



Psychology
for Flourishing

Resources

How to Write a Social Story*

Social Stories are brief description of an event or social situation which explains what to expect and what to do in that particular situation. To be effective they must be written in a particular way.

General Rules

A Social Story should have a title, an introduction, a main body and a conclusion.

Social Stories use **positive language** and states the desired behaviour in positive ways:

I will try not to run

I will walk

If it is essential to mention negative behaviour in the story, it is done so in very general terms:



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I make mistakes

Sometimes people make mistakes

Carefully construct sentences to navigate issues of **literal understanding**:

Instead of – I travel to school by bus each day

Use – I usually travel by bus on school days

Make it **appeal** to the child/young person, for example use pictures of their interests around the border of the page.



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Specific Rules

EVERY Social Story contains **descriptive sentences**. These are accurate statements of facts that do not make assumptions:

There are many people in the room.

Most people are sitting on chairs.

Social Stories MAY contain **perspective sentences**. These usually describe the thoughts and feelings of other people:



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The speaker will like it if I listen to her.

Children often like to talk when they are eating.

Social Stories MAY contain **affirmative** sentences. This enhance the meaning of the other sentences and may reflect a commonly shared option:

This is okay.

It is safe to use the toilet.



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Social Stories MAY contain **directive** sentences. These explain a possible response and/or gently direct behaviour:

I will try to listen to the speaker.

I will try to stay in my seat on the bus.

The basic Social Story **sentence ratio** is:

0 – 1 directive sentence.

2-5 descriptive, perspective or affirmative sentences.



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Example of a Social Story

Title: Why it is ok to Make Mistakes

Introduction: Children in school are learning (*descriptive*). When children learn, sometimes they make mistakes (*descriptive*).

Main Body: My teacher does not feel cross if I make mistakes (*perspective*). It is okay to make mistakes (*affirmative*).

Conclusion: When I make mistakes I will try to ask my teacher for help (*directive*).

Sentence ratio:

1 = directive

4 = descriptive/perspective/affirmative

(*The terms 'Social Story' and 'Social Stories' are Trademarks of Carol Gray)





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