chapter 1 and it aims to teach the relevant skills and change the factors that underlie social competence. The basic skills taught include micro-skills (for example eye contact, posture), social perception, social problem-solving, use of self-instructions, and finally successful performance of appropriate strategies of responding.

Once these skills have been learned, the programme aims to teach children to apply them to specific social tasks. The programme covers a wide range of social situations with which youngsters are required to deal in their everyday life. For practical purposes the programme selects the types of social tasks that are common to most children, but time should be left to deal with situations that are specific to each individual. The aim is for trainees to be able to use each of the skills in relation to a range of social tasks and to apply them to future, untrained situations. Home tasks are set at the end of each session, and photocopiable masters of these (The Home
Task Sheets) are provided in the Photocopiable Resource Book. The numbers of the Home Task Sheets relate to the relevant sessions, so that, for example, Home Task Sheet 1 (Children and Adolescents) should be used with Session 1.

Wherever possible, an attempt is made to involve parents and teachers in the programme. Each session provides a suggested wording for handouts to parents and teachers, outlining how they can assist with that session by encouraging practice and providing positive feedback. It is well worth the investment of trainer time in liaison with parents and teachers, in order to encourage their involvement in the programme. Trainers need to bear in mind, however, that some parents may not have good reading skills and thus will not be able to make use of Handouts. With parents who have reading difficulties, the trainer may be able to overcome this problem with a brief telephone call after each session in order to outline the tasks for which parental assistance is requested. Given the relatively high prevalence of adult literacy problems, it is always a good idea to tactfully check this out with the parents before the programme begins.

In this programme, the handouts for parents and teachers have been prepared with children, rather than adolescents, in mind. We found that most adolescents preferred to work independently. It was also hard to find secondary school teachers who were prepared to work on a daily basis with a particular pupil. Typically, adolescents have a wide range of teachers rather than a regular class teacher. Where it is appropriate to involve parents and teachers in the programme for a particular adolescent or group of adolescents, you will find it easy to adapt the parent and teacher handouts to fit with the adolescent home tasks.

Outline of Sessions

Session 1
- Introduction of participants and trainers
- Rationale, goals, setting group rules, session details, describing methods to be used
- Basic skills: eye contact
- Relaxation skills.

Session 2
- Identification of feelings (self and others)
- Social perception: posture
- Basic skills: posture
- Relaxation skills.

Session 3
- Identification of feelings (continued)
- Social perception: facial expression
- Basic skills: facial expression
- Relaxation skills
Session 4
- Social perception: tone of voice
- Basic skills: tone of voice
- Integrating basic skills: conversations and listening skills
- Relaxation skills
- (Adolescents: identifying unhelpful thoughts).

Session 5
- Integrating basic skills: conversations and listening skills
- Friendship skills: identifying friendly behaviours
- Rapid relaxation skills
- (Adolescents: identifying unhelpful thoughts).

Session 6
- Introduction to social problem-solving steps: The Social Detective
- Friendship skills: sharing
- Rapid relaxation skills
- (Adolescents: using helpful thoughts).

Session 7
- Using self-instruction in social problem-solving
- Friendship skills: offering help, giving compliments
- (Adolescents: using helpful thoughts).

Session 8
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  - Friendship skills: asking to join in
- (Adolescents: using helpful thoughts).

Session 9
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  - Friendship skills: giving invitations
- (Adolescents: using helpful thoughts).

Session 10
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  - Dealing with conflict situations: saying ‘no’
- (Adolescents: using helpful thoughts).
Session 11
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  - Dealing with conflict situations: teasing and bullying
- (Adolescents: using helpful thoughts).

Session 12
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  - Dealing with conflict situations with peers and siblings: arguments and disagreements
- (Adolescents: using helpful thoughts).

Session 13
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  - Dealing with conflict situations with adults: arguments and disagreements
- (Adolescents: using helpful thoughts).

Session 14
- Review of skills taught (relaxation and basic skills)
- General session-games relating to a wide range of social tasks.

Session 15
- Review of skills taught (social perception)
- General session-games relating to a wide range of social tasks.

Session 16
- Review of skills taught (social problem-solving)
- General session-games relating to wide range of social tasks
- Future plan.

Booster Session 1
- Review of skills taught
- Identification of problem situations
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods & problem-solving)
  - Problem situations identified by trainees.

Booster Session 2
- Review of skills taught
- Identification of problem situations
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  - Problem situations identified by trainees.
Session 1

Session plan

Agenda
- Introduction of participants and trainers
- Rationale, goals, setting group rules, session details, describing methods to be used
- Basic skills: eye contact
- Relaxation skills
- Home tasks
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents.

Equipment/materials to prepare
- Video recorder, monitor and camera (if available)
- Videotaped modelling demonstrations – use of eye contact (if available)
- Conversation are cards
- Relaxation script
- Scrap books (one for each trainee)
- Handouts for parents and teachers (children only).

Photocopy masters
- Home Task Sheet 1 (Children and Adolescents):
  - Eye contact
  - Relaxation practice.

Introduction of Participants and Trainers
The session should begin with the introduction of group members and the trainer. The trainees should only be asked to introduce themselves if they are already quite skilled and relaxed. Otherwise this task is too daunting at this stage and the trainer should perform the introductions.

Rationale, Goals, Setting Group Rules, Session Details, Describing Methods to be Used
It is important that the youngsters understand why they are attending the group and the benefits that it will bring. However, it is also important that they do not feel badly labelled and inferior to other children. The rationale for the group therefore needs to be made as normal as possible. Try to emphasize that all youngsters have problems getting on with others at some time or other and that this programme has been
A Session Guide to Enhancing Social Skills and Social Competence

designed to teach ways of getting on better with others, of making friends and
having good relationships at home and school.

The trainees should be encouraged to take part in deciding the group rules, but
the trainer needs to insist on certain ones (see Chapter 3, p. 99). These relate to
confidentiality and not putting each other down or saying hurtful things. Turn-taking
and participation by all group members are other important rules to develop.

The number, duration, time and place of sessions needs to be outlined and
trainees should be informed of the length of the programme (that is, how many
weeks). The trainer then outlines the methods to be used, such as of videotape, role-
plays and home tasks. It is a good idea to stress the importance of completing
home tasks and using scrap-books into which handouts and Home Task Sheets can
be pasted. These books should be brought to each session.

If a contingency management system is to be used (that is, giving tangible rewards
for specific behaviours), this should be described and commenced from this point.

**Basic Skills: Eye Contact**

Skills training begins with a discussion of the concept of impressions – the impres-
sion we make on others and the impression they make on us. Discuss how very
simple things can make a big difference to the impression that we make, using
eye contact as an example. Try to get trainees to come up with the reasons why it is
important to look at people during conversations (for example so that you can see
how the other person is feeling, that it shows you are interested in them, and that
you are listening). The discussion may also cover problems of too much eye contact,
as well as too little, and feelings of anxiety that we may have about looking others
in the eye.

Demonstrate, using roleplay, the impression created by not using eye contact, (for
example, bored, unfriendly, not listening) and how we feel when the other person
does not look at us during conversation. Appropriate use of eye contact should then
be modelled by the trainer, a videotaped model or an adequately skilled group mem-
ber. Trainees then work in pairs, taking turns to practise using eye contact during a
brief conversation, following a conversation cue card in which each trainee has to
ask a question to their partner and vice versa. The conversation cue cards should
outline a simple topic to talk about, such as 'What did you do last weekend?' or
'What are you going to do next weekend?', as shown in the examples below. The
trainer then provides feedback about each trainee's practice attempt (see Chapter 3,
p. 64 for details on giving feedback).
CONVERSATION CUE CARDS

Find out from your partner what he or she did last weekend.

Find out from your partner who he or she sits next to in class.

Find out from your partner when his or her birthday is.

Find out from your partner what his or her favourite video or film is.

Find out from your partner what he or she most likes to watch on TV.

Relaxation Skills
A detailed script for the relaxation skills training component of this session is given below, with further details being provided in Chapter 3 on p. 72. Relaxation is introduced through the idea that anxiety may influence how we behave. The benefits of learning to relax are discussed, such as reducing feelings of anxiety or anger and letting us deal better with other people. The first relaxation session takes about 15 minutes to conduct and sufficient time needs to be allocated for this component.

When you are giving the instructions, try to talk slowly and make your voice sound quiet and gentle. Your voice should have a hypnotic, calm quality to it. Pause in between the different instructions so that the children have time to follow your commands. Try to carry out the relaxation sessions in a quiet place, with space to lie down or comfortable chairs to sit in.
Relaxation script (Session 1)

Now, I want you to take your right arm and push it out in front of you. First of all, I want you to feel what it feels like when your muscles are really tense and tight. Try to imagine that you have a tennis ball in your hand and that you are really trying to squeeze it hard. Now really clench your fist and squeeze as tightly as you can. Count slowly to 5 while you hold it tight: 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5. Now let go. Just let your hand and fingers go limp and loose. Let them go all floppy, and let your arm drop back by your side.

Now can you describe to me how your hand feels when it is relaxed? [Try to elicit words such as ‘droopy,’ ‘loose,’ ‘floppy.’]

Can you tell me how your hand felt when it was all tensed up? What did your muscles feel like? [Try to elicit words like ‘tight,’ ‘stiff,’ ‘gripping.’]

Good. So you can see the difference in your muscles when they are tense compared to when they are relaxed. What we are going to do in this exercise is learn to relax the muscles in our bodies so that we can relax at times when we get all tensed up. There are lots of times when we get tensed up, like when we are frightened, nervous, worried or angry. Relaxing helps you to feel better in difficult times. Learning to relax is just like learning to do anything, like learning to ride a bike or to rollerskate. You have to practise, and bit by bit you will find that it gets easier to do.

Let’s start with your arms. Push both your arms out in front of you and keep them still and straight. Now push your arms down into your chair or the floor and try to push your body upwards, so that your arms are really tight. Now take a deep breath and hold it, keeping your arms tight and clenching your fists too, while you count to: 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5. Let it go. Breathe out and let your arms relax. Now, gently close your eyes. Just let your arms drop down by your sides, until they just hang there or rest on the floor. Limp and loose like a rag doll. Or you could imagine that you are a jellyfish, just a large lump of floppy jelly. Now, concentrate on relaxing the muscles in your arms. Try to think about what the muscles in your arms feel like and let them go all limp. Check your right arm first and let it go completely limp. Now move your attention to your left arm, and let it become heavy and droopy too. Relax. Can you feel any tightness? If you can, then try to let them go even flappier. Your arms are really starting to relax now. Really relaxed, really relaxed. Further and further, deeper and deeper, more
and more relaxed. Let both arms relax together now. Relax.

Now let us move on to the muscles in your head and face. Try to screw up your face so that it looks awful. Screw up your eyes, your lips, even your tongue in your mouth. Now take a deep breath and hold it while you count to 5: 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5. Let it go. Breathe out and let your face relax. Make sure that you keep your eyes closed. Now, concentrate on relaxing the muscles in your face. Think about what your forehead feels like and let it go all limp. Now move your attention to your eyes, and let them become heavy and droopy. Relax your mouth and lips. Try to think about what your lips feel like. Can you feel any tightness? If you can, then try to let them go all floppy. Even your tongue should be relaxed, so try and think about what your tongue feels like and relax it. You can relax your whole face and head now, really relax. Further and farther, deeper and deeper, more and more relaxed. Let the whole of your face relax together. Relax.

Now we are going to tense and relax the lower part of our bodies. This includes our backs, tummies and legs. This time I want you to imagine that you are a stiff robot. Pull in the muscles in your tummy, take a deep breath and hold it. Good. Now lift your legs up in the air, keeping them straight and screw up your toes. Really make them stiff, just like that metal robot. [With younger children, you can have them walk round the room like a stiff robot at this point.] Now keep holding your breath while you count to 5, and keep your legs and tummy tight: 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5. Let yourself relax. Breathe out through your mouth. Now, concentrate on relaxing the muscles in your tummy. There shouldn't be any tightness in your tummy muscles now. Just let the muscles go all floppy. Think about what your back feels like too and let it go all limp.

Now move your attention to your legs, and let them become heavy and droopy. Relax the top part of your legs and gradually move down, relaxing each muscle in turn. Relax your knees, your calves, your ankles and now your feet and toes. Just try to imagine that any tightness and tension is moving down your body, down and down, down through your legs and out through your toes. Imagine the tightness is drifting out into the air, leaving your body and legs feeling really relaxed. So relaxed that you can almost feel like a rag doll. Imagine that I come over and pick you up and shake you. Your legs and arms are all floppy and shake when I pick you up. There is no tightness in your
neck so your head just drops forward. Your arms just hang there at your sides or rest on the floor. Really relax. Further and further, deeper and deeper, more and more relaxed. Let the whole of your body relax together. Relax.

Now, I want you to spend just a couple minutes letting your muscles relax a little bit more and a little bit more. Go back to the top of your head and work downwards, checking each muscle that you come to. Check if it feels at all tense or tight. Then, say to yourself ‘relax’ and let all the tightness drift away. Really relax now. Starting at the tip of your head, moving down . . . and down . . . and down your body. Muscle by muscle, really relaxing. Relax . . . relax . . . relax.

Good. Now in a moment, I am going to ask you to slowly open your eyes. I will count to 10, and when I get to 5 I would like you to open your eyes. Then, when I get to 10, I will ask you to slowly sit up, 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5. Now slowly open your eyes 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . . 9 . . . 10.

Now slowly sit up. Try not to put all the tension straight back into your muscles. Try to stay relaxed. Good. How did you feel [discuss with each group member]? Did you have any problems with this task?

One of the tasks that I would like you to practise at home is learning to relax. I would like you to practise each day at a time when it is quiet, when you are on your own and you won’t get disturbed. I would like each of you to think of a time when you could practise. You only need ten minutes, but you will need to do it each day. Remember that it is like learning to ride a bike. The more you practise, the easier it will be.

Home Tasks (Session 1)
Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheet 1 (Children and Adolescents) in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 19).

- Practice of eye contact with a specific person (picked by the child during the session) during a conversation, for example, a relative, parent, sibling
- Relaxation practice – ten minutes each day.
Figure 19  Home Task Sheet 1 (Children and Adolescents)

Handout for Parents (Session 1: Children)

Thank you for agreeing to help with the social enhancement programme. Over the next few weeks _______ will be attending sessions with a small group of children and will be learning more about getting on with others and making friends. After each session, a list of tasks will be set which are to be carried out at home or school. Everyone is given a record form which they complete as they do the tasks and bring back to the next session.

As a parent, you have much more contact with _______ than we can have and it will be very useful if you agree to help out with the home tasks. It is also a good idea for you to know what the group is learning about, so that you can talk about it at home. This programme teaches things in small steps, taking what might seem to be very simple things and gradually putting them together.

In the first session, the group learned about how important it is to look at other people when talking to them. We also talked about the impressions that we make on other and why it is important to make a good impression. The first home task is for _______ to practise looking at people during
conversations or when he/she is listening. A particular person has been chosen to practise with. Please could you remind ___________ to carry out the task and to write down what happened on the form provided.

The second task is to practise relaxation exercises every day. Some relaxation exercises were taught in the group, which involve tensing up the muscles in the body and then concentrating on relaxing them one by one. Relaxation is important in dealing with other people as it helps to reduce any feelings of worry or anger that can get in the way of behaving in the best way with them. Relaxation is also a skill and has to be practised often, just like learning a sport. You could help a great deal here by reminding ___________ to do the relaxation practice every day and to write down on the form provided when the practice has been done. The relaxation tasks should always be done alone and in a quiet, comfy place. Just before going to sleep at night or early in the morning in bed are good times to choose.

Younger children will need some help here to fill in the sheets when they have done their home tasks. We will be looking at these record forms in the group at the next session.

We think it is important to give praise whenever youngsters try to do their home tasks, and we are less concerned with how well they do them, than with how much they really try. It would help us a great deal if you could give some praise whenever ___________ tries one of the tasks.

Finally, we would be very grateful if you could remind your child to bring their scrap book to each session. This book contains all the home tasks and handouts from the sessions.

If you have any questions as we work through the programme, remember that we are happy for you to call us.

Thank you.

Handout for teachers (Session 1: Children)
Thank you for agreeing to help with the social enhancement programme. Over the next few weeks your pupil will be attending sessions with a small group of children and will be learning more about getting on with others and making friends. After each session, a list of tasks will be set which are to be carried out at home or school. Everyone is given a record form which they complete as they do the tasks and bring back to the next session.

As a teacher, you have much more contact with your pupil than we can have and it will be very useful if you agree to help out with home tasks in between
sessions. It is also a good idea for you to know what the group is learning about, so that you can talk about it with __________. This programme teaches things in small steps, taking what might seem to be very simple things and gradually putting them together.

In the first session, the group learned about how important it is to look at other people when talking to them. We also talked about the impressions that we make on others and why it is important to make a good impression. The first home task is looking at people during conversations or when listening. The task specifies a particular person to practise with. Please could you remind __________ to carry out the task and ask him/her to write down what happened on the form provided.

The second task is to practise relaxation exercises every day. We are asking parents to help out with this area of practice.

We think it is important to give praise whenever trainees try to do their home tasks and we are less concerned with how well they do them, than with how much they really try. It would help us a great deal if you could give some praise whenever __________ tries one of the tasks.

If you have any questions as we work through the programme, remember that we are happy for you to call us.

Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents

This session needs very little alteration, as the content is applicable to youngsters of all ages. The introduction will remain basically the same, although obviously expressed in an age-appropriate manner. The basic skills and relaxation components need minimal change, although additional conversation cue cards can be used such as:

Find out from your partner what his or her favourite band or group is.

Find out from your partner what he or she thinks about [a singer’s] latest video clip.
One important variation with adolescents, however, is the involvement of teachers and parents. Many teenagers resent this type of interference from adults and you may decide that it is not appropriate to include parents and teachers in the programme. Naturally, parental permission will be needed and teachers will have consented to the youngster being absent from class, but the more detailed participation as outlined in the parent and teacher handouts may not be suitable in some instances. If this is the case, it may be helpful to find alternative ways of making it more likely that new skills will be carried over into real-life situations. One possible example is the use of a youth club or sports coaching meeting that could be used as a social event in which to encourage adolescents to practise their new skills. Alternatively, it may be possible to organize regular boardgame sessions, in which trainees are able to invite along guests from their class.
Session 2

Session plan

Agenda

- Review of home tasks from Session 1
- Review of Session 1
- Identification of feelings (self and others)
- Social perception: posture
- Basic skills: posture
- Relaxation skills
- Home tasks
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents.

Equipment/materials to prepare

- Board for recording Feelings list
- ‘Feelings list’ handout
- Feelings cue cards
- Photo Cards of posture
- Videotaped modelling demonstrations – use of posture (if available)
- Video recorder, monitor and camera (if available)
- Posture cue cards
- Relaxation script
- Handouts for parents and teachers (children).

Photocopy masters

- Home Task Sheet 2a and 2b (Children and Adolescents)
  - Feelings sentence completion
  - Posture
  - Relaxation practice.

Review of Home Tasks from Session 1

Each session should begin with the checking of the previous one's home tasks. All trainees must return their Home Task Sheets in their scrap books and the trainer should make a point of looking at each effort. If any trainee has not at least attempted the tasks, then the trainer stresses that this is a serious matter and that home tasks are extremely important. If any problems have been experienced with the tasks then these are discussed. Positive comments should be made for all attempts at home task completion.
Review of Session 1
Briefly mention the main points from the previous session, that is the role of eye contact and relaxation.

Identification of Feelings (Self and Others)
The discussion should move on to examine why it is important to be aware of our feelings and the feelings of other people. In particular, focus on why we need to change our behaviour according to how other people are feeling. The trainer should try to get the group to think of as many different types of feelings as possible, to produce a ‘Feelings list’ such as that shown below. Write up the responses on a board. It is also useful to prepare a handout of the list for trainees to put into their scrap books. This handout should only be given out once the group has produced its own list, after which additional feelings can be added to the handout from the group’s list.

**FEELINGS LIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good feelings</th>
<th>Bad feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>Sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncy</td>
<td>Worried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice surprise</td>
<td>Scared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving</td>
<td>Bored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful</td>
<td>Tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Hate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud of myself</td>
<td>Embarrassed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>Silly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other examples:

Ask the trainees to describe a time when they felt a particular feeling. Cue cards can be used which depict different emotions. Each youngster selects a card, then describes a situation that caused them to feel that way.
FEELINGS CUE CARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Angry</th>
<th>Excited</th>
<th>Embarrassed</th>
<th>Worried</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>Bored</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid</td>
<td>Proud</td>
<td>Hate</td>
<td>Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgusted</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Surprised</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important in the early sessions to praise all attempts at responding, even if the content is not correct. You need to correct errors gently and remember that the communication skills of trainees may be poor.

**Social Perception: Posture**

Pictures should be used to illustrate how posture can convey information about feelings and how we can find out about other people’s feelings from their body language. Discuss the concept of body language – that we do not have to talk in order to express how we feel. Discuss why it is important to be aware of how other people are feeling. Set the group the task of identifying how people are feeling using matchstick figure pictures, body postures cut out of magazines or photographs of postures: the laminated Photo Cards are ideal for this use. Training material should be selected on the basis of demonstrating a wide range of different emotions and non-verbal messages through postures.

**Basic Skills: Posture**

Recall the importance of impression and discuss how our posture makes a big impact on the impression we make. Illustrate this point by roleplaying an age-appropriate situation (for example you are a youngster being called up to the head teacher’s school principal’s office). Alternatively, pre-prepared videotapes may be used, if available. Keep the verbal content the same, but demonstrate the impression created by an inappropriate posture (for example slouched, feet on the desk, legs apart), compared to a smart, neat posture. Discuss how this could affect the impression you make and how this might influence the outcome of the situation. Discuss the type of situations in which posture could be important, and the different body positions that produce different impressions.

Select someone from the group (who is reasonably skilled in this area) to **model** to the group a more appropriate posture. The use of appropriate posture is then **practised** with trainees working in pairs. Posture cue cards (see below) can be used to get group members to demonstrate the type of posture that would be likely in different situations, for example happy/excited, bored, sad, rejecting, welcoming, aggressive. Each trainee is given a card describing a situation in which an emotion would be
conveyed and is asked to demonstrate the likely posture to the rest of the group. The group then has the task of working out what the feeling is. The performances can be videotaped and replayed if equipment is available.

**POSTURE CUE CARDS**

- Your team scores a goal in the football game.

- You have been standing outside a shop waiting for your mum for the past half an hour.

- Your best friend has just moved to another city and you are sitting at home on your own.

- Your mum tries to kiss you with lots of lipstick on.

- Your mum has been away for a few days and she arrives home.

- You see another child thumping your little brother.
Relaxation Skills
The second relaxation session continues with the tension and relaxation of muscle groups, namely the arms, head and face, chest, stomach and legs. The instructions then shift towards relaxed breathing and the use of the imagination to relax more deeply.

Relaxation script (Session 2)
Today we are going to learn a little bit more about relaxation and how we can use it when we are feeling worried or angry. Now that you have been practicing at home, we can move on to some new ways to relax. First of all, I would like you to relax your muscles and then I am going to explain some ways of relaxing your breathing.

Let's start with your arms. Push both your arms out in front of you and keep them still and straight. Now push your arms down into your chair or the floor and try to push your body upwards, so that your arms are really tight. Now take a deep breath and hold it, keeping your arms tight and clenching your fists too, while you count to 5: 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5. Let it go. Breathe out and let your arms relax. Gently close your eyes so that your eyelids are just touching. Just let your arms drop down by your sides, until they just hang there or rest on the floor. Limp and loose like a rag doll. Or you could imagine that you are a jelly fish, just a large lump of floppy jelly. Now, concentrate on relaxing the muscles in your arms. Try to think about what the muscles in your arms feel like and let them go all limp. Check your right arm first and let it go completely limp. Now move your attention to your left arm, and let it become heavy and droopy too. Relax. Can you feel any tightness? If you can, then try to let them go even flippier. Your arms are really starting to relax now. Really relaxed, really relaxed. Further and further, deeper and deeper, more and more relaxed. Let both arms relax together now. Relax.

Now let us move on to the muscles in your head and face. Try to screw up your face so that it looks awful. Screw up your eyes, your lips, even your tongue in your mouth. Now take a deep breath and hold it while you count to 5: 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5. Let it go. Breathe out and let your face relax. Make sure that you keep your eyes closed. Now, concentrate on relaxing the muscles in your face. Think about what your forehead feels like and let it go all limp. Now move your attention to your eyes, and let them become heavy and droopy. Relax your mouth and lips. Try to think about what
your lips feel like. Can you feel any tightness? If you can, then try to let them go all floppy. Even your tongue should be relaxed, so try and think about what your tongue feels like and relax it. You can relax your whole face and head now, really relax. Further and further, deeper and deeper, more and more relaxed. Let the whole of your face relax together. Relax.

Now we are going to tense and relax the lower part of our bodies. This includes our backs, tummies and legs. This time I want you to imagine that you are a stiff robot. Pull in the muscles in your tummies, take a deep breath and hold it. Good. Now lift your legs up in the air, keeping them straight and screw up your toes. Really make them stiff, just like that metal robot. (With younger children, you can have them walk round the room like a stiff robot at this point.) Now keep holding your breath while you count to 5, and keep your legs and tummies tight: 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5. Let yourself relax. Breathe out through your mouth. Now, concentrate on relaxing the muscles in your tummies. There shouldn’t be any tightness in your tummies now. Just let the muscles go all floppy. Think about what your back feels like too and let it go all limp.

Now move your attention to your legs, and let them become heavy and droopy. Relax the top part of your legs and gradually move down, relaxing each muscle in turn. Relax your knees, your calves, your ankles and now your feet and toes. Just try to imagine that any tightness and tension is moving down your body, down and down, down through your legs and out through your toes. Imagine the tightness is drifting out into the air, leaving your body and legs feeling really relaxed. So relaxed that you can almost feel like a rag doll. Imagine that I come over and pick you up and shake you. Your legs and arms are all floppy and shake when I pick you up. There is no tightness in your neck so your head just drops forward. Your arms just hang there at your sides or rest on the floor. Really relax. Further and further, deeper and deeper, more and more relaxed. Let the whole of your face relax together. Relax.

Now let’s try to tighten up your whole body. Stand up and take a deep breath. Hold your breath while you make your body go stiff all over. Imagine that you are one of those soldiers who stand in sentry boxes guarding the palace or a special building. Make yourself stiff and tight all over. Hold it there and count to 5: 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5. Now breathe out. Let yourself flop down onto the floor or into your chair and go limp all over. Imagine
that you are a rag doll, who doesn't have any bones or stiffness in the body. Let yourself go absolutely limp and lose all over. Let your breathing become gentle now. Just concentrate on letting your body relax. Really, relax. Close your eyes and try to concentrate on what you are doing. Try not to let other thoughts wander into your head. There is no need to worry what you look like, as everyone else has their eyes closed and is doing the same thing. Try to say to yourself the word 'relax' each time you breathe out. So, with each breath you become more and more relaxed. Relax . . . relax . . . really relax.

When you are ready, you can begin to relax your breathing. To start with just try to concentrate on the feelings of the air moving into your lungs and out again. Try to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Concentrate hard on this until you can feel the air moving in through your nose, into your lungs and then back out through your mouth. The air might feel cool and light. Feel the air moving across your lips on its way out. Now, keep your eyes closed and try to imagine that you are holding a candle just in front of you, a few centimetres from your face but not close enough for it to feel hot. Imagine that, as you breathe out, the air moves across your lips and makes the candle flame flicker. Concentrate on imagining that this is really happening, until you can imagine that the candle is actually there and flickering. Good. Stay relaxed and with every breath now I want you to relax a little bit deeper each time you breathe out. Breathe in . . . and out . . . in . . . and out . . . [try to time this to even, gentle breathing]. As you breathe out, say to yourself 'relax . . . relax.' The candle flickers each time you breathe out as you relax further and further, deeper and deeper, more and more relaxed. Let your breathing stay even and gentle, not too fast or deep. Just really gentle and calm. Relax . . . relax.

Good. Now you have learned how to relax your breathing, we are going to learn another way to relax even deeper. This time, we are going to learn to use our imaginations in another way to help us feel relaxed. Keep your eyes closed and try to listen to what I am saying. Try not to let your thoughts drift off onto other things.

I would like you to imagine now that you are lying on the beach. You have plenty of sunscreen on and it is a warm sunny day. The beach is very quiet. You have had a swim and are feeling rather tired, so you lie down on your
towel. Your friends are having a quiet time too and nobody disturbs you. So, you lie in the sun and let your body relax. Really relax. You can feel the warmth of the sand through your towel and your body begins to feel warm and peaceful. You can see the sky – it is clear and blue with only tiny white fluffy clouds. The sea looks clear and blue and sparkles in the sun. You can see a bird soaring way up in the sky. Now you concentrate on what you can hear. You can hear the sound of the surf crashing against the beach. What else can you hear? What else can you see? Now think about what you can feel with your fingers. You reach out and run your fingers through the sand. It feels warm and the grains of sand run through your fingers. Just imagine that you continue to lie there relaxing, with your muscles becoming more and more relaxed. There is nothing to disturb you. You feel calm and peaceful. No worries, no problems. Just really relaxed and calm. Further and further, deeper and deeper, more and more relaxed.

Now, I want you to spend just a couple of minutes letting your muscles relax a little bit more and a little bit more. Try to keep that scene of being at the beach in your imagination. Go back to the top of your head and work downwards, checking each muscle that you come to. Check if it feels at all tense or tight. Then, say to yourself ‘relax’ and let all the tightness drift away. Really relax now. Starting at the top of your head, moving down . . . and down . . . and down your body. Muscle by muscle, really relaxing. Relax . . . relax . . . relax.

Good. Now, in a moment, I am going to ask you to slowly open your eyes. I will count to 10, and when I get to 5, I would like you to open your eyes. Then, when I get to 10, I will ask you to slowly sit up. 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5. Slowly open your eyes. 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . . 9 . . . 10.

Now slowly sit up. Try not to put all the tension straight back into your muscles. Try to stay relaxed. Good. How did you feel? [discuss with each group member]. Did you have any problems with this task? Were you able to imagine being on the beach? Could you imagine the feelings of the sand and the warm sun?

Home Tasks (Session 2)

Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheets 2a and 2b (Children and Adolescents) in the Photocopyable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 20).
Feelings sentence completion
Posture – requires children to specify a time and place when they are going to observe their posture and to record their body position
Relaxation practice – ten minutes each day.

Several minutes should be allowed at the end of the session for handing out Home Task Sheets and discussing the content of each task.

Handout for Parents (Session 2: Children)
In this session _______________ is learning about different feelings and the way we send information about how we feel by our posture. The first home task is to complete a list of sentences that describe situations which cause different feelings. It would be helpful if you could _______________ give a reminder so that the task is carried out. If the task is attempted, it would be useful if you could give some praise about what a good job was done in trying. Do not worry about how well the task was done as long as it was attempted.

The second task is for _______________ to pay attention to his/her own posture, particularly in class. Again, it would be good if you could check that this task has been done and give praise for effort.

Finally, _______________ still needs to continue practising relaxation skills for ten minutes each day. As before, the best time for relaxation practice is before going to sleep or getting up. Please check that the relaxation has been done each day, as the method only works with regular practice. The type of relaxation being used includes tensing up all the muscles in the body and then relaxing them one by one. Relaxation is then made even deeper by concentrating on breathing and trying to imagine being in a calm, relaxing place. It would help if you could remind _______________ to use the breathing and imagination exercises during the practice.

Thank you.

Handout for Teachers (Session 2: Children)
This session _______________ is learning about different feelings and the way we send information about how we feel by our posture. The first home task is to complete a list of sentences that describe situations which cause different feelings. It would be helpful if you could give _______________ a reminder so that the task is carried out. If the task is attempted, it would be useful if you could give some praise about what a good job was done in
**Figure 20** Home Task Sheets 2a and 2b (Children and Adolescents)
trying. Do not worry about how well the task was done as long as it was attempted.

The second task is for ______________ to pay attention to his/her own posture, particularly in class. Again, it would be good if you could check that this task has been done and give praise for effort.

Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents
The session content is very similar for adolescents, with only minor changes being required. Alternative scenarios for posture cue cards may be used such as:

You go for a Saturday job at a fast food restaurant and you go into the Manager's office.

Cue (trainer): Good morning ______________ [trainee’s name]. Have a seat. Now, what days would you be able to work?

Response (trainee): ‘Well, I am free to work Saturdays and Sundays or any evening after school.’

You are called in to the principal’s office to discuss what subjects you want to take at school next year.

Cue (trainer): ‘Hello ______________ [trainee’s name]. Now, we need to sit down and talk about the subjects that you want to take next year. Have you made any decisions yet?’

Response (trainee): ‘Well, no. Not yet. I thought that maybe you could suggest what would be best.’

Age-appropriate vignettes such as these examples may be used to demonstrate inappropriate and appropriate posture and to practise posture during the session. At this stage the discussion should focus on the posture (and eye contact, covered in the previous session), rather than the verbal content, of the response.
Session 3

Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home tasks from Session 2
- Review of Session 2
- Identification of feelings (continued)
- Social perception: facial expression
- Basic skills: facial expression
- Relaxation skills
- Home tasks
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents.

Equipment/materials to prepare
- Posture cue cards
- ‘Tom’s Birthday Feelings’ story
- Photo Cards of facial expressions
- Facial expression cue cards
- Mirror
- Video recorder, monitor and camera (if available)
- ‘The miming task’ script
- Relaxation script
- Handouts for parents and teachers (children)
- ‘Elaine’s Letter’ story.

Photocopy masters
- 3 Home-Task Sheet 3a (Children) 3b (Children and Adolescents)
  - Smiling when saying ‘hello’
  - Watching other people’s facial expressions
- Home Task Sheet 3b (Children and Adolescents)
  - Relaxation practice
- Home Task Sheet 3c (Adolescents)
  - Feelings from facial expressions and postures
  - Watching other people’s facial expressions.

Review of Home Tasks from Session 2
Each group member should be asked to show their scrapbooks and to describe what happened with their home tasks. All attempts should be praised and any problems
should be discussed. If any trainees have not attempted their tasks or have missed out on several days of relaxation practice, then the importance of practice between sessions needs to be re-emphasized. Any reasons for non-compliance should be discussed and ways should be explored to ensure that the home tasks are completed in the future.

Review of Session 2
Briefly review the major types of feelings identified in the previous session and the role of posture in communicating feelings to others. Group members should be asked to demonstrate the type of posture that would be likely in different situations, for example happy/excited, bored, sad, rejecting, welcoming, aggressive, using the posture cue cards from the previous session. The rest of the group then has the task of working out what the feeling is.

Identification of Feelings (continued)
Introduce the idea that different people in the same situation may experience different feelings. A useful way of illustrating this point is to use a short story in which the main characters experience different feelings. ‘Tom’s Birthday Feelings’ (below) can be used for this purpose or any short story that illustrates a range of emotions. Discuss why it is helpful to pay attention to how other people are feeling. Stop the story at appropriate points and ask the group to suggest how they think particular characters are feeling and why this should be the case. In some instances, different trainees may come up with different answers and it can be interesting to discuss alternative interpretations of how the story characters are feeling.

**TOM’S BIRTHDAY FEELINGS**
It was Tom’s birthday. He woke up early and wondered if his parents were awake yet. He jumped out of bed and quickly got dressed. He was thinking about all the presents that he hoped to get. **He was feeling** _________ . He ran through to his parents’ bedroom. They were still asleep. He tiptoed around their room but could not see any presents. He sat down on the end of their bed, but they still did not wake up. He crept out of their room and looked through all the other rooms in the house, but could not find any presents. Then he slipped quietly back into this parents’ room and waited at the bottom of their bed. They were still fast asleep. For the next 30 minutes Tom sat at the end of their bed waiting for them to wake up. **He was feeling** _________ .

Suddenly his mother woke up. ‘Happy birthday Tom,’ she said and gave him a big hug. ‘Are you ready to open your presents yet?’ said his father. ‘Have a look in the cupboard over there.’ Tom opened the cupboard and there was a huge pile of presents all wrapped up. **He felt** _________ .
Just then, his younger sister Lisa walked in. She sat on the floor next to him as she watched him rip off the paper from each present. There was a beautiful new cassette player, just what he wanted, with some cassettes to go with it. One of them was by Lisa’s favourite singer. Then he opened the next present to find a big box of chocolates. Then a construction kit, a large box of crayons and art materials and a bed-side light for his room. Lisa sat silently as she watched Tom open his presents. She felt______.

That day, Tom took his new cassette player to school to show his friends. He didn’t tell his parents, because he knew they would say ‘no.’ At lunch time, he took it out of his bag and played the new cassette. ‘Wow,’ said his friend, ‘That is terrific.’ Tom felt__________. Just then, one of the older boys came over to look. ‘Hey, I’ll have that. Give me a turn,’ said the older boy, and he grabbed the cassette player from Tom. Tom felt__________. Tom snatched at the cassette player and pulled hard to get it back. He shouted loudly at the boy to let it go. Suddenly the other boy let go and the cassette player fell to the ground. It landed with a crash and smashed on the floor, with a bit broken off and wires hanging out. Tom felt__________.

A teacher heard the noise and came over to see what was happening. Tom explained and the teacher called the bigger boy over. She sent him to see the school principal. The bigger boy walked over to the office. He felt__________. Tom put the broken cassette player in his bag and went back to class. On his way home from school later that afternoon he started to wonder what he should tell his parents. Tom felt__________. When he told his mother what had happened she felt__________.

Social Perception: Facial Expression

Introduce the idea that our feelings are also shown by the way our face looks. Pictures and photos, such as those provided on the Photo Cards, can be used at this point to illustrate different feelings and different facial expressions, as outlined in Chapter 3, p.70. The features of each facial expression should be discussed, such as the shape and position of the mouth, eyebrows and eyes. Once each of the primary emotions (for example, happy, sad, angry, afraid, disgust, surprised) has been discussed, the group can be asked to take turns in identifying the feelings shown in other pictures, or the trainer may model different facial expressions. Other, more complicated expressions may be introduced, such as boredom or confusion/ puzzlement.
Basic Skills: Facial Expression

The exercises for teaching the use of facial expression to convey emotions also provide an opportunity for practising social perception skills. While some group members are practising the use of particular facial expressions, the remaining participants can be working out what emotions are being conveyed. A series of cards is needed, on which specific emotions are written, such as happy, sad, disgusted, afraid, surprised, bored, puzzled (the feelings cue cards for Session 2 could be suitable here). One trainee is given a card and asked to demonstrate the feeling on the card. The other group members are asked to watch closely and state how that person is feeling. The trainer provides feedback to the trainee who is demonstrating the expression. In some instances a mirror is useful, or the demonstration can be videotaped in order to provide feedback.

‘The miming task’ can also be used at this point. The trainer reads out a script describing a story in which various emotions occur. The group is split into two for this task, with one sub-group doing the mime and the other observing and trying to work out the emotions being shown. You can design your own scripts, but an example is provided below. The miming subgroup should not be provided with the script in advance, but are required to listen to the script as it is read out by the trainer and alter their non-verbal signals in accordance with the story. The trainer calls a ‘Stop’ at intervals in order to discuss the non-verbal cues being shown.

THE MIMING TASK

Trainer: David and Sarah are on holiday. They are walking down to the beach. They are both feeling really happy. It is a beautiful, sunny day. They are carrying their towels and wearing their swimming costumes. They lie down on the beach and feel the warm sun on their skin. They are both feeling peaceful and relaxed.

Stop. [Discuss emotions, posture, gestures, facial expressions]

Suddenly, they both feel sand land on them. They look up and see two older kids kicking sand at them deliberately. David and Sarah both feel really angry. How dare these kids just come up and start annoying them like this. They both sit up and tell the kids to stop kicking sand.

Stop. [Discuss emotions, posture, gestures, facial expressions]

The other kids go away, but when Sarah lies down again, she realizes that her purse is missing. She searches under her towel and all around in the sand. She is feeling really worried now. She has to find that purse, it has all her holiday money in it. She is feeling really worried.

Stop. [Discuss emotions, posture, gestures, facial expressions]

Sarah now begins to get upset. David tries to make her feel better and offers her some of his money, but they go home to tell their parents. Their
father calls the police and they all have to go down to the police station. They have never been into a police station before and when they walk in they see a large policeman in his uniform behind a high counter. He is not very friendly towards them and tells them to sit down and wait. Sarah and David both feel rather scared.

Stop. [Discuss emotions, posture, gestures, facial expressions]

There is a very long queue of people in front of them. They wait for an hour and are then asked to fill in a form that asks what happened. Then they are told to sit down and wait for another policeman to interview them. They wait and wait, Sarah and David start to feel bored. They wish it could all be over so that they could get back to the beach.

Stop. [Discuss emotions, posture, gestures, facial expressions]

Relaxation Skills

The relaxation exercises in this session are designed to speed up the process of relaxing and to extend the use of imagery to enhance the depth of relaxation. The exercise begins with tension of the whole body and then relaxes each muscle starting from the head and working downwards. Instructions are then given to concentrate on relaxed breathing, prior to the introduction of a relaxing imagery scene. A space-walk image is used in the present example, but you may prefer to develop your own imagery scenes.

Relaxation script (Session 3)

I think you are ready now to be able to relax the whole of your body in one go. So, today I would like you to tense up the whole of your body at once. Let's just try this... watch me first. I take a deep breath... screw up my face... push up my shoulders into my neck... arms pushing down against the chair or floor, tummy pulled in... and legs lifted upwards... even my fists are clenched and my toes are screwed up. I hold this while I count to 5 and then I let go. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5 and breathe out and relax. You try this now. Tense up first. Take a deep breath... screw up your face... push up your shoulders into your neck... push your arms down against the chair; tummy pulled in... and legs lifted upwards... clench your fists and screw up your toes. Hold it there while you count to 5: 1... 2... 3... 4... 5 and breathe out and relax. Just let all the tension in your body drift away. Imagine the tightness is moving down your body, letting each muscle relax as it goes. Start with your face... relax. Relax around your eyes and then your lips. Moving down now to your shoulders and
neck. Just let this area relax as the tightness moves down your body... down and down. Down through your arms, chest, your back and your tummy. Let all your muscles go limp and loose. Imagine waves of tightness leaving your body through your fingers. Drifting out into the air, leaving your arms feeling really relaxed and loose. Down now through your legs too. Past your knees and calves, through your ankles and out through your toes. Just let all the tightness leave your body now. Leaving you really relaxed. Further and further, deeper and deeper, more and more relaxed. Imagine that you are a rag doll. All limp and loose and floppy. If anyone picked you up, your arms would hang by your sides. There is no tightness anywhere in your body.

Now, concentrate on relaxing your breathing. Try to be aware of the cool air moving through your nose, filling up your lungs and passing out again over your lips. Imagine a candle flickering with each breath that you breathe out. Each time you breathe out, say to yourself ‘relax’... relax. Nice, gentle, even breathing. Letting your body relax, becoming more and more relaxed with each breath.

When you are feeling really relaxed, you can move on to another way to help you relax even further. This time I want you to imagine that you are in a spaceship out in space. You are going to go for a space-walk. Actually, it is more like floating. You do not have any jobs to do, you are just going to float in space outside your spaceship. You open the door of the ship and push yourself outside. You are attached to the ship by a long rope so that you cannot drift too far. You just let yourself float now. It is absolutely safe and nothing can harm you. You are wearing a spacesuit and a mask. You can breathe the air from an airtank on your back. Now you are floating outside the spaceship. You just let yourself relax completely. You do not have to move or support yourself in any way. Your body relaxes completely. You feel weightless. Every muscle in your body can relax completely. As you float, you can see stars in the distance. You can see the shiny metal surface of the spaceship at the end of the rope. Your arms hang by your side. Relaxed. Your legs feel limp, loose and floppy. Really relaxed. You cannot hear anything except for the sound of your breathing. It is totally still. With each breath that you can hear, you relax a little bit more and a little bit more. You feel calm, peaceful, no cares, no worries, just really, really relaxed. The only thing you can feel with your skin is your space suit which is soft and silky. Your body feels warm and very relaxed. Just concentrate for a moment on
what you can see around you and on letting your body relax even more. Floating, weightless. You feel more relaxed than you have ever been before.

Good. Now, in a moment, I am going to ask you to slowly open your eyes. I will count to 10, and when I get to 5, I would like you to open your eyes. Then, when I get to 10, I will ask you to slowly sit up. 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5. Slowly open your eyes. 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . . 9 . . . 10.

Now slowly sit up. Try not to put all the tension straight back into your muscles. Try to stay relaxed. Good. How did you feel [discuss with each group member]? Were you able to imagine floating in space?

Relaxation training generally involves six to eight sessions, with home based practice in between. The duration of the scripts tends to decrease as the children become more skilled and able to relax faster. The outline for Session 3 can be adapted for subsequent sessions, to include a range of relaxing imagery scenes.

**Home Tasks (Session 3)**

Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on **Home Task Sheets 3a (Children)** and **3b (Children and Adolescents)** in the *Photocopiable Resource Book* (and reproduced in Figure 21).

- Smiling when saying 'hello'
- Watching other people’s facial expressions
- Relaxation practice.

Suggested home tasks for adolescents are covered on p. 142.

**Handout for Parents (Session 3: Children)**

This session is learning about different feelings and the way we send information about how we feel by the expressions on our faces.

The first home task is to say ‘hello’ to someone at school and smile. Please could you ask to see the Home Task Sheet and whom has decided to say ‘hello’ to. It would be helpful if you could give a reminder so that the task is carried out. If the task is attempted, it would be useful if you could give some praise about what a good job was done in trying. Do not worry about how well the task was done as long as it was attempted.

The second task is for to observe other people’s faces and to try to work out how other people are feeling. If someone looks happy, angry or sad, this is written down on the Home Task Sheet. Again, it would be good if you could check that this task is done and give praise for effort.
Home Task Sheet 3a (Children)
SMILING WHEN SAYING ‘HELLO’

Name: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Smile when you say ‘hello’ to someone at school.
Who are you going to say ‘hello’ to?

When? __________________________
Did you say ‘hello’?
With whom? __________________________
When? __________________________
What did the person do?

WATHCING OTHER PEOPLE’S FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Watch other people’s faces and write down situations when different feelings are shown.

When did you see someone with an angry look on their face?

Why were they angry?

When did you see someone with a happy look on their face?

Why were they happy?

When did you see someone with a sad look on their face?

Why were they sad?

Figure 21 Home Task Sheets 3a (Children) and 3b (Children and Adolescents).
Finally, _______________ still needs to continue practising relaxation skills, but this can now be reduced to five minutes each day. As before, the best time for relaxation practice is before going to sleep or getting up. Please check that the relaxation has been done each day, as the method only works with regular practice. The type of relaxation being used includes tensing up all the muscles in the body and then relaxing them one by one. Relaxation is then made even deeper by concentrating on breathing and trying to imagine being in a calm, relaxing place. It would help if you could remind _______________ to use the breathing and imagination exercises when they do their practice.

Thank you.

Handout for Teachers (Session 3: Children)
This session _______________ is learning about different feelings and the way we send information about how we feel by the expressions on our faces. The first home task is to say 'hello' to someone at school and smile. Please could you ask to see the Home Task Sheet and whom _______________ has decided to say 'hello' to. It would be helpful if you could give _______________ a reminder so that the task is carried out. If the task is attempted, it would be useful if you could give _______________ some praise about what a good job was done in trying. Do not worry about how well the task was done as long as it was attempted.

The second task is for _______________ to observe other people's faces and to try to work out how other people are feeling. If someone looks happy, angry or sad, this is written down on the Home Task Sheet. Again, it would be good if you could check that this task is done and give praise for effort.

Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents
Minor changes may be made to the content of Session 3 for adolescents. The relaxation imagery scenes may be varied if the group can suggest alternative images. In addition, relaxing music may be added to the relaxation component and group members may be asked to make suggestions about quiet, peaceful music which they could bring in for the group.

The content of the story for identification of feelings may also be adjusted for adolescents, as in the following example.
ELAINE'S LETTER
Elaine gets home from school. There is a letter waiting for her. She opens it and inside is some money and a card from her Uncle Jim congratulating her for doing so well in her school exams. 'Buy yourself something nice. Well done on your exams,' the message says. Elaine feels ________________.

Richard, her brother, arrives home. Where did you get that money from?' he asks. Elaine tells him. Richard feels ________________.

Elaine decides to go down to the shops straight away. At last she can buy that new CD that she really wants. She asks her mum if she can go out and walks down the street to the music shop. She feels ________________.

She looks through the many CDs on the shelves and finds the one she wants. She walks up to the counter to pay and puts her hand into her pocket. But there is nothing there. She quickly searches through all her pockets but her money is not there. She feels ________________.

There is a big queue of people forming behind her at the pay desk. The shop assistant feels ________________. Elaine explains that she has lost her money and runs back out of the shop to see if she dropped it in the street. She runs home looking on the footpath, but there is no sign of the money. Elaine feels ________________.

Elaine looks around everywhere at home, but just then she hears her brother giggling in the next room. She goes in and he waves the money at her. 'I pinched it from your jacket pocket,' he says, rolling around with laughter. Elaine feels ________________.

Home tasks
Record forms for the following task are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheet 3c (Adolescents) in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 22).

- Feelings from facial expressions and postures
- Watching other people's facial expressions
- Relaxational practice.

The wording of the home tasks for adolescents has been adjusted so as to be more age appropriate. For example, most adolescents are able to understand the term 'facial expression', rather than using simple wording such as 'look on their face'. The 'Smiling when saying hello' task on Home Task Sheet 3a (Children) is also rather
**Figure 22 Home Task Sheet 3c (Adolescents)**

Simplistic for many adolescents; thus this task has been replaced by an alternative one. ‘Feelings from facial expressions and postures’ asks trainees to look through newspapers and magazines to find pictures of facial expressions or postures that demonstrate specific emotions. The group can then talk about the feelings that are shown in each picture.
Session 4

Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home tasks from Session 3
- Review of Session 3
- Social perception: tone of voice
- Basic skills: tone of voice
- Integrating basic skills: conversations and listening skills
- Relaxation skills
- Home tasks
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents: identifying unhelpful thoughts.

Equipment/materials to prepare
- Audiotape of emotions from tone of voice
- ‘Miming with a difference’ cards
- Handout: ‘Having a conversation’
- Videotaped modelling demonstrations – conversation skills
- Conversation cue cards
- Relaxation script (from Session 3)
- Handouts for parents and teachers (Children).

Photocopy masters
- Home Task Sheet 4a (Children)
  - Asking a question to someone at home
- Home Task Sheet 4b (Children and Adolescents)
  - Six questions to ask a new friend
  - Relaxation practice
- Home Task Sheet 4c (Adolescents)
  - Getting to know more about people
  - How do thoughts make me feel?

Review of Home Tasks from Session 3
As for previous sessions.

Review of Sessions
As for previous sessions.
**Social Perception: Tone of Voice**

There are various ways to demonstrate how tone of voice can send information about feelings. You can either model this yourself or use pre-prepared audiotapes which present the major emotions using the numbers 1–10 or the alphabet. If you are demonstrating this yourself, you need to use a mask or turn away from the group in order to limit facial expression cues. Group members then take turns to identify the emotions being conveyed. Some of the more complicated emotions, such as boredom or disgust, are hard to demonstrate using tone of voice; thus with younger children, it is better to stick to the more obvious emotions of happiness, sadness, fear or anger.

**Basic Skills: Tone of Voice**

After the group has worked on interpreting emotions from tone of voice (social perception) the session moves on to practise the use of tone of voice to communicate feelings. A useful task here is ‘Miming with a difference’. Trainees work in pairs for this task with one person being given a card which outlines a particular scenario. This youngster uses the numbers 1–10 or the alphabet to speak in a tone of voice that communicates to their partner the emotion in the situation. The partner tries to work out what the emotion is and the actual situation on the card is then described. Ideally every trainee should have the opportunity to practise each of the major emotions of happiness, sadness, fear and anger. Below are some examples of suitable scenarios.

**MIMING WITH A DIFFERENCE**

- Your dog has been killed by a car and you have to tell your sister when she gets home from school.
- Your dad or your parents get home late and the house is all dark. There is a power cut and the electricity will not work. Your parents go off to look for a candle, leaving you alone. Just then you hear someone moving about behind you. You call to your parents.
- You are working neatly on a piece of work in class. Another classmate deliberately walks up behind you and give you a push, making your pen mess up your work. You tell the person not to do it again.
- You are walking along a footpath with a friend when you step in some dog’s mess. It goes all over your new shoes. You tell your friend how disgusting it is that people let their dogs do that on the footpath.
- You are shopping with your mum and it has been hours and she is still deciding which shoes to buy. You decide to tell her how bored you are.
Integrating Basic Skills: Conversations and Listening Skills

In this component, the trainer should start to bring together the skills that have been learned. Begin the discussion with an attempt to identify what is needed in a successful conversation. The importance of eye contact, appropriate posture, facial expression and tone of voice should be stressed. Now try to get the group to produce a list of other important behaviours. These can be written onto a board to produce a list, which would look something like that shown below. After the group have produced their own list, they can be given a handout which summarizes the main skills involved in having a conversation, to which the group’s suggestions can then be added.

**HAVING A CONVERSATION**

- Eye contact
- Friendly posture
- Friendly facial expression
- Friendly tone of voice
- Showing you are listening (head nods, ‘mm’, ‘yes’)
- Asking questions
- Picking the right topic to talk about
- Sticking to the topic
- Planning what you are going to say
- Showing you are interested in the other person
- Saying ‘hello’

Other suggestions:

The training of conversation skills begins with a focus on asking questions and listening to the responses given. Ask trainees to identify ways in which they can show that they are listening. In addition to eye contact, responses such as head nods, attention feedback (for example ‘mm’, ‘yes’, ‘ahah’) and making relevant comments should be mentioned.

At this point, a modelled example of asking a question should be given, which may involve a videotaped model, the trainer, or a group member who is relatively proficient in conversation skills. After the modelled performance, the group should discuss which of the behaviours from the ‘Having a Conversation’ list were present. Trainees are then asked to practise their conversation skills in pairs, using a series of cue cards as shown below that outline topics for questions. Every pair is given two cue cards, so that each trainee can ask a question in order to find out more about their partner.
CONVERSATION CUE CARDS

- Does your partner have any brothers or sisters?
- What lesson does your partner like most at school?
- What is your partner's favourite TV show?
- What is your partner's favourite food?
- Does your partner have any pets?
- Who else lives in your partner's home?
- What did your partner do last weekend?
- What is your partner's favourite kind of holiday?

Following the practice, provide feedback to the pair about the various component skills, such as eye contact, tone of voice, volume and listening skills. If necessary, the pair can be asked to repeat the task, in order to correct areas of weakness. Give the next pair two cards and repeat the process.
Relaxation Skills
Repeat the rapid relaxation instructions from Session 3, tensing the whole body and relaxing down the muscle groups. In this session you can ask the group to generate some relaxation images of their own to practise. If you can get anyone to think up an imagery scene that is relaxing and you can produce details to describe it then this image could be used. Otherwise youngsters may select the beach or the space scene for this session. In asking trainees to produce their own ideas, try to get them to focus on sensations, such as what they can see, feel, touch or hear. You might also like to use some of the excellent meditation scripts that are available for use with children. With younger children, the book by Maureen Garth (1991) called Starbright contains some wonderful ideas that can be used for relaxation imagery. For example, she describes the worry tree, on which children hang their worries relating to school, home or peer problems, before they move through the door into their imagery adventure.

Home Tasks (Session 4)
- Asking a question to someone at home
- Six questions to ask a new friend
- Relaxation practice.

Suggested home tasks for adolescents are covered on p. 151.
Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheets 4a (Children) and 4b (Children and Adolescents) in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 23).

Handout for Parents (Session 4: Children)
In this session ______________ is working on skills to do with asking questions in conversations. Three home tasks have been set. The first is to ask a question to someone at home. Please could you ask to see the Home Task Sheet and find out what the question is and who is to be asked. It would be helpful if you could give ______________ a reminder so that the task is carried out. If the task is attempted, it would be useful if you could give some praise about what a good job was done in trying. Do not worry about how well the task was done as long as it was attempted.

The second task is for ______________ to make a list of six questions that could be asked to another youngster. Again, it would be good if you could check that this task is done and give praise for effort.

Finally ______________ still needs to continue practising relaxation skills for five minutes each day. As before, the best time for relaxation practice is before going to sleep or getting up. Please check that the
A Session Guide to Enhancing Social Skills and Social Competence

Figure 23 Home Task Sheets 4a (Children) and 4b (Children and Adolescents)
relaxation has been done each day, as the method only works with regular practice.
Thank you.

Handout for Teachers (Session 4: Children)
In this session _______________ is working on skills to do with asking questions in conversations. The first home task is to ask a question to someone at home. Please could you ask to see the Home Task sheet and find out what the question is and who is to be asked. It would be helpful if you could give _______________ a reminder so that the task is carried out and give some praise for any attempt. If you find that problems have occurred, or that _______________ is feeling worried about trying, perhaps you could suggest some easier task that could be tried instead.

The second task is for _______________ to make a list of six questions that could be asked to another youngster. Again, it would be helpful if you could give encouragement with this task and provide help if any is needed in coming up with possible questions.
Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents
Most of the content of Session 4 is appropriate for adolescents as well as younger children. However, it may be helpful to alter the conversation cue cards so as to make the content more age-relevant. For example:

**CONVERSATION CUE CARDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card 1</th>
<th>Card 2</th>
<th>Card 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your partner have a part-time job to earn extra money?</td>
<td>Who is your partner's favourite singer?</td>
<td>Does your partner do any sports activities outside school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Does your partner collect anything as a hobby?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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In addition, the session may be adapted for older children and adolescents to examine the way in which thoughts influence how we feel and how we behave. This component is not included for the younger age group, who typically have great difficulty in understanding the concepts.

**Identifying unhelpful thoughts**

First, trainees should be given some examples of negative, unhelpful thoughts and provided with a rationale as to why such thoughts are unhelpful.

For example: ‘Unhelpful thoughts are those that stop you from solving a problem, that make you feel bad or that make you behave in a way that leads to a bad outcome’, ‘Helpful thoughts make you feel good, help to solve problems and make it more likely that there will be a good outcome’. Ask trainees to work out what a person is likely to do or what the outcome will be using examples of unhelpful and helpful thoughts, such as:

- Tom is visiting some new neighbours with his mum. He thinks, I don’t like meeting new people. It is really scary and I don’t know what to say. They won’t like me, I want to go home.'
- How do these thoughts make Tom feel?
- How is Tom likely to behave?
- Would you say these thoughts are helpful or unhelpful? Why?

---

*Figure 24* Home Task Sheet 4c (Adolescents).
• Sam is visiting some new neighbours with his mum. He thinks, 'I wonder if these new people have any kids. I hope so. If not, I only need stay for a few minutes and then I can come home again.'
   How do these thoughts make Sam feel?
   How is Sam likely to behave?
   Would you say these thoughts are helpful or unhelpful? Why?

• Esther is told off by her teacher for talking in class. It wasn't her. She thinks, 'That teacher is always picking on me. I hate teachers. How dare she talk to me like that and make a fool of me in front of the class.'
   How do these thoughts make Esther feel?
   How is Esther likely to behave?
   Would you say these thoughts are helpful or unhelpful? Why?

• Jenny is told off by her teacher for talking in class. It wasn't her. She thinks, 'That wasn't fair; it wasn't me. Oh well, I might tell her after class. Then she will know that it wasn't me.'
   How do these thoughts make Jenny feel?
   How is Jenny likely to behave?
   Would you say these thoughts are helpful or unhelpful? Why?

Home tasks
Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheets 4c (Adolescents) in the Photocopyable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 24).

• Getting to know more about people
• How do thoughts make me feel?

‘Getting to know more about people’ gives adolescents the opportunity to practise asking multiple questions. The ‘How do thoughts make me feel?’ home task can be used to make the group more aware of how thoughts can make one feel good or bad emotions.
Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home task from Session 4
- Review of Session 4
- Integrating basic skills: conversations and listening skills
- Friendship skills: identifying friendly behaviours
- Rapid relaxation skills
- Home tasks
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents: identifying unhelpful thoughts.

Equipment/materials to prepare
- Handout: 'Having a conversation' (from Session 4)
- Conversation cue cards (from Session 4)
- New conversation cue cards
- Handout of Friendly/Unfriendly behaviours
- Handouts for parents and teachers (children)
- Handouts: 'Discovering your own unhelpful thoughts' and 'What do I think?'

Photocopy masters
- Home Task Sheets 5a and 5b (Children and Adolescents)
  - Asking a question to a classmate
  - Six questions for getting to know someone better
  - Relaxation practice.
- Home Task Sheet 5 (Adolescents)
  - Identifying unhelpful thoughts.

Review of Session 4
Display the list of conversation skills that were produced in the previous session (having a conversation) on the board again. The main points relating to asking questions and listening to the answers should be reiterated. The group members should change around so that different pairs work together and the conversation cue cards from the previous session can be given out again for further practice in question-asking.

Integrating Basic Skills: Conversations and Listening Skills
When a satisfactory level of question-asking has been achieved, discuss ways of keeping conversations going once they have started. The main points to cover are
the need for an adequate length of responding (that is, not short, monosyllabic answers), showing you are listening, and asking further, relevant questions.

Provide new conversation cards for pair work with the aim being for each trainee to think of a further question to ask after their partner has answered the first. The group work together to produce possible questions before practising them.

You ask a boy in your class if he has a pet. He tells you that he as a dog called Blackie.
What question could you ask next?

You ask your teacher if she had a nice weekend. She says she was ill.
What question could you ask next?

You ask your mum if she had a good day at work. She says that she was late because she missed the bus.
What question could you ask next?

You ask the girl next to you in class where she got her new pens from. She tells you that it is her birthday today.
What question could you ask next?

You ask a girl standing next to you in a queue in a shop if she knows what time it is. She tells you that her watch was stolen last week when her house was burgled.
What question could you ask next?
The task of asking follow-up questions can then be practised using the conversation cue cards from Session 4. Instruct trainees to ask a further question after hearing the response of their partner. Feedback should be given regarding the use of basic skills and the group may also be asked to think of further questions that would be appropriate.

**Friendship Skills: Identifying Friendly Behaviours**

The first step in the teaching of friendship skills is to enable children to work out why being friendly towards others is important. This step can then be followed by the identification of the kinds of things people do that make them seem friendly or unfriendly towards others. Many of these will include skills already covered in the previous sessions. The trainer makes a list on the board of friendly and unfriendly behaviours. The list may look something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRIENDLY</th>
<th>UNFRIENDLY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smiling</td>
<td>Scowling, glaring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly voice</td>
<td>Shouting, angry voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting</td>
<td>Pushing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining In</td>
<td>Ignoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>Being alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping</td>
<td>Not sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying nice things</td>
<td>Saying unkind/hurtful things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking questions about others</td>
<td>Talking only about self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to others</td>
<td>Being bossy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking turns</td>
<td>Pushing in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is useful to prepare a handout of this list of friendly and unfriendly behaviours for trainees to stick in their scrap books. This should only be given out after the list has been produced by the group, and then any additional responses produced by the group can be added to it.

**Rapid Relaxation Skills**

By now, the trainees should be able to relax quickly, and this can be improved even further by using instruction cues, such as the word relax. In Session 5, the relaxation component should include a very rapid tension of the whole body and focus on breathing as the trainee relaxes all body muscles simultaneously. With each outward breath, the word ‘relax’ should be spoken. At first, this should be demonstrated by the trainer, who then instructs the youngsters to say the word aloud with each breath out. After several attempts at saying this out loud, the word ‘relax’ should be said silently, again with each outward breath. The aim is to relax the body more deeply with every ‘relax’. The relaxation home task practises this form of rapid relaxation in real-life situations, rather than just at quiet times at home. The ‘Asking a question to
a classmate’s home task will probably produce anxiety for some group members, which provides a good opportunity for them to practise their relaxation skills.

**Home Tasks (Session 5)**

Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheets 5a and 5b (Children and Adolescents) in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 25).

- Asking a question to a classmate
- Six questions for getting to know someone better
- Relaxation practice.

Before trainees are sent off with their home tasks, it is important to discuss any feelings of anxiety or fear that they may have about approaching a classmate to ask a question. Ways of coping with these anxious feelings should be talked about, and the trainer should explain that relaxation prior to beginning the task forms part of the assignment. The person that the trainee selects for the task should be non-threatening and known in advance to be a friendly individual. This will increase the chance of a positive outcome from the task. Some discussion of appropriate times and places to approach the person may prevent possible misadventures.

Suggested home tasks for adolescents are covered on p.159.

**Handout for Parents (Session 5: Children)**

In this session __________ is working on skills to do with asking questions in conversations. Three home tasks have been set. The first is to ask a question to a classmate. Please could you ask to see the Home Task sheet and find out what the question is and who is to be asked. It would be helpful if you could give ______________ a reminder so that the task is carried out. If the task is attempted, it would be useful if you could give some praise about what a good job was done in trying. Do not worry about how well the task was done as long as it was attempted.

The second task is for ______________ to make a list of six questions that could be asked of somebody in order to get to know them better. Again, it would be good if you could check that this task is done and give praise for effort.

Finally ______________ still needs to continue practising relaxation skills for five minutes each day. As before, the best time for relaxation practice is before going to sleep or getting up. Please check that the relaxation has been done each day, as the method only works with regular practice.

Thank you.
Figure 25 Home Task Sheets 5a and 5b (Children and Adolescents)
Handout for Teachers (Session 5: Children)

In this session ________________ is working on skills to do with asking questions in conversations. The first home task is to ask a question to a classmate. Please could you ask to see the Home Task Sheet and find out what the question is and who is to be asked. It would be helpful if you could give ________________ a reminder so that the task is carried out. If the task is attempted, it would be useful if you could give some praise about what a good job was done in trying. Do not worry about how well the task was done as long as it was attempted. It would also be a good idea if you could check that the classmate who has been chosen is somebody likely to respond in a pleasant way. If not, perhaps you could suggest an alternative child for the task.

The second task is for ________________ to make a list of six questions that could be asked of somebody in order to get to know them better. Again, it would be good if you could check that this task is done and give praise for effort.

Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents

The major change to the content of Session 5 for adolescents involves a continued discussion of the importance of unhelpful thoughts in producing unwanted emotions and behaviour. In this second stage of the discussion, children are taught to identify where and when unhelpful thoughts occur. Most of us have unhelpful thoughts at some time or other so it is usually possible to get children to identify certain situations. Ask trainees to recall a time when they had to face a difficult interpersonal situation and when they felt really bad. Then asked them to remember the types of things that they were thinking at the time and how this influenced their behaviour. You could use a form like the one shown below to help with this task.

**DISCOVERING YOUR OWN UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS**

Try to think of a time when you felt bad in some way (such as angry, sad or afraid):

- Where were you?
- With whom?
- What happened?
- How did you feel?
- What were your unhelpful thoughts?
- What did you do next?
The following sentence completion task can then be used to illustrate the effect of unhelpful thoughts on how we feel and what we do. Trainees work individually and then discuss their answers with the group.

**WHAT DO I THINK?**

Write down exactly what thoughts would go through your mind if each of these things happened to you.

*When the teacher tells me off in front of the class* I say to myself:

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

How would this thought make you feel?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Is this a helpful thought or an unhelpful thought?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

*When I go up to a group of classmates to ask if I can join in their game* I say to myself:

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

How would this thought make you feel?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________
Is this a helpful thought or an unhelpful thought?


When someone in my class has a party and I am not invited I say to myself:


How would this thought make you feel?


Is this a helpful thought or an unhelpful thought?


When the teacher asks me to read out my work to the class I say to myself:


How would this thought make you feel?
Is this a helpful thought or an unhelpful thought?


When someone in my class teases me I say to myself:


How would this thought make you feel?


Is this a helpful thought or an unhelpful thought?


When a parent tells me that I can't do something I really want to do I say to myself:


How would this thought make you feel?


Is this a helpful thought or an unhelpful thought?

The home task may be set for continued identification of negative, unhelpful thoughts.

Home tasks
A record form for the following task is available for photocopying on Home Task Sheet 5c (Adolescents) in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 26).

Figure 26 Home Task Sheet 5c (Adolescents)
Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home tasks from Session 5
- Review of Session 5
- Introduction to social problem-solving steps: The Social Detective
- Friendship skills: sharing
- Rapid relaxation skills
- Home tasks
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents: using helpful thoughts.

Equipment/materials to prepare
- Social Detective poster
- Handout of Social Detective model
- Videotaped modelling demonstrations – sharing (if available)
- Sharing scenario cards
- Handouts for parents and teachers (children)

Photocopy masters
- Home Task Sheet 6a and 6b (Children and Adolescents)
  - Sharing
  - Relaxation practice
  - The ‘What can I do?’ game
- Home Task Sheet 6c (Adolescents)
  - Finding helpful thoughts.

Review of Home Tasks from Session 5
Any problems that occurred during the tasks can provide valuable discussion material.

Review of Session 5
As for previous sessions.

Introduction to Social Problem-Solving Steps: The Social Detective
The training of social problem-solving skills should begin with a discussion about the choices of how we behave towards others and how the responses we choose can
produce different outcomes. Introduce the idea of The Social Detective, who solves social problems making use of three major steps, namely Detect, Investigate and Solve. Suggest the similarities between solving social problems and solving crimes. Put up a large poster showing the three steps and the major questions or instructions. This model should also be drawn into a cartoon-illustrated handout for children to stick into their project books, as shown below.

THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

STEP 1: DETECT

• Step
• What is the problem?

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE

• Relax
• What could I do?
• What would happen next?
• Which of these would be best?

STEP 3: SOLVE

• Make a plan
• Remember social skills
• Do it
• How did I do?

Discuss each step and point with the trainees. Discussion of Step 1: Detect should emphasize the need to discover that a social problem is present. This means explaining that we have to pay attention to our own feelings and the feelings of others. A good guide to discovering that a social problem is there and needs to be solved is that someone is feeling bad (for example, lonely, guilty, sad, angry). This someone may be oneself or another person. Explain that rather than rushing in to solve the problem with the first solution that comes into our heads, we need to stop and think. The first question to ask ourselves is ‘What is the problem?’

Discussion of Step 2 should use the analogy of investigating a crime, but in this case the investigation is designed to work out ways of solving the problem. Talk about the advantages of relaxing before trying to deal with a problem. Then stress that there are many different ways of behaving and that we need to work out which would be the best one to solve the problem. Discussion of Step 3 should focus on the type of social skills that need to be used in carrying out the chosen response (for example, eye contact, friendly tone of voice, smiling, asking questions). A simple example, such as the one below, can be drawn up on a board to illustrate the use of the steps.
**Step 1: Detect**

Tom is feeling lonely and shy.  
He has just started a new school and doesn't know anybody.
- Stop  
- What is the problem?

**Step 2: Investigate**

- Relax  
- What could Tom do?  
  - Ignore the other children  
  - Run away from school and go home  
  - Cry  
  - Be rude to the other kids  
  - Offer to share his chocolate bar with the boy sitting next to him  
- What would happen next?  
  - The likely consequences of each alternative are discussed and written up on the board  
- Which of these would be best?  
  - The group are asked to work out what they feel is the best solution and would make Tom happier.

**Step 3: Solve**

- Make a plan  
- Remember social skills  
- Do it  
- How did I do?

It is to be hoped that the solution of sharing will be selected as the best way of solving the problem, and if so the group can discuss the responses that are important in sharing. This then leads on to the next phase of the session in which the friendship skill of sharing is discussed, modelled and roleplayed.

**Friendship Skills: Sharing**

After a discussion of the behaviours involved in sharing, an example of sharing should be modelled by a group member, the trainer or on videotape. Each trainee should then be given the opportunity to roleplay sharing with a partner. Give feedback about performance and suggest further practice if improvement in specific areas is required. Roleplay cards can be given out which outline sharing situations, tailored to the age group concerned. Some examples of suitable roleplay scenarios are shown below:
SHARING ROLEPLAY SCENARIOS

- You have some chocolate cookies in your lunch box. Offer to share one with your partner.
- Your partner is doing some craft work and cannot find his or her scissors. Offer to share your scissors.
- You are on the school bus and your partner is standing because there are no seats left. Offer to share your seat.
- You have got a new hand-held computer game for your birthday. Offer to let your partner have a turn with it.
- You are working on a picture in class and your partner does not have any coloured pens to use. Offer to share your pens.
- It is raining and you have your umbrella with you. Your partner is getting wet. Offer to share your umbrella.
- You get some extra pocket money this week for some jobs you did. Your little brother really wants an ice cream when you are out at the park, but he hasn’t got enough money. Offer to treat him.
- The person sitting next to you runs out of note paper in the middle of the class. Offer to give him or her a few sheets of yours.

Rapid Relaxation Skills

This session continues rapid relaxation exercises which should be practised for around five minutes under the instructions of the trainer. The whole body should be tensed and rapidly relaxed as the trainee relaxes all body muscles simultaneously. With each outward breath, the word ‘relax’ should be spoken silently, relaxing the body more deeply with each ‘relax’. The home task for relaxation is then to practise this in a real-life situation while also working on sharing skills.

Home Tasks (Session 6)

Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheets 6a and 6b (Children and Adolescents) in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 27).

- Sharing skills
- Relaxation practice
- The ‘What can I do?’ game.

Suggested home tasks for adolescents are covered on p.170.

Handout for Parents (Session 6: Children)

In this session ______ is working on skills to do with sharing with others. The first home task is to share something with somebody.
**Home Task Sheet 6a (Children and Adolescents)

**SHARING**

**Instructions:**
Think of something you could share and someone could share this with. Practise your quick relaxation before you carry out your task.

**What could you share?**

**Who could you share this with?**

**Where?**

**Did you do your sharing task?**

**What did you share?**

**What did the person say?**

**Did you remember to relax first?**

**RELAXATION PRACTICE**

Practice this relaxation exercise once every day for five minutes. Tense up the whole body and relax as you breathe out, saying the word 'relax'.

Please fill in your record form each day. Put a circle around your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you do your practice?</th>
<th>How relaxed did you feel?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday Yes</td>
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<td>Tuesday Yes</td>
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<td>Saturday Yes</td>
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<td>Sunday Yes</td>
<td>Very</td>
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</table>

Write down any problems you have when you do your relaxation practice.

---

**Home Task Sheet 6b (Children and Adolescents)

**THE 'WHAT CAN I DO?' GAME**

**Instructions:**

Add a list of the different things that you could do when each of these things happens.

1. You take your new jeans to school and they disappear from your bag. Another boy in your class is using some pens that look just like yours.

   What different things could you do?

   _____________________________

2. You are playing with some friends and you kick the ball through the window of the house next door. The window breaks.

   What different things could you do?

   _____________________________

3. You promise a friend that you will go to the cinema to see a movie with him or her on Saturday, but you are invited to a party that you really want to go to. Your friend is not invited to the party.

   What different things could you do?

   _____________________________

---

Figure 27 Home Task Sheets 6a and 6b (Children and Adolescents)
Please could you ask to see the Home Task Sheet and find out what task has been chosen. It would be helpful if you could give a reminder so that the task is carried out. If the task is attempted, it would be useful if you could give some praise about what a good job was done in trying. Do not worry about how well the task was done as long as it was attempted.

If you notice any other time when offers to share something with somebody, it would help as if you could make a positive comment about this.

The relaxation practice this session involves five minutes of practice each day. A fast way of relaxing is now being used. This involves tensing up the whole body and relaxing the body quickly. Every time you breathe out, you say to yourself, 'relax' and concentrate on relaxing every muscle very deeply. Please could you remind to practise the relaxation skills once a day for five minutes.

Finally, the group are learning about how there are many different ways that we can behave when something happens. Of the home tasks is to make a list of the different things that someone could do in three situations. You may need to help come up with different ideas. For example, in the first situation, in which some pens go missing, the different choices could be to tell the teacher, snatch the pens back from the boy or ask the boy where he got them from. There are probably many other choices you could think of too. At this point, it is not important to choose the correct choice, but to find different ways of behaving.

Thank you.

Handout for Teachers (Session 6: Children)
In this session is working on skills to do with sharing with others. The first home task is to share something with somebody. Please could you ask to see the Home Task Sheet and find out what task has been chosen. It would be helpful if you could give a reminder so that the task is carried out. If the task is attempted, it would be useful if you could give some praise about what a good job was done in trying. Do not worry about how well the task was done as long as it was attempted.

If you notice any other time when offers to share something with somebody, it would help as if you could make a positive
comment about this. Perhaps you might also notice a time when you could suggest to _______________ that sharing would be a good thing to do in that situation.

Finally, the group are learning about how there are many different ways that we can behave when something happens. One of the home tasks is to make a list of the different things that someone could do in three situations. You may need to help _______________ to come up with different ideas. For example, in the first situation, in which some pens go missing, the different choices could be to tell the teacher, snatch the pens back from the boy or ask the boy where he got them from. There are probably many other choices you could think of too. At this point, it is not important to choose the correct choice, but to find different ways of behaving.

Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents
The main alteration to the content of Session 6 for adolescents concerns the emphasis on the role of negative thinking. This is included in the Social Detective steps, so as to add in an extra component to Step 2: Investigate. This extra step, instructs the youngster to look for and deal with any unhelpful thoughts. Thus, the Social Detective steps for adolescents look like this:

**THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE**

**STEP 1: DETECT**
- Step
- What is the problem?

**STEP 2: INVESTIGATE**
- Relax
- What could I do?
- What would happen next?
- Which of these would be best?
- Watch for unhelpful thoughts

**STEP 3: SOLVE**
- Make a plan
- Remember social skills
- Do it
- How did I do?
In the example which is used to illustrate the Social Detective step, on p.166 the following could be added to suggest Tom’s unhelpful thoughts:

- Watch for unhelpful thoughts
  - This is awful. I hate this school. I wish I was back at my old school. No one likes me here. I'll never have any friends.

The group can then discuss how these thoughts make Tom feel and suggest alternative, more helpful thoughts for dealing with the situation. For example: ‘If I try to be friendly then some classmates might start to talk to me. It will just take a little time and then I will have new friends to hang around with.’

The session should then focus on teaching youngsters to think of positive, alternative thoughts that would produce more positive emotions. This process begins with written examples of potential situations in which unhelpful thoughts are likely to occur. Provide examples of unhelpful thoughts and ask the group to suggest alternative, more helpful thoughts. Once this process has been learned, it can then be applied in all future sessions when specific problem situations are discussed. Thus, for all future sessions, trainees can be asked to identify some possible negative thoughts that may occur in each situation and to think of thoughts that would make it more likely for them to behave in a way which would produce a positive result and make them feel good. The following tasks can be used to teach the basic principle of changing negative/unhelpful thoughts to more positive and helpful ones:

**FINDING HELPFUL THOUGHTS**

Try to think of some different thoughts that would make you feel better. Write them down in the spaces below.

Someone in your class is having a party and lots of your friends are going, but you are not invited.

Unhelpful thoughts: You think:
- 'This is awful. No-one likes me. I am going to lose all my friends.'

How are you feeling with this thought? ____________________________

What would be a more helpful thought? ____________________________

The teacher tells you off in front of the class for something that you didn't do.

Unhelpful thoughts: You think:
- 'He is always telling me off. He doesn't like me. He never tells anyone else off.'
How are you feeling with this thought?

What would be a more helpful thought?

Your mum won’t buy you a new computer game that you really want. 
Unhelpful thoughts: You think: ‘This isn’t fair. All my friends have that game. It is really terrible if I can’t have it. My mum has to buy it for me.’

How are you feeling with this thought?

What would be a more helpful thought?

Home tasks
A record form for the following tasks is available for photocopying on Home Task Sheet 6c (Adolescents) in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 28).

- Finding unhelpful thoughts.

The extra task provides further practice in suggesting positive alternatives to unhelpful thoughts.

Figure 28 Home Task Sheet 6c (Adolescents)
Session 7

Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home tasks from Session 6
- Review of Session 6
- Using self-instruction in social problem-solving
- Friendship skills: offering help, giving compliments
- Home tasks
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents: using helpful thoughts.

Equipment/materials to prepare
- Social Detective poster and handout (from Session 6)
- Handouts for parents and teachers (Children).

Photocopy masters
- Home Task Sheets 7a and 7b (Children)
  - Saying something nice
  - Offering to help
  - What do you think happens next?
- Home Task Sheets 7c and 7d (Adolescents)
  - Giving a compliment
  - Offering to help
  - What do you think happens next?

Review of Home Tasks from Session 6
Discuss successes and any problems experienced with the sharing task. If problems have occurred, the situation can be roleplayed in the group. One trainee who is more skilled at this task may be asked to model an appropriate performance and those who experienced the problems can then be asked to practise.

The alternative solutions suggested for the ‘What can I do?’ game also need to be discussed. Note that the aim of this exercise is to develop the idea that there are many different ways of responding to a situation, rather than to discuss the social value of these alternatives.

Review of Session 6
Return to the handout and poster that describe the Social Detective model. Each step should be briefly summarized. Further questions similar to those in the ‘What can I
do?" game can then be used to discuss the production of alternative responses. For example:

- A new child has just started in your class. You are talking with your friend and the new classmate is watching you. What different things could you do?
- Your dad won't let you go out over to your friends until you have tidied up your room. What different things could you do?
- Your teacher is carrying a large pile of books and is having trouble picking up some papers she has dropped. What different things could you do?

Using Self-Instruction in Social Problem-Solving
A detailed description of the use of self-instruction training to teach social problem-solving steps is given in Chapter 3, p.80. It is a good idea to be thoroughly familiar with these procedures before you begin Session 7. Briefly, the trainer should begin by using an example of a specific social problem while talking through each of the problem-solving steps. It is useful to take an example from the skill areas being taught for the session, which are ‘Offering help’ and ‘Giving compliments.’ The group uses the Social Detective steps to go through the problem-solving sequence and the steps and questions are written up on a board. Here is an example:

THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM
Sarah is walking home from school when she sees a boy in her class drop all his books, pens and papers out of his bag.

STEP 1: DETECT
- Step
- What is the problem?
  The boy feels upset and embarrassed. His papers are blowing away.

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE
- Relax
- What could I do?
  a) I could walk past and ignore him
  b) I could offer to help him pick his things up
  c) I could laugh at him
  d) I could tease him for being clumsy
• What would happen next?
  a) If I walk past and ignore him, I will feel mean
  b) If I offer to help him, he might be pleased and I will feel good about myself
  c) If I laugh at him, he will feel worse and I will feel mean
  d) If I tease him for being clumsy, he will feel worse and I will feel mean
• Which of these would be best?
  I think it would be best if I offer to help him.

STEP 3: SOLVE
• Make a plan
  I will go up and say ‘Would you like me to help you to pick up your things up?’
• Remember social skills
  Remember to look at him, smile and use a friendly voice
• Do it
• How did I do?
  I did really well. He thanked me for helping him.

Once you have demonstrated the use of these steps by talking through each one, ask the trainees to practise the steps themselves, again talking out loud. Some group members may find this task rather embarrassing and it may take a little persuasion. It is useful to pick a more assertive and confident trainee to begin with. The same example of helping may be used to practise self-instructions out loud, with all group members having a turn at talking themselves through the steps. The steps and questions written up on the board may help trainees to follow the sequence. Considerable prompting and correction may be needed at first. The aim is eventually for youngsters to become thoroughly familiar with the steps, so that their use becomes automatic.

When each trainee has had a turn with the helping task, present another social problem, relating to saying something nice to another person. The group should use the Social Detective steps to go through the problem-solving sequence and the steps and questions should be written up on a board. The trainer should again model the steps by talking through each one. You could use the following example, or select your own situation if you prefer.

THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM
Your friend has been to the hairdresser and had a really short hair cut. You think it looks really nice.
STEP 1: DETECT
• Stop
• What is the problem?
  You think your friend's hair looks really nice but feel shy about saying anything

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE
• Relax
• What could I do?
  a) I could ignore it and not say anything
  b) I could say it looks awful and like it's been under a lawnmower
  c) I could say it looks really good
• What would happen next?
  a) If I ignore it then my friend might be hurt, and I won't feel like a friend
  b) If I say it looks awful, my friend will be upset and I will feel mean
  c) If I say it looks really good, my friend will be pleased and I will feel like a good friend
• Which of these would be best?
  I think it would be best if I say it looks good.

STEP 3: SOLVE
• Make a plan
  I will go up to my friend and say 'I really like your hair, it looks good.'
• Remember social skills
  Remember to smile, look your friend in the eye and have a friendly voice
• Do it
• How did I do?
  I did that very well and my friend was really pleased.

After demonstrating the Social Detective steps out loud, each trainee should then take a turn to practise, again talking through the steps aloud.

Friendship Skills: Offering Help, Giving Compliments
Having dealt with the problem-solving aspects of offering help and giving compliments previously in the session, it is now important that the group has time to
practise the performance of these friendship skills. Each trainee should be asked to think of situations to roleplay, relating to offering help and then giving a compliment. They should pick real-life examples, involving situations that are likely to occur in the future.

**Home Tasks (Session 7)**

Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheets 7a and 7b (Children) in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 29).

- Saying something nice
- Offering to help
- What do you think happens next?

Suggested home tasks for adolescents are covered at p.179.

**Handout for Parents (Session 7: Children)**

In this session ______________ is working on skills to do with saying nice things to people and offering to help. Three tasks have been set. The first is to say something nice to somebody. Please could you ask to see the Home Task Sheet and find out what task has been chosen. It would be helpful if you could give ______________ a reminder so that the task is carried out. If the task is attempted, it would be useful if you could give some praise about what a good job was done in trying. Do not worry about how well the task was done as long as it was attempted.

The second task this session is to offer to help somebody. Again, it would be helpful if you could remind ______________ to carry out this task and give some praise if an attempt is made. If you notice any other time when ______________ says something nice or offers to help somebody, it would help us if you could make a positive comment about this.

The group have been learning about how to work out what is likely to happen if we behave in different ways. We can produce good or bad outcomes for ourselves depending on how we choose to behave. The third home task asks youngsters to work out what is likely to happen next in different situations.

You will be glad to know that relaxation does not have to be practised every day from now on. We have been teaching a very fast way of relaxing, which youngsters can use when they try out the home tasks. Please can you remind ______________ to use the fast relaxation when doing this week's task.

Thank you.
A Session Guide to Enhancing Social Skills and Social Competence

Home Task Sheet 7a (Children)
SAYING SOMETHING NICE

Name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Think of something nice that you could say to somebody. Practice your quick reaction before you carry out the task.

What could you say that is nice?

Who could you say this to?

Where? ___________________________

When? ___________________________

Did you do your task of saying something nice to somebody?

What did you say?

To whom?

Where?

What did the person say?

Did you remember to smile, relaxed?

Did you have any problems doing this?

OFFERING TO HELP

Think of something you could do to help somebody. Practice your quick reaction before you carry out the task.

Where could you help?

What could you offer to help with?

When? ___________________________

Where? ___________________________

Did you do your task of helping somebody?

What did you offer to help with?

What did you say?

To whom?

Where?

What did the person say?

Did you remember to smile, relaxed?

Did you have any problems doing this?


Home Task Sheet 7b (Children)
WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS NEXT?

Name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Write down what you think might happen next in each of these stories.

1. You are standing in line at the school shop. A bigger child pushes in front of you. You give the other child a kick.

What do you think happens next?

2. Kim trips over and hurts her knee. You go up and try to help her. She says, 'Go away and leave me alone. I don't need any help.'

What do you think happens next?

3. You are watching your favourite TV show and your dad calls you and tells you to come for your meal. You ignore your dad and carry on watching TV.

What do you think happens next?


Figure 29 Home Task Sheets 7a and 7b (Children).
Handout for Teachers (Session 7: Children)

In this session __________ is working on skills to do with saying nice things to people and offering to help. Three tasks have been set. The first is to say something nice to somebody. Please could you ask to see the Home Task Sheet and find out what task has been chosen. It would be helpful if you could give __________ a reminder so that the task is carried out. If the task is attempted, it would be useful if you could give some praise about what a good job was done in trying. Do not worry about how well the task was done as long as it was attempted.

The second task this session is to offer to help somebody. Again, it would be helpful if you could remind __________ to carry out this task and give some praise if an attempt is made. If you notice any other time when __________ says something nice or offers to help somebody, it would help us if you could make a positive comment about this.

The group have been learning about how to work out what is likely to happen if we behave in different ways. We can produce good or bad outcomes for ourselves depending on how we choose to behave. The third home task asks youngsters to work out what is likely to happen next in different situations.

Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents

The content of Session 7 is essentially the same for adolescents, with the exception of a focus on possible negative or unhelpful thoughts during the social problem-solving steps as applied to the offering to help and giving compliments scenarios. In Step 2: Investigate of the Social Detective model, the trainees should be asked to include an additional point.

- Watch for unhelpful thoughts

In the offering to help scenario when Sarah sees the boy drop all the things out of his bag, examples of unhelpful thoughts could be:

'I don’t offer to help him. What happens if he doesn’t want help. He might shout at me and I will feel awful. Anyway, I don’t know what to say to him.'

The group should then discuss how Sarah is likely to feel and how she is likely to behave with these kinds of thoughts. Alternative, more helpful thoughts should then be proposed by trainees, which could be something like:

'Oh dear. That boy has dropped his things. He looks like he could do with some help. I’ll offer and see if he would like me to help. If not, he can say...'

179
so. At least I will have offered.'

In the giving compliments scenario, examples of unhelpful thoughts could be:

'I think her hair looks really good, but if I say something the others will all laugh at me and think I'm a nerd. Only people who are creepy say nice things.'

The group should then discuss how this person is likely to feel and how he or she is likely to behave with these kinds of thoughts. Alternative, more helpful thoughts should then be proposed by trainees, which could be something like:

'I think my friend's hair looks really good. If I tell her, that will make her feel good. The others won't notice and anyway, even if they do, it's OK to say nice things to people when you mean it.'

One final point is that many youngsters of this age are very embarrassed when it comes to talking through the problem-solving stages out loud. The trainer needs to anticipate this problem and try to alleviate anxiety. Having the trainer model the steps out loud first, and then select one of the more confident members of the group to demonstrate the steps may encourage the less confident trainees to participate in this task. Alternatively, it may be feasible to progress straight to silent rehearsal of the steps, without requiring them to be spoken out loud.

Home Tasks

Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheets 7c and 7d (Adolescents) in the Photocopiabe Resource Book and (reproduced in Figure 30).

- Giving a compliment
- Offering to help
- What do you think happens next?

The tasks vary considerably from those on Home Task Sheets 7a and 7b (children). 'Saying something nice' has been replaced by 'Giving a compliment'. This includes instructions for adolescents to note whether they experienced any unhelpful thoughts and whether they were able to think of more helpful alternatives. 'Offering to help' has been adapted to include these instructions as well. 'What do you think happens next?' has been adapted to include more age-relevant scenarios.
Home Task Sheet 7c (Adolescents)

GIVING A COMPLIMENT

**Name:**

**Date:**

Think of something nice that you could say to somebody. Practice your quick relaxation before you carry out the task.

What could you say that is nice?

Why could you say this too?

What did you say?

What did the person say?

Did you remember to relax first?

Write down any helpful thoughts that you had.

Write down any better, helpful thoughts that you had.

OFFERING TO HELP

Think of something that you could do to help somebody. Practice your quick relaxation before you carry out the task.

When could you help?

What could you offer to help with?

What did you offer to help with?

What did the person say?

Did you remember to relax first?

Write down any helpful thoughts that you had.

Write down any better, helpful thoughts that you had.

---

Home Task Sheet 7d (Adolescents)

WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS NEXT?

**Name:**

**Date:**

Write down what you think might happen next in each of these stories.

1. You are standing in line to buy a ticket for a concert. A woman comes up and pushes in front of you. You feel her in the back and say, "Hey you, I was here first. Get to the back of the queue."
   
   What do you think happens next?

2. You are babysitting at a house where the parents have said that you are not allowed to have friends over. At 10.30 all your friends arrive. They have brought a bottle of wine with them. You say they can come in for a while. The parents arrive home early.
   
   What do you think happens next?

3. You are watching your favourite TV show and your dad tells you to come and eat your meal. You ignore your dad and carry on watching TV.
   
   What do you think happens next?
Session 8

Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home tasks from Session 7
- Review of Session 7
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  - Friendship skills: asking to join in
- Home task
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents: using helpful thoughts.

Equipment/materials to prepare
- What do you think happens next handout (for older children and adolescents)
- Videotaped modelling demonstrations – joining in (if available)
- Handouts for parents and teachers (Children).

Photocopy masters
- Home Task Sheet 8 (Children and Adolescents)
  - Asking to join in.

Review of Home Tasks from Session 7
As in previous sessions.

Review of Session 7
The Social Detective steps should be briefly reviewed. Further examples of ‘What do you think happens next?’ should be used to continue to teach the group about predicting the consequences of alternative solutions. This task can be done verbally, or older children and adolescents can be asked to write down the likely consequences on a handout like the one below, to stick into their scrap book.

WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS NEXT

1 You really want a turn on the computer game that your sister is playing with. You go over and push her out of the way and grab the controls. What do you think happens next?

2 You are given a box of chocolates for your birthday. In the evening, you are watching TV with your family and you take out the chocolates and
offer them around.
What do you think happens next?

3 A boy in your class is bragging about how good he is at sport and he tells you that you are useless. You walk away and ignore the boy.
What do you think happens next?

4 You spill some paint at school. You go and tell the teacher that you are sorry but you spilled it accidently and need a cloth to clean it up.
What do you think happens next?

5 You are having difficulty understanding how to do some maths problems at school. You go up to the teacher at the end of the day and tell him that you do not understand how to do your homework and need some help.
What do you think happens next?

6 Your mum has bought a new dress and walks into the room wearing it. You tell her that it looks awful and that you don’t like the colour.
What do you think happens next?

7 A new family moves in next door to you at home. You can hear their children playing in the garden. You go round and knock on the door and ask if they would like to come over to your house.
What do you think happens next?

Integrating Social Skills (Basic Skills, Social Perception, Self-Instruction Methods and Problem-Solving)
Rather than discussing social problem-solving separately from performance skills, this and all subsequent sessions combine the use of basic skills, social perception, problem-solving and skill performance, using self-instructions to guide the steps. The trainees should now be able to guide themselves through the Social Detective steps by using self-instructions out loud, so at this point the self-instruction component shifts to silent self-instructions.

Friendship skills: asking to join in
Discuss the importance of being able to ask to join in activities with other classmates.
The Social Detective model can be used to illustrate the alternative responses and different consequences that may occur in relation to joining in situations. For example:
THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

You are at school and a group of your classmates are playing volleyball. There is room on one of the teams and you would like to join in.

STEP 1: DETECT
• Stop
• What is the problem?
  I would like to join in the game.

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE
• Relax
• What could I do?
  a) I could wait until they ask me
  b) I could go somewhere else
  c) I could ask them if I could join in
  d) I could take their ball and hide it
• What would happen next?
  a) If I wait until they ask me, I might be here all day
  b) If I go somewhere else, then I would miss out on the game
  c) If I ask them if I could join in, they may say ‘yes’
  d) If I take their ball and hide it, then they will get angry and dislike me
• Which of these would be best?
  Asking if I can join in would be the best way to get to play the game.

STEP 3: SOLVE
• Make a plan
  I will wait until the game stops for a moment and then say, ‘Can I join in the game please?’
• Remember social skills
  Remember to have a loud, but friendly voice, to smile and look at the classmates while I talk
• Do it
• How did I do?
  Well done. I asked to join in. They said I can play at the end of this game.
Discuss the component skills that are involved in asking to join in. Reference should be made to social perception and observing the cues from other people in order to decide when is a good time to ask to join in. The basic skills of appropriate facial expression and tone of voice also need to be discussed, along with selecting the correct words.

Many children feel anxious about joining in and relaxation skills are important in reducing feelings of worry. Thus, it is helpful to have children apply their relaxation skills when they carry out their home task for joining in (see below).

Having discussed the problem-solving steps relating to asking to join in and the important skills involved, the possible solutions should then be modelled, either using a videotaped example or by the trainer or a group member. Each trainee should then be given a turn to roleplay a realistic situation in which he or she could ask to join in a peer group activity, involving other group members as roleplay participants. Prior to roleplaying, instruct each trainee to use the Social Detective steps silently in order to decide on the best response. The trainer should provide feedback about the quality of the performance and also discuss how the Social Detective steps were used to solve the problem.

**Home Task (Session 8)**

A record form for the following task is available for photocopying on **Home Task Sheet 8 (Children and Adolescents)** in the **Photocopiable Resource Book** (and reproduced in Figure 31).

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**Home Task Sheet 8 (Children and Adolescents)**

**ASKING TO JOIN IN**

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<th>Name</th>
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Think of a time when you could ask to join in an activity with another group of kids. Your task is to ask to join in with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which kids are you going to ask?</th>
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<th>Did you ask to join in?</th>
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<tr>
<th>Did they let you join in?</th>
<th>Did you remember to relax?</th>
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**Figure 31** Home Task Sheet 8 (Children and Adolescents)
• Asking to join in.

In setting the home task for this session, it is important to discuss how to deal with rejection if the peer group say ‘no’ to a request to join in. In particular, the children need to be aware that no one is always successful and that rejection on one occasion does not mean it will happen all the time.

Handout for Parents (Session 8: Children)
In this session the group have been working on ways of asking to join in activities with other children. The home task is to pick a particular group of classmates and to ask to join in a game or activity with them. Some children are rather afraid of this task, but we have practised it in the group and relaxation exercises can be used to reduce feelings of worry. It would be helpful if you could remind __________ to carry out this task and say something positive when it is tried.

Thank you.

Handout for Teachers (Session 8: Children)
In this session the group have been working on ways of asking to join in activities with other children. The home task is to pick a particular group of classmates and to ask to join in a game or activity with them. Some children are rather afraid of this task, but we have practised it in the group and relaxation exercises can be used to reduce feelings of worry. It would be helpful if you could remind __________ to carry out this task and say something positive when it is tried. If there is any way that you could influence the situation so that the peer group are likely to accept __________, then this would be very beneficial for building up confidence.

If you notice any other occasions at school when it would be appropriate for __________ to ask to join in a group activity, perhaps you could suggest this and discuss ways of approaching the group to ask to join in.

Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents
As with previous sessions, Session 8 should be adapted to include discussion of possible negative or unhelpful thoughts during the social problem-solving steps as applied to asking to join in peer group activities. The situations used to illustrate joining in may be altered to become more age appropriate. For example:
Some kids in your class are talking about going to a concert next week. You would really like to go too.

This scenario can be used as a problem to solve using the Social Detective steps, including in Step 2: Investigate

• Watch for unhelpful thoughts

Examples of unhelpful thoughts could be:

'I don't go up and ask them if I can join in. They will laugh at me and I don't know what to say anyway. I know that none of them like me and they wouldn't want me there.'

The group should then discuss how these thoughts would make the person feel and how he or she is likely to behave with these kinds of thoughts. Alternative, more helpful thoughts should then be proposed by trainees, which could be something like:

'Well, it might be worth asking them if I could go along too. Even if they say no, then at least I tried. If they laugh at me and say unkind things, then they aren't very nice people.'
Session 9

Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home task from Session 8
- Review of Session 8
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and, problem-solving)
  - Friendship skills: giving invitations
- Home tasks
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents: using helpful thoughts

Equipment/materials to prepare
- Videotaped modelling demonstrations – giving invitations (if available)
- Handouts for parents and teachers (Children).

Photocopy masters
- Home Task Sheet 9 (Children and Adolescents)
  - Giving an invitation.

Review of Home Task from Session 8
Discuss successes and difficulties relating to asking to join in. Roleplay any situations in which the trainee was not successful and that could be tried again. Discuss ways of dealing with rejection if this has occurred.

Review of Session 8
As for previous sessions.

Integrating Social Skills (Basic Skills, Social Perception, Self-Instruction Methods and Problem-Solving)
Friendship Skills: Giving Invitations
The Social Detective steps can be used to illustrate the different behaviours and consequences that may occur when giving invitations to other children. Discuss the importance of being able to offer invitations in order to make and keep friends. The following example can be used to illustrate the steps.
THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM
You would like to have someone to spend time with at the weekend. A new boy has started in your class and does not seem to have anyone to talk to.

STEP 1: DETECT
- Stop
- What is the problem?
  I would like someone to spend time with at the weekend.

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE
- Relax
- What could I do?
  a) I could ignore the new person
  b) I could invite him over to my house
  c) I could tease him about the colour of his hair
- What would happen next?
  a) If I ignore the new person, then I still won't have anyone to spend time with
  b) If I invite the new person over to my house, then he might say 'yes' and we could have a good time
  c) If I tease him, then he won't like me and I still won't have a friend
- Which of these would be best?
  Inviting the new person to my house would be the best answer

STEP 3: SOLVE
- Make a plan
  I will go over and say 'Hi, I'm in your class. If my parents say it is OK, would you like to come over to my house at the weekend and see my new computer game?'
- Remember social skills
  Remember to have a friendly voice, to smile and to look at the new person while I talk
- Do it
- How did I do?
  Well done. I invited the new person over to my house at the weekend and he is going to ask his parents if he can come.
Discuss the component skills that are involved in offering an invitation. Reference should be made to social perception and observing the cues from other people in order to decide when is a good time to approach someone with an invitation. The basic skills of appropriate facial expression and tone of voice also need to be discussed, along with selecting the correct words. The value of using rapid relaxation to reduce any feelings of anxiety should also be mentioned.

Having discussed the problem-solving steps relating to giving invitations to peers and the important skills involved, the behaviours should then be modelled, either using a videotaped example or by the trainer or a group member. Each trainee should then be given a turn to roleplay a likely situation in which he or she could give an invitation to a peer, involving other group members as roleplay participants. Prior to roleplaying, instruct each trainee to use the Social Detective steps silently in order to decide on the best response.

The trainer should provide feedback about the quality of the performance and also discuss how the Social Detective steps were used to solve the problem.

**Home Tasks (Session 9)**

A record form for the following task is available for photocopying on *Home Task Sheet 9 (Children and Adolescents)* in the *Photocopiable Resource Book* (and reproduced in Figure 32).

- Giving an invitation.

*Figure 32 Home Task Sheet 9 (Children and Adolescents).*
Handout for Parents (Session 9: Children)
This session the group have been working on ways of inviting another child to an event, such as having someone home to visit, going to a movie or some other activity. Being able to invite other people to do things is an important part of making and keeping friends. We have practised how to do this in a friendly way and the home task is to invite a classmate to an outside activity, for example having them home to visit.

It would be very helpful if you could help with this task and allow __________ to invite someone home to visit or to take part in some other activity. Please could you look at the Home Task Sheet and see who has been chosen for the invitation and what activity has been picked. If this task just isn’t possible, please could you work out some other invitation that could be given. Again, it is important to give praise when the task is attempted, even if the other child does not accept the invitation.

Thank you.

Handout for Teachers (Session 9: Children)
This session the group have been working on ways of inviting another child to an event, such as having someone home to visit, going to a movie or some other activity. Being able to invite other people to do things is an important part of making and keeping friends. We have practised how to do this in a friendly way and the home task is to invite a classmate to an outside activity, for example having them home to visit.

We have asked the parents to help with this task and to allow __________ to invite someone home to visit or to take part in some other activity. If there is any encouragement that you could give to prompt __________ to offer an invitation, this would be helpful. Again, it is important to give praise when the task is attempted, even if the other child does not accept the invitation.

Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents
The structure of Session 9 is suitable for all age groups, although the examples used can be adjusted to make them more age appropriate. The importance of giving invitations in order to form and keep friendships should be discussed, prior to modelling, roleplay and feedback relating to performance of relevant skills.

Use the Social Detective steps to illustrate the different behaviours and consequences that may occur relating to giving invitations to peers. Include a discussion
of possible negative or unhelpful thoughts during the social problem-solving steps. The following scenario can be used as an example.

THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM
You would like to have someone to spend time with at the weekend. A new boy has started in your class and does not seem to have anyone to talk to.

STEP 1: DETECT
- Stop
- What is the problem?
  I would like someone to spend time with at the weekend

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE
- Relax
- What could I do?
  a) I could ignore the new person
  b) I could invite him or her over to my house
  c) I could tease him or her
- What would happen next?
  a) If I ignore the new person, then I still won't have anyone to spend time with
  b) If I invite the new person over to my house, then he might say 'yes' and we could have a good time
  c) If I tease him, then he won't like me and I will still won't have a friend
- Which of these would be best?
  Inviting the new person to my house would be the best answer
- Watch for unhelpful thoughts
  Yes, I do have some unhelpful thoughts. I keep thinking, 'What will happen if he says no? That will be terrible and I will feel really embarrassed.' A better thought would be to think: 'He might say no, and that's OK. I will find someone else to invite.'

STEP 3: SOLVE
- Make a plan
  I will go over and say, 'Hi, I'm in your class. I wondered if you would
like to come over to my house at the weekend and watch this new video.

- Remember social skills
  Remember to keep my voice and facial expression friendly and to make eye contact while I talk.
- Do it
- How did I do?
  Well done. I invited the new person over to my house at the weekend and he is going to come.
Session 10

Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home task from Session 9
- Review of Session 9
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving).
  - Dealing with conflict situations: saying ‘no’
- Home tasks
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents: using helpful thoughts.

Equipment/materials to prepare
- Practice cards: saying ‘no’
- Handouts for parents and teachers (Children).

Photocopy masters
- Home Task Sheets 10a and 10b (Children and Adolescents)
  - Saying ‘no’
  - Joining a club or activity.

Review of Home Task from Session 9
As in previous sessions.

Review of Session 9
As in previous sessions.

Integrating Social Skills (Basic Skills, Social Perception, Self-Instruction Methods and Problem-Solving)
Dealing with Conflict Situations: Saying ‘No’
This session focuses on how to deal with pressure from others to do things that one doesn’t want to do. The emphasis is mainly on peer situations and pressure to take part in antisocial activities. Begin the session with a discussion about friendships and how it is sometimes difficult to say ‘no’ to things that other people want you to do, because you want them to like you. It is also important to emphasize how we all have the right to say ‘no’ when something feels wrong. The examples below are useful to illustrate the type of problem that can arise.
• You would like to be friends with a particular person in your class and he or she asks you to steal some money from home to spend on chocolate bars at school.
• You want to belong to a group at school, but the leader tells the whole group that you all have to tease and bully one of your classmates. You feel sorry for this person and don’t want to be cruel to them.

The group can then be asked to come up with some examples of their own, that they have experienced themselves. Use the Social Detective model to work out possible solutions to these dilemmas. Taking the first situation, ask the group to work through the steps, writing up the answers on a board for example:

THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM
You would like to be friends with a particular person in your class and he or she asks you to steal some money from home to spend on chocolate bars at school.

STEP 1: DETECT
• Stop
• What is the problem?
  I am feeling bad, I want to keep my friend, but I don’t think it is right to take money from home. I am scared that if I don’t do it, I will lose my friend.

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE
• Relax
• What could I do?
  a) I could steal the money from home
  b) I could tell my parents about my problem
  c) I could shout at my friend
  d) I could pretend to forget to do it
  e) I could explain to my friend that it is not the right thing to do
• What would happen next?
  a) If I steal the money from home, then I might get caught and I would feel bad for stealing
  b) If I tell my parents about my problem, then they may ring my friend’s parents and then I might lose my friend
e) If I shout at my friend, we might have a fight and I might lose my friend

d) If I pretend to forget to do it, my friend will only keep bothering me

c) If I explain to my friend that it is not the right thing to do, then he or she might listen to me

- Which of these would be best?
  I will tell my friend that I am not going to do it because it is not right.

**STEP 3: SOLVE**

- Make a plan
  Next time my friend asks me I am going to say, 'I am not going to take that money, because I don't think it is right to steal, but I would still like to be your friend. Is there something else we could do that is fair?'

- Remember social skills
  Remember to keep a friendly face and voice and look my friend in the eye.

- Do it

- How did I do?
  I did very well to say 'no'. My friend might not like me, but I feel better.

After the Social Detective steps have been discussed, the group should then move on to practise the skills of saying 'no'. Ask each trainee to think of a time when they have found it hard to say 'no' and to describe this to the group. The next stage is to work out an appropriate strategy for saying 'no' using the Social Detective steps. One of the group members, or the trainer, should then be selected to model an appropriate response. The trainee then roleplays the situation, with feedback being given. Two or three attempts may be necessary until a satisfactory performance is produced. The next trainee should then present another example, with the process being repeated.

Ideally, the group members should produce examples from their own real-life experiences, but some practice cards will be useful if real-life examples are notforthcoming. These could include the following scenarios:

- You are at a friend's place and you have promised your mother that you will be home by 6 p.m. because you are having visitors over. Your friend suggests going for a walk to the park, but if you go you will be late home.
You have a friend over to your house and they see some expensive chocolates belonging to your mum in a cupboard. They ask you to take them up to your room so you can both eat them.

Home Tasks (Session 10)
Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheets 10a and 10b (Children and Adolescents) in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 33).

- Saying ‘no’
- Joining a club or activity.

Handout for Parents (Session 10: Children)
In this session the group worked on saying ‘no’ to other classmates who try to pressure them into doing things that feel wrong. The first home task is to work out how young people can say ‘no’ when other youngsters put pressure on them to smoke cigarettes. If you smoke yourself, please do not think we are being critical of this. Rather, we are trying to give children the skills to say ‘no’ if that is what they want to do. At least they can make the choice for themselves rather than starting to smoke just because they can’t say ‘no’.
Please can you remind ___________________________ to do the home task and to bring the Home Task Sheet back to the next session.

One important way that parents can help with this programme is to make sure that children have opportunities to make friends and take part in social or sports club activities outside school. Your child may already be doing this, and if this is the case then he/she should continue with this activity. The second task this week is for ___________________________ to join a club or take part in an activity of some type if this is not already happening.
If ___________________________ does not take part in any social or sports club activities each week, then we would like to ask you to talk to ___________________________ about the kind of activity he/she would like to do and then find a local club for them to join. This may take some pushing from you at first, but it is very important in the long run. Try to pick something that is easy to get to and not too expensive, so that it does not cause too much trouble to family life. Examples include sports clubs (such as soccer, cricket, tennis, netball, basketball or swimming), Scouts, Guides, Brownies or Cubs. Your local council or community centre should be able to tell you what is available nearby.

Thank you.
**Home Task Sheet 10a (Children and Adolescents)**

**SAYING 'NO'**

**Notes:**

Use the Social Detective to solve this problem:

You are with a group of friends and one of them has a packet of cigarettes. A few of the other kids have some and light them. You feel like you want to say 'no' but you are scared that they will laugh at you.

**Step 1: Define**

- What is the problem?

**Step 2: Investigate**

- What could I do?
  - Think of three different things. It doesn't matter whether you think they are the right things to do.
  - What would happen next?
  - Which of these would be best?

(Continued on Home Task Sheet 10b)

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**Home Task Sheet 10b (Children and Adolescents)**

**SAYING 'NO' (continued)**

**Name:**

**Date:**

**Step 3: Solve**

- Make a plan.
  - What are you going to say?
  - Remember social skills.
  - What do I have to remember?
  - Do I (put present)?
  - How did I do?
  - What could I say to myself after you said 'no'?

**JOINING A CLUB OR ACTIVITY**

If you don't already go to a club or activity each week, find a club or activity that you would enjoy and join it.

Are you already going to a club or activity each week?

If not, then what would you like to do? (Talk to your parents about this)

**Did you join?**

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Figure 33 Home Task Sheets 10a and 10b (Children and Adolescents).
Handout for Teachers (Session 10: Children)
In this session the group worked on saying 'no' to other classmates who try to pressure them into doing things that feel wrong. The first home task is to work out how young people can say 'no' when other youngsters put pressure on them to smoke cigarettes. What we are trying to do is to give children the ability to say 'no' if that is what they want. Please can you remind _____________ to do the home task and to bring the Home Task Sheet back to the next session.

We have also asked the parents to try to organize some weekly club activity (either sport or social) for ________________ to take part in outside school, if he or she is not already involved in something. If you have any suggestions, it would be most helpful if you could mention this to the parents.

Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents
The structure of Session 10 and the home tasks is suitable for all age groups, although the examples used can be adjusted so as to be more age appropriate. The importance of being able say 'no' when we want to should be discussed, prior to modelling, roleplay and feedback relating to performance of relevant skills.

Use the Social Detective steps to illustrate the different behaviours and consequences that may occur relating to saying 'no' to unreasonable requests. Include a discussion of possible negative or unhelpful thoughts during the social problem-solving steps. The following scenario can be used as an example.

THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

The Social Problem
Your friend asks you to lend her some money, but she already owes you quite a lot.

Step 1: Detect
- What is the problem?
  I don't want to lend my friend this money. She already owes me a lot and hasn't offered to pay it back. I am worried that I will never get this extra amount back either. I am worried that she won't like me if I don't lend her the money.
**Step 2: Investigate**

- Relax
- What could I do?
  - a) I could lend her the money
  - b) I could say that I don’t have any money
  - c) I could refuse to lend her any more money until she pays me back what she already owes me
- What would happen next?
  - a) If I lend her the money, I may never get it back again
  - b) If I say that I haven’t got any money, it is a lie and she might find out
  - c) If I say ‘no’ until she pays me back what she already owes me, she may be angry but I would have my money
- Which of these would be best?
  - I will say ‘no’
- Watch for unhelpful thoughts?
  - I am thinking, ‘My friend will get angry if I say “no” and she will dislike me because I won’t lend her the money. I might lose a friend if I say “no”.’ A better thought would be: ‘I have the right to say “no” to her request. She might be angry at first, but if she ends our friendship because of this, then she isn’t a very good friend.’

**Step 3: Solve**

- Make a plan
  - I will say ‘no’ in a friendly way, and explain that I can’t keep on lending her money and that I need the first lot of money back
- Remember social skills
  - Remember to keep my voice and facial expression friendly and to make eye contact while I talk.
- Do it
- How did I do?
  - I did very well to say ‘no.’ My friend seems to understand.

There are many other situations relating to saying ‘no’, that can be used with adolescents, such as:

- You are at a party and some of your friends have some drugs with them. They ask you if you would like to buy some pills.
• You have been to a dance with some friends and are walking home. One of the guys tells you that he knows how to break into cars and can drive you home. Your friends go with him to break into a car parked in the street. They ask you to join them.

• (For older girls.) You are at a party and you have been kissing with a boy whom you don’t know very well. He asks you to go upstairs to one of the bedrooms with him, but you really don’t want to do this.

• (For older boys.) You have been dating a girl but you don’t want to have sex with her. She invites you to stay at her house while her parents are away and suggests that you could sleep together.

• Your friend has been missing a lot of lessons and keeps asking you if they can copy the answers from your homework each morning.

• Your friend wants you to go to a disco in town that your parents won’t allow you to visit. Your friend suggests that you lie to your parents and say that you are staying at his/her place.

• Some of your classmates have been shoplifting and they invite you to go with them on Saturday afternoon to steal some Christmas presents from a big supermarket. They tell you how easy it is.

• Your sister asks you if she can borrow your brand new shoes to wear to a party. You haven’t even worn them yet.
Session 11

Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home tasks from Session 10
- Review of Session 10
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  - Dealing with conflict situations: teasing and bullying
- Home tasks
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents: using helpful thoughts.

Equipment/materials to prepare
- Practice cards: dealing with teasing and bullying
- Handouts for parents and teachers (Children).

Photocopy masters
- Home Task Sheets 11a and 11b (Children and Adolescents)
  - Dealing with teasing or bullying
  - Going to a club.

Review of Home Tasks from Session 10
Look through the Home Task Sheets relating to the saying ‘no’ task from Session 10. Discuss progress made with taking part in a weekly social or sports activity.

Review of Session 10
Discuss major points relating to saying ‘no’ and any situations that have arisen since the previous session.

Integrating Social Skills (Basic Skills, Social Perception, Self-Instruction Methods and Problem-Solving)
Dealing with Conflict Situations: Teasing and Bullying
This session moves on to examine conflict situations with peers, in particular teasing and bullying. Ask the group how it feels to be bullied or teased and use the Social Detective model to look at ways of dealing with teasing or bullying. Take an example for discussion, such as the one below.
THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM
There is a boy in your class who picks on you every day, says mean things and calls you rude names. You are sitting in the school playground and the boy comes over and says, 'What rotten food you're eating - it looks like pig food. Just right for a pig!'

STEP 1: DETECT
- Stop
- What is the problem?
  I feel upset and angry.

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE
- Relax
- What could I do?
  a) I could punch the boy on the nose
  b) I could cry
  c) I could tell the teacher
  d) I could ignore the boy
  e) I could say something rude back
  f) I could do something friendly, like ask him if he wants to look at my comic
- What would happen next?
  a) If I punch the boy, he will get hit hard and might get into trouble for fighting
  b) If I cry, the boy will laugh at me and do it more
  c) If I tell the teacher, the boy will get into trouble. I might get picked on even more
  d) If I ignore the boy, he might get bored and leave me alone
  e) If I say something rude back, I might get into a fight
  f) If I offer to share my comic, he might take it and not give it back, or he might be a bit friendlier towards me
- Which of these would be best?
  It is probably best just to ignore the boy.
- Make a plan
  I am just going to ignore the boy and carry on eating my lunch. Then I am going to sit with some nicer people from my class.
- Remember social skills
  I don't need to look at him at all
- Do it
- How did I do?
  I ignored him and he has gone away.

After the Social Detective steps have been discussed, the group should then practise dealing with teasing. Ask each trainee to think of a time when they have been teased or bullied and to describe this to the group. The next stage is to work out an appropriate strategy for dealing with the situation using the Social Detective steps. One of the group members, or the trainer, should then be selected to model an appropriate response. The trainee then roleplays the situation, with feedback being given. Two or three attempts may be necessary until a satisfactory performance is produced. The next trainee should then present another example, with the process being repeated. It is helpful to generate a range of different solutions and discuss when it might be appropriate to ask an adult to intervene, or to explain that you are feeling hurt, rather than just ignoring the situation.

Ideally, the group members should produce examples from their own real-life experiences, but some practice cards will be useful if real-life examples are not forthcoming. These could include the following scenarios:

- You are at a friend’s place and she keeps teasing you about your new haircut and telling you that it makes you look like a creature from outer space.
- Your friend has begun spending a lot of time with another person from your class and they have started saying cruel things to you whenever you walk past, like “What’s that awful smell?”

**Home Tasks (Session 11)**

Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on Home Task Sheets 11a and 11b (Children and Adolescents) in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 34).

- Dealing with teasing or bullying
- Joining a club or activity.

**Handout for Parents (Session 11: Children)**

In this session the group worked on what to do about teasing and bullying. The first home task is to work out how to deal with being teased or picked on by other youngsters. Please can you remind ___________ to do the task and to bring the Home Task Sheet back to the next session.

After the last session, we asked if you would be able to help in organizing
Home Task Sheet 11a (Children and Adolescents)

DEALING WITH TEASING OR BULLYING

Use the Social Detective to solve this problem:

There is a group of kids in your class who keep doing mean things to you. Today these kids blew your school bag and emptied it out on the floor while you were washing.

Step 1: Detect

- Name: __________
- Date: __________

- What is the problem?

Step 2: Investigate

- What would happen next?
- What could I do?
- What would happen if I did?

(Think of three different things. Don’t worry whether they are the right choices or not)

- What would happen next?
- What could I do?
- What could I say?

(Continued on Home Task Sheet 11b)

Home Task Sheet 11b (Children and Adolescents)

DEALING WITH TEASING OR BULLYING (continued)

Name: __________

- Date: __________

GOING TO A CLUB

Last week your task was to find out about joining a club or sports activity that you could go to with your friends. This week your task is to go along to the club and see what it is like. Remember to think of questions you could ask to one of the other people when you are there.

Did you go to the club?

Did you remember to stop?

Did you ask a question to another young person?

What did you ask?

Figure 34 Home Task Sheets 11a and 11b (Children and Adolescents).
a weekly social club or sports activity for your child if he/she is not already doing this. The second home task is for _____________ to go along to this activity and to ask a question to one of the other children there. If you are having trouble finding an activity, then perhaps you could talk to the class teacher, who might have some ideas. We don’t want you to have to spend a great deal of money or to travel a long way, so please pick something simple and easy to do.

Thank you.

**Handout for Teachers (Session 11: Children)**

In this session the group worked on what to do about teasing and bullying. The first home task is to work out how to deal with being picked on by other youngsters. Please can you remind _____________ to do the task and to bring the Home Task Sheet back to the next session.

We have also asked the parents to arrange for _______________ to attend some weekly club activity (either sport or social), if he/she is not already involved. This provides a chance to practice many of the skills learned in the sessions and to develop new friendships.

Thank you.

**Adapting the Session for Adolescents**

This session needs minimal change for adolescents. The wording of the examples can be changed slightly, but should remain essentially the same, as should the home tasks. The only addition is to include the identification of unhelpful thoughts and use of more appropriate, helpful thoughts. A detailed description of this process is given on pages 74 to 80.
Session 12

Session plan

Agenda
• Review of home tasks from Session 11
• Review of Session 11
• Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  – Dealing with conflict situations with peers and siblings: arguments and disagreements
• Home tasks
• Handouts for parents and teachers
• Adapting the session for adolescents.

Equipment/materials to prepare
• Practice cards: dealing with a peer conflict situation
• Handouts for parents and teachers (Children).

Photocopy masters
• Home Task Sheet 12 (Children and Adolescents)
  – Compromising.

Review of Home Tasks from Session 11
As in previous sessions.

Review of Session 11
As in previous sessions.

Integrating Social Skills (Basic Skills, Social Perception, Self-Instruction Methods and Problem-Solving)

Dealing with Conflict Situations with Peers and Siblings: Arguments and Disagreements
The kinds of situations that cause rows and arguments with siblings and peers should be discussed. Ask each group member to describe a fight (verbal or physical) that they have got into with another youngster. The problems that tend to result from conflicts need to be elicited, such as getting into trouble with parents or teachers, feeling upset or angry, being disliked by the other person and so on. The Social Detective model can then be used to work out solutions to these problems. For example:
THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM
A girl in your class takes your new pens without asking and won’t let you have them back.

STEP 1: DETECT

- Stop
- What is the problem?
  I feel upset because the girl has taken my new pens and I want them back.

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE

- Relax
  Keep calm
- What could I do?
  a) I could snatch the pens away from her
  b) I could tell the teacher
  c) I could ask her again for the pens back in a friendly way
  d) I could offer to share the pens with her if she gives them back to me
  e) I could hit her
- What would happen next?
  a) If I snatch the pens away from her, she will grab them back and they might break
  b) If I tell the teacher, that might help
  c) If I ask her again for the pens back in a friendly way, she might give them to me, or she might ignore me
  d) If I offer to share the pens with her if she gives them back to me, then she might agree
  e) If I hit her we will have a fight and I might get into trouble
- Which of these would be best?
  Telling the teacher or offering to share the pens might be best.

STEP 3: SOLVE

- Make a plan
  I am going to offer to share the pens
- Remember social skills
  Remember to look at her and have a friendly voice and face
Do it
How did I do?
I tried my best and she still won't give the pens back, so I will tell the teacher now.

During discussion of the Social Detective steps, it is important to mention people's rights. This was mentioned briefly on page 87, but the concept needs further discussion here. Point out that all people have rights. We have the right to our own things, to feel safe and not to be hurt, and to be spoken to in a polite way. Similarly, the idea that other people have the same rights as we do also needs to be discussed.

Most importantly, the group need to discuss the importance of being able to communicate feelings to other people, but in a friendly and calm way. The use of non-verbal skills of facial expression and tone of voice should be given particular importance. Some roleplay scenes will be useful for practising use of a calm facial expression and tone of voice. The following are examples of suitable scenarios:

- I really don’t like it when you borrow my things without asking me. Please ask me first next time
- Well, I don’t agree with you. I think my team is the best and I hope they win on Saturday
- I didn’t break your cassette player. I haven’t even used it
- I think it was very mean of you to eat all my chocolate. It belonged to me and you shouldn’t have taken it.

These roleplays can be used to demonstrate how different impressions can be made, depending on the facial expression, posture and tone of voice that are used to send the messages. For each scenario the rights of the person should be discussed and the trainer should model a polite and aggressive way of communicating the same message, keeping the words the same but altering the non-verbal cues. The likely outcome of the different messages should then be discussed.

Use the roleplays to work out some basic rules for dealing with conflicts and put them up on the board. They may look something like this:

RULES FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICTS

- Keep calm, relax
- Use The Social Detective
- Firm but friendly voice
- Firm but friendly face
- Firm but friendly posture
- Listen to what the other person has to say
A Session Guide to Enhancing Social Skills and Social Competence

- Say how you feel
- Compromise.

The idea of a compromise needs some discussion and explanation, using examples. Beliefs that we always have to win and have our own way absolutely also require discussion, along with the consequences that are likely to result if we always insist on having our own way. The advantages of compromising as a friendship skill can then be highlighted, using examples like the ones below.

Compromising

- Tom and Mandy both wanted to play the same computer game, so Tom suggested that he would step after 10 minutes and let Mandy have a turn for 10 minutes.
- Michael wanted to go to the beach but his brother wanted to go to the museum. Michael suggested that they could go to the beach today as it was warm and sunny and they could go to the museum tomorrow instead.

After the concepts of rights and compromise have been discussed, the group should then practise dealing with a peer conflict situation. Ask each trainee to think of a real-life example when they had an argument or fight with another child and to describe this to the group. The next stage is to work out an appropriate strategy for dealing with the situation using the Social Detective steps. One of the group members, or the trainer, should then be selected to model an appropriate response. The trainee then roleplays the situation, with feedback being given. Two or three attempts may be necessary until a satisfactory performance is produced. The next trainee should then present another example, with the process being repeated.

Ideally, the group members should produce examples from their own real-life experiences, but some practice cards will be useful if real-life examples are not forthcoming. These could include the following scenarios:

- The person sitting next to you in class accuses you of taking their ruler and not returning it. You haven't used it
- You spill some paint on your classmate's work and make a mess. He shouts at you and tells you off for spoiling his picture
- Your brother or sister keeps going into your drawer at home and borrowing your best points. You ask them not to do this
- You need to take a book on spiders into school and your brother or sister has one. You ask them if you can borrow it, but they say 'no.'
Home Tasks (Session 12)

A record form for the following task is available for photocopying on Home Task Sheet 12 (Children and Adolescents) in the Photocopiable Resource Book (and reproduced in Figure 35).

• Compromising.

![Home Task Sheet 12 (Children and Adolescents)](image)

Figure 35 Home Task Sheet 12 (Children and Adolescents)

Handout for Parents (Session 12: Children)

This session we worked on dealing with arguments and conflicts with classmates, brothers or sisters. We talked about some of the situations where conflicts happen and ways of behaving so that things don’t blow up into a big fight. Here are some of the rules we talked about:

**RULES FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICTS**

• Keep calm, relax
• Firm but friendly voice
• Firm but friendly face
• Firm but friendly posture
Listen to what the other person has to say
Say how you feel
Compromise.

The home task is for ___________ to work out solutions to the problems on the Home Task Sheet, trying to work out a compromise. By this we mean suggesting that each person gives in a little in order to solve the problem. If you notice a time when ___________ uses these rules and tries to stay calm, rather than getting angry and rude, during a conflict with another child, please could you say to ___________ how good this was.

The second home task is to go along to the sport or social club again. If there is anything that you can do to make sure that this happens, it would be most helpful.

Thank you.

Handout for Teachers (Session 12: Children)
This session we worked on dealing with arguments and conflicts with classmates, brothers or sisters. We talked about some of the situations where conflicts happen and ways of behaving so that things don’t blow up into a big fight. Here are some of the rules we talked about:

RULES FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICTS

- Keep calm, relax
- Firm but friendly voice
- Firm but friendly face
- Firm but friendly posture
- Listen to what the other person has to say
- Say how you feel
- Compromise.

The home task is for ___________ to work out solutions to the problems on the Home Task Sheet, trying to work out a compromise. By this we mean suggesting that each person gives in a little in order to solve the problem. If you notice a time when ___________ uses these rules and tries to stay calm, rather than getting angry and rude, during a conflict with another child, please could you say to ___________ how good this was.
The second home task is to go along to the sport or social club again. If there is anything that you can do to help this to happen, it would be most useful.

Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents
The examples used as illustrations for The Social Detective in Session 12 need to be adjusted for adolescents to include unhelpful thoughts. For example:

**THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE**

**THE SOCIAL PROBLEM**
You really want to go to the cinema to see a movie on Saturday night, but your friend wants to go to watch a basketball game.

**STEP 1: DETECT**
- Step
- What is the problem?
  I feel upset because I really want to go to the cinema and my friend won't come with me.

**STEP 2: INVESTIGATE**
- Relax
- Keep calm
- What could I do?
  a) I could go to see the film on my own and miss the basketball game
  b) I could go to the basketball game and miss the movie
  c) I could go to the basketball game on Saturday if my friend came to the film on Friday instead
  d) I could stay in and sulk
  e) I could invite someone else to the cinema
- What would happen next?
  a) If I go to the cinema on my own and miss the basketball game, my friend might be upset and I wouldn't enjoy the film so much
  b) If I go to the basketball game and miss the film, I will feel that I always have to do what my friend wants
  c) If I go to the basketball game on Saturday and my friend comes to the cinema on Friday instead, then we will both be happy (if we can afford it)
4) If I stay in and sulk, I will still be miserable
5) If I invite someone else to see the film, my friend might be hurt
   • Which of these would be best?
   To go to the cinema on Friday with my friend if he or she will come with me would probably be best. Then I will go to the basketball game on Saturday.
   • Watch for unhelpful thoughts
   I cannot identify any unhelpful thoughts that might get in the way. I am prepared to compromise.

STEP 3: SOLVE
   • Make a plan
   I am going to offer to go to the cinema on Friday with my friend, if he or she will come with me to the basketball game on Saturday.
   • Remember social skills
   Remember to look at my friend, and have a friendly voice and face.
   • Do it
   • How did I do?
   Well done, my friend agreed to the compromise.

Other possible situations that can be examined for dealing with peer conflicts include the following:

• You borrow your brother’s new watch and drop it on the floor. It breaks and when you tell him, he begins to shout at you and call you stupid.
• You have arranged to meet a friend and the bus is very late getting there. Your friend starts to complain and tells you off for not being punctual.
• Another person in your class is working with you on a chemistry experiment. You add the wrong chemical and the experiment is ruined. The other person gets angry with you and tells you you are stupid.
• You and another person in your class have the same set of pens. They are expensive ones, and you got your set for your birthday. The other person comes across and accuses you of stealing his pens, but you are certain that these are your ones.
Session 13

Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home tasks from Session 12
- Review of Session 12
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  - Dealing with conflict situations with adults: arguments and disagreements
- Home tasks
- Handouts for parents and teachers
- Adapting the session for adolescents: using helpful thoughts.

Equipment/Materials to prepare
- The Social Detective Poster
- Poster: Rules for Dealing with Conflicts
- Videotape equipment (if available)
- Videotaped modelling scenes (if available)
- Handouts for parents and teachers (Children).

Photocopy masters
- Home Task Sheets 13a and 13b (Children and Adolescents)
  - Solving a conflict with an adult
  - Giving an invitation.

Review of Home Tasks from Session 12
Discuss the various compromise suggestions from the home task, attendance at a sport/social club and asking a question to another person at the club.

Review of Session 12
Review the major points for dealing with conflict situations:

RULES FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICTS
- Keep calm, relax
- Use The Social Detective
- Firm but friendly voice
- Firm but friendly face
- Firm but friendly posture
- Listen to what the other person has to say
- Say how you feel
- Compromise.

Integrating Social Skills (Basic Skills, Social Perception, Self-Instruction Methods and Problem-Solving)

Dealing with Conflict Situations with Adults: Arguments and Disagreements

The kinds of situations that cause rows and arguments with parents and teachers should be discussed. Ask each group member to describe a dispute that they have had recently with an adult. The Social Detective model can then be used to work out solutions to these problems. For example:

THE SOCIAL DETECTIVE

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM
You have arranged with another person to go over to their house, but your mother won’t let you go because you have to stay in and tidy your room.

STEP 1: DETECT
- Step
- What is the problem
  I feel angry because my mum won’t let me go over to my friends. My mum feels angry because I haven’t tidied my room.

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE
- Relax
- What could I do?
  a) I could scream and shout at her
  b) I could ignore her and go over to my friend’s
  c) I could stay in and tidy my room
  d) I could try for a compromise. I could ask my mum if I could tidy my room and then go over to my friend’s later
- What would happen next?
  a) If I scream and shout, she will be even more angry and I won’t get to go out
  b) If I ignore her and go over to my friend’s I will be in real trouble
STEP 3: SOLVE

- Make a plan
  I will ask my mum if I could tidy my room and then go over to my friends later. I will tell her how I feel; that I would be very upset about not being able to go to my friend’s and that it would be rude if I just didn’t show up.

- Remember social skills
  Remember to use a friendly voice and face, and look at my mum when I ask.

- Do it

- How did I do?
  I did really well. My mum agreed, so I will call my friend and say I will be late.

Discuss the rights of the people involved in this conflict and their feelings. The alternative responses produced from the Social Detective should be considered and it may be useful to act out an inappropriate way of responding in order to illustrate the likely negative consequences. A group member or trainer should then model an appropriate way of solving the problem, using a compromise solution and the rules for dealing with conflicts. Each group member then has a turn at roleplaying an appropriate solution, with the trainer providing feedback.

It can also be valuable to use reverse roleplay at this point (see p. 63), in order to provide insight into each person’s perspective in the conflict situation. Ask each trainee to take their real-life example of an argument or fight with a parent and teacher and to work out an appropriate strategy for handling the conflict. Again, this response should then be roleplayed, with feedback being given. Two or three attempts may be necessary until a satisfactory performance is produced.

If group members are unable to produce their own real-life examples, some practice cards could be used. These may include the following scenarios:

- You were out last night and forgot to do your homework. Your teacher criticizes you and tells you off in front of the class.
- You get in an argument with a classmate and the teacher tells you to stay in after school.
- Your father or mother has cooked a big meal which includes a
Figure 36 Home Task Sheets 13a and 13b (Children and Adolescents).
vegetable that you really hate. You leave it and they get angry with you and tell you that you have to sit at the table until you eat it.

- Your dad tells you to help wash up, but you want to go and watch TV.

Some of the points that may emerge here are that compromises will not always work and that sometimes it is better to give in to adult demands, accept criticism and apologize. The use of reverse role play also assists in helping to see things from the adult’s perspective. Particular attention needs to be paid during the role plays to the use of non-verbal cues and the avoidance of aggressive messages that may make the conflict worse.

**Home Tasks (Session 13)**

Record forms for the following tasks are available for photocopying on **Home Task Sheets 13a and 13b (Children and Adolescents)** in the **Photocopiable Resource Book** (and reproduced in Figure 36).

- Solving a conflict with an adult
- Giving an invitation.

**Handout for Parents (Session 13: Children)**

This session we worked on dealing with arguments and conflicts with parents and teachers. We talked about some of the situations where conflicts happen and ways of behaving so that things don’t blow up into a big fight. The same rules for dealing with conflicts that we told you about last session were used again here.

The first home task is for ________________ to try to use these rules at a time when a conflict occurs with a parent or teacher, such as getting into trouble or being told to do something that he/she doesn’t want to do. If you notice a time when ________________ uses these rules and tries to stay calm, rather than getting angry and rude, please say how good this was. We are not teaching children just to give in all the time, but sometimes it might be better for youngsters to try to compromise. This is not always possible, but it helps to make family life a bit happier. Please don’t try to produce conflict situations, just so that you can see whether ________________ is able to use the skills. This might produce problems.

The second home task is to invite another child to do an activity. This is a big part of making and keeping friends and it is really important that you help to carry out this task. Perhaps you could suggest an activity and someone from school who could be invited to do it. This could be having someone over to
visit for the afternoon, or after school for a couple of hours. Please look
at the Home Task Sheet and find out what task has been chosen. If the
invitation is not suitable, please help ____________ to work out a
better one.

Thank you.

Handout for Teachers (Session 13: Children)
This session we worked on dealing with arguments and conflicts with parents
and teachers. We talked about some of the situations where conflicts happen
and ways of behaving so that things don’t blow up into a big fight. The same
rules for dealing with conflicts that we told you about last session were used
again here.
The first home task is for ____________ to try to use these
rules at a time when a conflict occurs with a parent or teacher, such as get-
ting into trouble or being told to do something that he/she doesn’t want to do.
If you notice a time when ____________ uses these rules and tries
to stay calm, rather than getting angry and rude, please say how good this
was. We are not teaching children just to give in all the time, but sometimes
it might be better for youngsters to try to compromise. This is not always
possible, but it helps to make life a bit happier for everyone. Please don’t
try to produce conflict situations, just so that you can see whether
______________ is able to use the skills. This might produce
problems.
The second home task is to invite another child to do an activity. We have
asked parents to help out with this task.

Thank you.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents
This session needs minimal change for adolescents. The wording of the examples
can be changed slightly, but should remain essentially the same, as should the home
tasks. The only addition is to include the identification of unhelpful thoughts and
more appropriate, helpful thoughts in the Social Detective steps. A detailed descrip-
tion of this process is given on pages 74 to 80.
Session 14

Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home tasks from Session 13
- Review of Session 13
- Review of skills taught (relaxation and basic skills)
- General session-games relating to a wide range of social task
- Home task
- Social session 1
- Adapting the session for adolescents.

Equipment/materials to prepare
- Relaxation script (Session 3, p.138)
- Roleplay Spinner (wheel and cards: see Chapter 3, p.95)
- Roleplayopoly (board and cards: see Chapter 3, p.95)
- Handouts for parents and teachers (Children).

Review of Home Tasks from Session 13
Review each trainee’s Home Task Sheet and discuss any conflicts that occurred and how these were dealt with. Modelling and roleplay can be used to demonstrate different ways of responding if the solutions chosen were not successful. The outcome of the invitation task should also be discussed.

Review of Session 13
The use of the Social Detective steps, compromise and rules for dealing with conflict situations may be reiterated and applied to situations reported in the home tasks.

Review of skills taught (relaxation and basic skills)
The next three sessions should review each of the skill areas taught in the programme. This first review session should cover the most important points relating to relaxation skills and basic social skills, for example eye contact, posture and tone of voice. The relaxation script from Session 3, p.138 should be used to conduct a quick, deep relaxation (for about 10 minutes).

General Session-Games Relating to a Wide Range of Social Tasks
This component of the session continues the practice of skills, using games that provide a wide range of social situation. Roleplay Spinner and Roleplayopoly are
examples of the kinds of games that can be used here: these are described in detail in Chapter 3, pp. 95–97 and require some preparation to make up the materials. Both games are quite easy to prepare and involve a series of cards that describe a wide range of social situations, involving interaction with adults and children, at home, school and socially. The cards are designed to give each group member a chance to roleplay different types of social tasks and to receive feedback from the trainer about the performance. By this stage, the sequence of the Social Detective steps and the use of basic skills and social perception should be almost automatic, and it is appropriate to encourage trainees to solve social problems quickly, without having to go through each step slowly. The aim is for trainees to work out a positive solution and to carry it out using appropriate basic skills. The Social Detective can be shortened to three simple cues at this point:

- **DETECT** (social perception)
- **INVESTIGATE** (relaxation and social problem-solving)
- **SOLVE** (basic performance skills).

**Home Tasks (Session 14)**
The home tasks for this and the next session should be determined according to the needs of the trainees and the areas in which further work is required. There are, therefore, no accompanying Home Task Sheets. Older children and adolescents may be able to participate in setting their own tasks.

For the final sessions, parents and teachers are not routinely involved in the home tasks, and the last parent/teacher handouts (see below) are designed to set up conditions to help to maintain the improvements produced by the programme.

**Handout for Parents (Session 14: Children)**
Thank you very much for playing a part in the social enhancement programme. The results are likely to be much better when parents have helped. This is the last handout that we will be sending you and there are only two more sessions to go before the end of the programme. The group is now going back through some of the most important things that have been taught in the programme. After that, we will meet twice over the next few months to remind children of what they have learned. The dates and times for these extra sessions are:

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There are many things that you could do to help your child continue to use the skills that we have worked on. This is important, as it would be a great
shame if everything was quickly forgotten. Whenever you notice __________ using any of the skills that we have worked on, please say something nice about this. You might also need to remind him/her about what we talked about in the group. Every few weeks, you could get out the scrap book from the programme and talk about some of the things that the group did.

Last of all, it is a good idea for __________ to continue to go along to the social or sports club each week as this will help in making and keeping friends. You can also play a big part in setting up invitations for other young-sters to come over to visit or to go along to some other activity with your child.

Thank you again for all your help with the programme.

Handout for Teachers (Session 14: Children)
Thank you very much for playing a part in the social enhancement programme. The results are likely to be much better when teachers have helped. This is the last handout that we will be sending you and there are only two more sessions to go before the end of the programme. The group is now going back through some of the most important things that have been taught in the programme. After that, we will meet twice over the next few months, to remind children of what they have learned. The dates and times for these extra sessions are:

Date: ____________  Time: ____________

Date: ____________  Time: ____________

There are many things that you could do to help ____________ continue to use the skills that we have worked on. This is important, as it would be a great shame if everything was quickly forgotten. Whenever you notice ____________ using any of the skills that we have worked on, please say something nice about this. You might also need to remind him/her about what we talked about in the group. From time to time, perhaps you could talk about some of the things that the group did.

Thank you again for all your help with the programme.
Social Session 1

The social sessions are held on three occasions, after Session 14, 15 and 16. During the few days following Session 14, the trainer should organize a small social function in which each trainee invites a class member or friend to attend. The function should include playing board games and eating a snack. The aim is to create a non-threatening and enjoyable environment in which to practise peer relationship skills. The trainer should play the role of facilitator during the session but should not actively train skills. Where possible, small group games should be used which encourage interaction between participants, rather than being competitive: some examples of possible games include Charades, Cluedo or Headache. Adolescents may prefer to set the content of the sessions themselves and may prefer to include music or a sporting activity rather than games. Videotapes should be avoided as they do not encourage social interaction.

Adapting the Session for Adolescents

There is no need to adapt Session 14 for adolescents.
Session 15

Session plan

Agenda
- Review of home task from Session 14
- Review of Session 14
- Review of skills taught (social perception)
- General session-games relating to a wide range of social tasks
- Home tasks
- Social Session 2
- Adapting the session for adolescents.

Equipment/materials to prepare
- Social perception cue cards
- 'Miming with a difference' cue cards
- Roleplay Spinner (wheel and cards: see Chapter 3, p. 95)
- Roleplayopoly (board and cards: see Chapter 3, p. 95)

Review of Home Tasks from Session 14
As for previous sessions.

Review of Session 14
As for previous sessions.

Review of Skills Taught (Social Perception)
The major aspects of social perception should be quickly reviewed and cue cards used to give the group the opportunity to present and identify different emotions from non-verbal cues. Each trainee should be given a card which describes a particular situation. The aim is to demonstrate the type of emotion suggested on the card, using facial expression and posture cues, to the rest of the group, who try to work out what emotion is being conveyed.

SOCIAL PERCEPTION CUE CARDS

You do really badly in your spelling test.
‘Miming with a Difference’
Use this task again to recall how different emotions are conveyed from tone of voice. The numbers 1–10 or the alphabet should be spoken to express different feelings which the rest of the group try to identify. Use cue cards again to provide situations in which a particular emotion must be communicated. These could include the following scenarios:

- You go through to your mum’s room in the night and tell her that you can hear someone moving around in the house and that you think it might be a burglar.
- You tell your friend that you were given your favourite game for your birthday.
- You have had an awful day at school and you tell your mum about how no one would play with you and how upset you are feeling.
- You are reading your library book from school but your brother keeps annoying you. He snatches at your book and tears it.

General Session-Games Relating to a Wide Range of Social Tasks
This component of the session continues the practice of skills, using games such as Roleplay Spinner and Roleplayopoly as outlined in Chapter 3, p. 95. Trainees should take turns to select roleplay cards that describe a particular social situation. The situation should then be roleplayed with a partner from the group, the aim being to work out and perform an appropriate response using the shortened Social Detective steps:
- **DETECT** (social perception)
- **INVESTIGATE** (relaxation and social problem-solving)
- **SOLVE** (basic performance skills).

Give feedback about the performance, and the group may also discuss the alternative responses that are available and the likely consequences. Particular attention should be paid to the use of basic social skills, such as eye contact, posture, facial expression and tone of voice. Some of the cards included in the games could relate to social perception tasks or other components of the programme. For example, one card could ask for a list of positive feelings, another for a list of negative feelings and so on. The aim of the cards is to produce a comprehensive review of the skills learned and to cover a variety of situations not specifically dealt with earlier in the programme.

**Home Tasks (Session 15)**
Home tasks should only be set where felt to be necessary and appropriate for this session.

**Social Session 2**
During the few days following Session 15, organize a small social function as outlined for the previous session on p. 224.

**Adapting the Session for Adolescents**
There is no need to adapt Session 15 for adolescents.
Session 16

Session plan

Agenda

- Review of home tasks from Session 15
- Review of Session 15
- Review of skills taught (social problem-solving)
- General session-games relating to a wide range of social tasks
- Future plan
- Social Session 3
- Adapting the session for adolescents.

Equipment/materials to prepare

- Social Detective Poster
- Handout, 'What different things could you do?' and 'What do you think happens next?'
- Roleplay Spinner (wheel and cards: see Chapter 3, p. 95)
- Roleplayopoly (board and cards: see Chapter 3, p. 95)
- Handout of dates and times of booster sessions.

Review of Home Tasks from Session 15

Home tasks should be discussed if any were set the previous session.

Review of Session 15

As for previous sessions.

Review of Skills Taught (Social Problem-Solving)

The use of self-instructions and the Social Detective steps for social problem-solving should be briefly reviewed. Work through one example in detail to ensure that all trainees can still recall the steps involved in Detect, Investigate and Solve. You could use either of the following social problems:

- Your friend always wants to go to his house to play, but you would really like to go to your house this time, so that you can show him your new game.
- (For adolescents.) Your friend always seems to decide where you are going to go and what you are going to do at the weekends. This Saturday evening, you really want to stay home and watch a video, but your friend has other ideas.
Further practice at working out alternative solutions and predicting likely consequences from actions can be provided by preparing handouts with the following scenarios:

**WHAT DIFFERENT THINGS COULD YOU DO?**

- You are in class and everyone is working quietly. You badly need to go to the toilet. What different things could you do?
- Your teacher asks you to read your work aloud to the class. You make a mistake and get your reading all muddled up. What different things could you do?
- A boy in your class keeps picking on you. Whenever he walks past, he kicks or pushes you. What different things could you do?
- Your mum comes back from having her hair done. It is cut very short and you don’t like it. What different things could you do?

**WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS NEXT?**

Write down what you think might happen next in each of these stories.

1. You are standing in line at the school shop. A bigger person pushes in in front of you. You give the person a kick.
   What do you think happens next?

   What do you think happens next?

3. You are watching your favourite TV show and your dad calls you and tells you to come for your meal. You ignore your dad and carry on watching TV.
   What do you think happens next?

**General Session-Games Relating to a Wide Range of Social Tasks**

This component of the session continues the practice of skills, using games such as Roleplay Spiner and Roleplayopoly as outlined in Chapter 3. p.95. Trainees should take turns to select roleplay cards that describe a particular social situation. The situation should then be roleplayed with a partner from the group, the aim being to work out and perform an appropriate response using the shortened Social Detective steps:
A Session Guide to Enhancing Social Skills and Social Competence

- **DETECT** (social perception)
- **INVESTIGATE** (relaxation and social problem-solving)
- **SOLVE** (basic performance skills).

Feedback should be given about the performance, and the group may also discuss the alternative responses that are available and the likely consequences. Particular attention should be paid to the use of basic social skills, such as eye contact, posture, facial expression and tone of voice.

**Future Plan**
This component involves a discussion of plans that can be made to make it more likely that the trainees will maintain their improvements and continue to use the skills they have learned. The type of plans that can be made may relate to joining a particular club, or working on a strategy to make friends with particular classmates. It is also valuable for trainees to set up some triggers in their lives that will remind them to use their skills. If trainees attend the same school, they might arrange a particular password which they say to each other when they meet at school. This would be a reminder to use The Social Detective. Each trainee should make a list of the things that will help for the future. A form could be used like the one shown below:

**MAKING A PLAN**

Make a list of things that you are going to do to help you to remember about this group.

1

2

3

This plan should be placed into the scrap book along with handouts from the session. Finally give trainees a handout with dates and times for the booster sessions.

**Social Session 3**
During the few days following Session 16, organize a small social function as outlined for Session 14 on p. 224.

**Adapting the Session for Adolescents**
There is no need to adapt Session 16 for adolescents.
Booster Session 1

Session plan

Agenda
• Review of skills taught
• Identification of problem situations
• Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  – Problem situations identified by trainees.

Equipment/materials to prepare
• Checklist of possible social problem situations
• Target form.

Review of Skills Taught
The first booster session should begin with a discussion of how trainees have been able to use the things they have learned and whether they have found this to be helpful. The trainees are asked to recall the Social Detective model to summarize the various components covered in the programme, namely:

• Relaxation
• Social Perception
• Basic social skills
• Self-instructions
• Social problem-solving.

Having discussed each of these areas briefly, the Social Detective model can then be applied to social problems suggested by the group.

Identification of Problem Situations
All group members should be asked to think of some difficulty they have had in getting on with another person. This could be at home, school or socially, and could be an adult or a peer. The types of situations to elicit may concern arguments, problems in making friends or any other area identified by the trainees. The following checklist may help in getting youngsters to think of a problem that they have had over the past few weeks:

• You got in a fight with another person
• Another person kept teasing you
• You had a fight with your parents
• You were rude to a teacher
• You were on your own most of the time at school
• You didn’t offer to help someone when you could have
• You haven’t invited anyone over for a while
• You haven’t started a conversation with another classmate for a while
• You had trouble saying ‘no’ and did something that you knew you shouldn’t have
• You didn’t ask for help when you needed it
• You didn’t say something nice to someone when you could have
• You didn’t ask to join in an activity with other youngsters when you could have
• You didn’t share something when you could have.

Integrating Social Skills (Basic Skills, Social Perception, Self-Instruction Methods and Problem-Solving)

Problem Situations Identified by Trainees
When each trainee has described a particular problem that has occurred during the previous few weeks, then this situation can be taken for discussion, modelling, roleplay, and feedback. The discussion should focus on the application of the Social Detective to work out a strategy to deal with the situation. The selected response should then be modelled by another group member or the group leader and then roleplayed by the trainee as he or she practises the response. Give feedback regarding the use of basic skills.

Each group member should have a turn to work on their particular problem and a target should be set to work on before the next booster session. You could use a form like the one below.

TARGET TO WORK ON

Write down a task that you are going to work on over the next few weeks.

What are you going to try to do? ______________________________________

With whom? ________________________________________________________

When? _____________________________________________________________
# Booster Session 2

## Session plan

### Agenda
- Review of skills taught
- Identification of problem situations
- Integrating social skills (basic skills, social perception, self-instruction methods and problem-solving)
  - Problem situations identified by trainees.

### Equipment/materials to prepare
- Checklist of possible social problem situations (from Booster Session 1)
- Target form.

## Review of Skills Taught

The second booster session should begin with a discussion of the progress made with targets set at the end of Booster Session 1. The trainees should then be asked to recall the Social Detective model to summarize the various components covered in the programme, namely:

- Relaxation
- Social perception
- Basic social Skills
- Self-instructions
- Social problem-solving.

Having discussed each of these areas briefly, the Social Detective model can then be applied to any new social problems suggested by the group.

## Identification of Problem Situations

All group members are asked to think of some difficulty that they have had in getting on with another person over the previous few weeks. This could be at home, school or socially, and could be an adult or a peer. The types of situations to elicit may concern arguments, problems in making friends or any other area identified by the trainees. Again, the checklist from Booster Session 1 can be used to help youngsters to think of a problem that they have had over the past few weeks:
Integrating Social Skills (Basic Skills, Social Perception, Self-Instruction Methods and Problem-Solving)

Problem Situations Identified by Trainees
When each trainee has described a particular problem that has occurred during the previous few weeks, then this situation can be taken for discussion, modelling, roleplay and feedback. The discussion should focus upon the application of the Social Detective to work out a strategy to deal with the situation. The selected response should then be modelled by another group member or the group leader and then roleplayed by the trainee as he or she practises the response. Feedback is given regarding the use of basic skills.

Each group member should have a turn to work on their particular problem and a target is set to work on over the next few weeks. You could use a form like the one below.

**TARGET TO WORK ON**
Write down a task that you are going to work on over the next few weeks.

What are you going to try to do? ______________________________________________

With whom? ________________________________________________________________

When? ________________________________________________________________
CHAPTER 5
Working With Children With Disabilities

There are two main reasons for including a separate chapter on children with disabilities. First, youngsters with disabilities experience a range of interpersonal problems, some of which are determined by the specific nature of their disability and others which reflect the more general consequences of being different from other children. Second, the methods used in a social enhancement programme may need to be adapted to the needs of children with disabilities. This chapter discusses some of the practical aspects of running social enhancement programmes with children who have an intellectual, physical or sensory disability.

There is clear evidence that many children with intellectual, physical or sensory disabilities experience interpersonal difficulties. The exact nature of these problems will be discussed in more detail below. There are many reasons why disabled children have difficulties in their relationships with others. Some of these explanations are a direct reflection of the children’s disability, such as cognitive or sensory limitations. Other influences, however, are more indirect. For example, children with disabilities tend to be more restricted in their social experiences and may therefore have less opportunity to learn social skills. This is particularly true if the child resides in an institution or attends a special school, where the opportunity to interact with non-disabled peers is restricted. For those children living at home and attending mainstream classes, their social interaction may still be limited. Children with severe disabilities are less able to take part in a full range of child activities and miss out on many opportunities to acquire social skills.

There is also considerable evidence that non-disabled peers tend to react less favourably towards disabled children, whether the disability is cognitive, sensory or physical in nature. Non-disabled peers are less likely to initiate social interaction with disabled classmates and are less likely to respond positively to the approaches of disabled peers. This limits the positive learning experiences that children with disabilities have in their social interaction with other children. On the one hand they tend to have fewer chances to interact with peers and on the other hand their attempts to use appropriate social skills are often not rewarded. It is not surprising therefore to find that disabled children often have social skills deficits. Furthermore, the lack of success from social interaction may, in turn, produce poor self-image on the part of the disabled child.

This summary paints rather a pessimistic picture but it is not accurate to assume that all children with disabilities experience interpersonal rejection or social skills deficits. The available information comes from group studies which tend to mask the fact that many disabled children have satisfactory social relationships. Overall, however, there is clearly a need for intervention programmes to enhance the social
development of children with disabilities. It is also clear that it will not be sufficient merely to teach social skills to children with disabilities without also changing the behaviour of the people with whom they interact. If disabled children try out their newly acquired social skills and continue to meet with a negative or neutral response from others, they are unlikely to continue to use these skills. Somehow we need to find ways to ensure that appropriate social behaviour leads to a positive outcome. This requires teaching non-disabled peers to respond favourably to appropriate social responses of disabled youngsters and to include them in the ongoing social interaction of the peer group.

The lack of positive response from peers has been blamed for the poor results of many social skills training programmes. Although studies typically show that children with disabilities can be taught to improve their social skills within a training situation, these improvements are often not shown when it comes to interaction with other children in everyday life situations, such as in the classroom. It has been suggested that these poor results occur because children with disabilities are not rewarded by other children for using their new skills. Several studies have found that, unless specific action is taken, non-disabled peers tend to continue to ignore their disabled classmates, even when the disabled children attempt to join in and initiate social interaction. Not surprisingly, skills that have been learned in the training setting frequently do not carry over into the classroom or free play and are quickly extinguished. Stokes and Osnes (1986) discussed the concept of ‘trapping’ as a means of making it more likely that newly acquired social skills will lead to naturally occurring successes in real-life social interaction. In many instances, trapping requires the trainer to change the behaviour of the peer group. The aim is to produce a self-perpetuating effect in which the child’s initiations lead to a positive response and further initiations from peers. This process, it is suggested, results in greater involvement in the peer group, maintenance of newly acquired skills and increased opportunities to develop further social skills.

Recognition of the need to produce a self-perpetuating learning system has influenced the direction of recent intervention programmes. Various methods have been suggested to facilitate this process. These methods include:

- Changing the attitudes of non-disabled peers towards their disabled classmates, through discussion and education
- Teaching non-disabled children to initiate interaction with disabled peers and/or rewarding them for doing so
- Teaching non-disabled children to respond positively towards the social initiations of disabled peers and/or rewarding them for doing so
- Teaching non-disabled peers to train children with disabilities to use social skills. This method assumes that the training process will carry over into naturalistic situations and that peers will become naturally occurring triggers for socially skilled behaviour in real-life settings.

The above measures are typically used as an adjunct to training social skills with disabled children. The following sections look more specifically at the enhancement
of social functioning for children with various forms of disability.

The interpersonal difficulties of disabled children also have implications for educational placement. There has been a recent push to place disabled children in mainstream classrooms, rather than providing education within a special unit in isolation from non-disabled peers. Mainstream education is designed to provide disabled children with a greater opportunity to develop social skills and to reduce the stigmatization that may result from isolating disabled children from their non-disabled peers. Unfortunately, studies suggest that the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream classes is not always a success from a social point of view. Youngsters with disabilities are more likely to be socially rejected or socially isolated compared to non-disabled peers and to be the recipients of negative social behaviours from their classmates (Hundert and Houghton, 1992). Furthermore, placement with normally developing classmates does not automatically lead to spontaneous improvement in the social behaviour of children with disabilities (ibid.). Thus, specific action is required to ensure that mainstream placements are a positive social learning experience for children with disabilities.

**Children With Visual or Hearing Impairments**

Visual and hearing impairments produce particular difficulties for social development. Much of the research to date has concentrated on children with visual impairments, but many of the problems found are also applicable to youngsters with hearing impairments. It is now well established that children with visual impairments, as a group, have less well-developed social skills and experience a range of interpersonal difficulties. This is true for children who are integrated into mainstream classrooms as well as those who live in institutions (Van Hasselt et al., 1985). Various explanations have been suggested to account for the social difficulties of children with visual impairments. The lack of visual cues from others may make interpersonal perception difficult, thereby making it harder to work out the most appropriate response to a social situation. This lack of visual feedback may also bias the kind of feedback that children with visual impairments receive about their behaviour. If their behaviour is inappropriate they may not be aware of the negative feedback from others and therefore fail to change their behaviour. Youngsters with visual impairments also tend to be restricted in the number and kinds of social activities that they can take part in (for example classroom ball games). This lack of social opportunity may make it harder to learn social skills through lack of practice. These factors, combined with the more global influences discussed above for disabled children in general, are likely to contribute to poor social skill development and interpersonal difficulties.

Early studies of children with visual impairments typically focused on teaching very specific behavioural skills, such as eye contact, smiling or posture. For example, Van Hasselt et al. (1983) used direct instruction, modelling, manual guidance, behaviour rehearsal and feedback to improve a series of specific behavioural skills with visually impaired adolescents. Operant procedures, such as token reinforce-
ment, have also been used to shape up skill usage or to decrease inappropriate social responding in visually impaired children (Farkas et al., 1981).

Social skills training and operant procedures have generally been effective in producing behaviour change within the intervention setting. Carry-over of new skills into everyday situations and maintenance over time, however, have been more difficult to achieve. In an attempt to overcome problems of generalization of training effects, Sisson et al. (1985) used a peer-initiation intervention. This programme taught non-disabled children to prompt and reinforce social interaction among their visually impaired peers and was reported to produce increases in social initiations and appropriate play behaviour of four children with visual impairments. There was some evidence of generalization to untrained situations and maintenance at three-month follow-up. Although further studies with larger numbers are required before we can draw any firm conclusions, the results of this study suggest that peer initiation training may be a useful technique in social enhancement programmes for youngsters with visual impairments.

A subsequent study by Sisson et al. (1988) suggested that it is important not only to teach children with visual impairments to initiate social interaction, but that it is also necessary to teach them how to respond appropriately to the social initiations of other children. A small group format was used to teach social initiation skills to five children with multiple disabilities, which included visual impairments. When training focused upon social initiations, the trainees were found to increase their rate of initiations towards each other during free play, but did not tend to show higher levels of responding to peer initiations. It was only when training shifted to focus on teaching the trainees how to respond to peer initiations that they increased their rate of responding to each other's initiations.

The impact upon social interaction with non-disabled peers was less favourable. There was little improvement in the social behaviour of the children with visual impairments towards a small group of non-disabled children who were invited to visit the group. Similarly, at follow-up, the positive results were only found for interaction with other children with disabilities and not with the non-disabled peers. Indeed, in the free play sessions, the trainees interacted very rarely with the non-disabled visitors. Sisson et al. (1988) emphasized the need for specific programming efforts to facilitate social interaction between disabled and non-disabled children. Merely providing the disabled children with the necessary social skills was not sufficient to bring about this goal. Some direct attempt to encourage interaction between youngsters with disabilities and non-disabled children appears to be necessary.

Sacks and Gaylord-Ross (1989) demonstrated the superiority of a peer-mediated training programme compared to a teacher-directed approach in improving the social interaction of children with visual impairments. In the peer-mediated programme, each of five children with visual impairments were assigned to a non-disabled peer trainer. These non-disabled peers were trained to conduct sessions in which specific target social behaviours were to be taught, using modelling and prompting. The programme involved 12 40-minute sessions over a four-week period. The teacher-directed group involved a standard social skills training approach using
discussion, modelling, roleplays and verbal feedback. Children in the peer-mediated programme showed an improvement in the use of specific social skills and positive social initiations, which was also found in the natural situations outside the training setting and was maintained at four-week follow-up. Although the teacher-instruction approach was initially more effective in teaching the use of social skills in the training setting, these benefits did not carry over so well into natural settings and were not maintained over time. These findings demonstrate the superiority of using the peer-mediation approach to training when it comes to use of specific social skills in naturalistic situations. The study did not, however, indicate how successful the peer-mediation approach was in terms of changing the response of peers towards the children with visual impairments.

In summary, research involving youngsters with visual impairments has shown that social skills training approaches can be used successfully to produce improvements in the use of specific social skills. These changes appear to be more likely to carry over into everyday life if peer training, rather than teacher instruction is used. It also appears to be insufficient simply to teach children with visual impairments to increase social initiations towards other children without also teaching them how to respond to the initiations of others. Children with visual impairments do not appear to automatically improve their responding to the initiations of others, unless they are specifically taught to do so. Similarly, some attempt needs to be made to encourage non-disabled peers to interact in a positive way with their visually impaired classmates. When trainees begin to use their newly acquired skills, this does not necessarily lead to positive responses from non-disabled peers, and there is a tendency for children with visual impairments to interact with each other in isolation from their non-disabled peers unless specific action is taken to prevent this.

Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the training of social skills with children with hearing impairments, even though the interpersonal difficulties of these children may be even more severe than those of youngsters with visual impairments (Matson and Ollendick, 1988). In one of the few studies to investigate the benefits of teaching social skills to children with hearing impairments, Lemanek et al. (1986) worked with four children aged 11–18 years. In addition to substantial hearing loss, the children were described as being socially withdrawn. Two of the children used sign language and two of them communicated with oral speech. Vignettes of specific social situations were used to prompt responses, followed by positive and negative feedback about performances. Instructions for appropriate responding were then given, and modelled if required. Behaviour rehearsal of the response was performed until a satisfactory level of performance was reached, using social reinforcement and feedback to shape the desired response. This approach was reported to be successful in improving target behaviours such eye contact, smiling, and use of open-ended questions. At the two-month follow-up, these benefits were still found in the training setting. Whether improvements of this type carry over and are maintained during everyday interaction remains to be demonstrated.

Matson et al. (1988) described a multi-component approach to training eye contact, on-task appropriate verbal content and reducing bizarre mannerisms with
three autistic children with hearing impairments. The severe, multiple disabilities experienced by these youngsters required modifications to be made to a regular skills training approach. Pictorial information was used to maintain attention and facilitate learning. Matson and Ollendick (1988) suggested that a major goal of intervention for children with hearing impairments is to ensure that they attend to incoming material, particularly visual material, which is their primary source of information. Target behaviours were taught using sign language and pictorial representations of the skills. Correct performance of the skills was reinforced using a system in which the child could nominate the reinforcer by pointing to a picture of the item or event depicted on a notice board. Modelling, roleplay and social reinforcement of target skills were also used.

This approach was reported to be effective in improving specific social skills and demonstrates the way in which a skills training approach can be adapted to take into account the specific problems of children with disabilities.

Children With Intellectual Disabilities

Youngsters with intellectual disabilities vary considerably in the nature and extent of their difficulties. The type of interpersonal problems that they experience varies according to their cognitive limitations. For some children with extreme intellectual deficits, the impact upon their ability to respond appropriately in social situations is considerable. Severe intellectual impairment is frequently associated with language problems of comprehension and expression, which obviously makes communication difficult. Physical and sensory disabilities are also common in severely intellectually impaired children, making appropriate social responding even more difficult. The cognitive deficits also have direct effects upon children's ability to attend to social information and to learn social skills. Not surprisingly, severely intellectually disabled children show a wide range of social skills deficits. Non-verbal skills deficits are often found in areas such as eye contact, social distance, posture and facial expression. For those youngsters who do acquire speech, the content of their communications is often socially inappropriate. The teaching of social skills is therefore a significant part of the education of children with severe intellectual disabilities (Matson and Ollendick, 1988).

Although the social skills difficulties of children with moderate and mild intellectual impairments are less pronounced, they may still have a marked impact upon their success in dealing with other people. Not surprisingly perhaps, even mild intellectual disability appears to produce difficulty in interpersonal problem-solving skills. Children with mild intellectual impairments are found to select less socially acceptable solutions to social problems, to think of fewer alternative solutions and to be less able to predict consequences (Schumaker and Hazel, 1984a). These children also tend to have poor social cue discrimination skills, such as decoding emotions from facial expression and voice tone. Furthermore, their role-taking skills tend to be poor. Thus, they tend to have problems in understanding and taking into account the thoughts and feelings of others as distinct from their own.
In addition to problems in social cognition, children with mild intellectual disabilities often show a range of overt behavioural skill deficits in non-verbal and verbal skill areas. Non-verbal skill problems include lack of smiling, poor posture and inadequate use of gesture (Schumaker and Hazel, 1984a). Verbal skill deficits include a low rate of asking questions or making requests, less appropriate personal disclosure and problems in accepting criticism. The impact of such skill deficits becomes particularly marked when it comes to dealing with social situations which require a high level of social skillfulness, such as dealing with a job interview and handling work situations. Social skills training interventions are therefore applicable with many youngsters with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities.

Given the wide variation in the nature and severity of social skills deficits and the learning abilities of children with intellectual impairments, it is essential to tailor the type of social enhancement programme to meet each child’s needs. The type of programme should vary considerably according to the attention span, speed of learning, cognitive deficits and language skills of the child. For children with severe intellectual disabilities, teaching social skills will need to be an ongoing, day-to-day intervention in which very specific, simple skills are taught through a process of shaping, using operant methods. Given the children’s short attention span, training sessions need to be brief and very frequent. Ideally, the programme should operate throughout the day, with new skills being prompted and rewarded on an ongoing basis by teachers and parents/carers. Operant reinforcement methods are typically used to teach micro-skills such as eye contact, appropriate social distance and smiling. There have been many single case studies which have demonstrated the effectiveness of contingency management methods in increasing social skill usage with intellectually disabled children. For example, Stokes et al. (1974) reported the successful training of using hand gestures as greetings with four profoundly intellectually disabled children aged 10–13. The children were trained to wave in response to approaches from others and the use of these greetings was reinforced with potato crisps. These tangible rewards were paired with social reinforcement, such as smiling and verbal greetings from the staff. As a result, the programme was effective in increasing the use of gestural greetings by the children.

The Stokes et al. (1974) study illustrates the time-consuming and long-term process of social skills training with severely and profoundly intellectually disabled children. For youngsters with less severe intellectual disabilities, a social learning approach to teaching social skills can be used, involving instructions and discussion, modelling, roleplay/behaviour rehearsal and feedback. For example, Matson et al. (1980) reported the use of a social skills training package approach to teach two boys with moderate intellectual disabilities to improve their response in relation to content of speech, intonation, number of words spoken, eye contact, and use of gestures. The improvements were found to carry over to untrained roleplayed situations, but the study did not investigate the durability of the effects within real-life interaction. A subsequent study by Bradlyn et al. (1983) suggested that it is possible to produce effects which are strong enough to carry over into a conversation with an unfamiliar peer and which are maintained five months after the end of training. These authors
worked with five moderately intellectually disabled adolescents and used 26 20-minute sessions which took place three times per week. A typical social skills training approach was used, involving instructions, modelling, behaviour rehearsal and feedback, to teach the conversation skills of conversation questions (seven sessions), self-disclosing statements (eight sessions) and talking about high interest topics (nine sessions). All subjects showed improvements in the use of these skills in response to training.

The results of the Bradlyn et al. (1983) study are encouraging, but unfortunately several reports have failed to find evidence of generalization of skills to naturalistic situations (Schumaker and Hazel, 1984b). This difficulty in producing long-lasting changes in social behaviour in real-life situations led researchers to explore ways of improving generalization. For example, Clement-Heist et al. (1992) propose that a two-stage approach to intervention is needed in which training begins in a simulated situation and then, once the skills have been established, shifts to real-life contexts. These authors reported the successful use of this two-stage model to improve the vocational social skills of four teenage youths with learning disabilities. Social skills training was commenced in a school setting and target behaviours, such as eye contact or initiation of conversations, were observed at the work site. If a target behaviour was not found to be occurring at work, then the trainee participated in a series of training sessions at work. This procedure was effective in establishing the use of the majority of target skills in daily interaction at work.

Hundert and Houghton (1992) took an alternative approach to try to promote generalization of skills amongst preschoolers with intellectual and physical disabilities. These authors proposed that a class-based approach should be effective in encouraging peers to reciprocate the positive interaction of children with disabilities. Their programme was designed to teach social skills to all children in the class and to train teachers to prompt and reinforce positive social interaction in a free play setting. Four integrated classrooms were targeted, which included 14 disabled children, aged three to five. The class-based programme used instructions regarding specific social skills, puppet modelling, behaviour rehearsal and feedback. Target behaviours were then reinforced by the teacher and trainer during a free play setting. The study demonstrated that positive play of the disabled children increased to levels comparable with classmates but only in the training situation. Unfortunately, the improvement was not maintained once the training ended and did not carry over into untrained play situations. It was also observed that the teachers' use of reinforcement for positive play was not maintained over time and did not generalize to non-training play sessions at school. The authors emphasized the need to find ways to encourage teachers to use prompting and reinforcement skills in the classroom to enhance the social development of disabled children. They also stressed the need to find ways to ensure that the social initiations of children with intellectual disabilities are followed by a positive response from peers if future social initiations are to occur under natural conditions. It appears that teaching social skills to entire classrooms, even when combined with reinforcement for positive play interactions, does not produce long-lasting improvements in peer social interactions.
Haring and Lovinger (1989) demonstrated that simply encouraging a positive attitude amongst peers towards children with autism did little to improve the quality of their responses towards an autistic child, even when this was accompanied by a reward for positive responses. It was only when the autistic child was subsequently trained by his peers to initiate interactions in a more appropriate way that significant improvements occurred (peer initiation training). These peers had been trained in methods of teaching social initiations to the autistic child. Direct behavioural observation revealed that the autistic boy initiated more social interactions and received more positive responses from the peer group following peer initiation training. The positive results of peer initiation training were then replicated with two other children.

In summary, social enhancement programmes with intellectually disabled children have much in common with the teaching of social skills to any other group of children. The methods and problems are very similar, particularly with youngsters with moderate and mild intellectual impairments. If the intellectual and cognitive deficits are severe, then the type of targets for intervention tend to be more specific and basic. Training tends to require greater use of contingency management methods and gradual shaping of target skills over prolonged periods. Sessions also need to be much more frequent and short, and ideally training should be an ongoing, daily process. Children with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities, on the other hand, can often be taught new social skills using a session-based traditional social skills training approach. Generalization to everyday life situations remains a problem: a major goal for the trainer is to develop ways to ensure that non-disabled peers respond positively when intellectually disabled youngsters try out their newly acquired social skills.

**Suggestions for Designing a Social Enhancement Programme for Disabled Children**

There are several suggestions that can be made about how to set up a social enhancement programme for children with disabilities, whether the handicap is sensory, physical or intellectual in nature. It is hoped that those outlined below may make it possible to produce long-lasting improvements in social responding within real-life situations.

First, if long-lasting improvements in social skills are to be produced, consideration must be given to the type of skills to be trained. It is important to select for training those skills that are most likely to lead to reinforcing consequences in the form of positive responses from others. Skills should be selected that enable trainees to initiate social interaction with other children (and adults) successfully and to respond appropriately to other people’s initiations.

Second, it may also be necessary to introduce additional means of encouraging the use of newly learned skills in day-to-day interactions with others. For example, it may be helpful to train teachers to prompt and reinforce trainees for using their new skills in real-life, classroom and play situations. Alternatively, peers may be
trained to carry out this prompting and shaping process.

Third, it seems essential to change the behaviour of the peer group so that the non-disabled peers do not continue to ignore or respond negatively to a trainee. Several suggestions can be made regarding methods which, when used in combination, may achieve this goal. Training and reinforcing peers for positive initiations towards children with disabilities and for responding positively to their initiations may be helpful.

Finally, it may be feasible in some instances to carry out training sessions in real-life situations. An example of this is the work-based training of vocational social skills to youths with learning disabilities.
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Many children and adolescents experience problems in their relationships with others. For some, these interpersonal difficulties are persistent and can interfere with long-term social adjustment. Identifying the problem areas and helping these young people enhance their social skills is therefore of great importance to teachers, psychologists and youth counsellors.

Social Skills Training: Enhancing Social Competence with Children and Adolescents is a resource for professionals who are involved with young people facing such problems. It provides the means to assess social competence and to design appropriate intervention programmes, which will change negative thinking patterns and develop self-esteem. Social Skills Training also examines the nature of social competence, the causes of relationship difficulties, the assessment of interpersonal problems and the effectiveness of intervention methods.

This User's Guide contains all the information required to assess the children and to run an enhancement programme. It also provides a valuable discussion of what determines social competence and includes a wide range of new trialled assessments of social competence. It gives detailed descriptions regarding the teaching of behavioural and social perception skills, social problem-solving, relaxation and positive thinking. Advice is offered on designing a practical social enhancement programme through a clear session-by-session guide that can be adapted to meet individual requirements. The final section focuses on children with disabilities, such as hearing, visual or intellectual impairments, and the special problems they can face in social relationships.

Social Skills Training also includes:

- a Photocopiable Resource Book and eight Photo Cards for use in conjunction with the User's Guide;

- a Research and Technical Supplement, which reviews alternative assessment instruments and gives a detailed overview of the whole area of social skills.

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