

Social Coaching Services

WHY SOCIAL COACHING SERVICES?

Social difficulties may lead to problems not only with friendships or romantic relationships, but also daily living, academic and occupational success.

The goal of social coaching is to help improve social communication and other communication difficulties to improve an individual's quality of life by connecting with others .

Many desirable outcomes are associated with positive and effective social interactions, including:

- Improved self-esteem
- Decreased anxiety and depressive symptoms
- Better quality of life

Buhrmester, 1990; Barnhill, 2007; Howlin, 2000; Jennes-Coussens et al., 2006; Wing, 1983



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WHO NEEDS SOCIAL COACHING?

Most people may benefit from social communication coaching as a way to gain awareness of how they interact with others .

For some people, social skills training is often essential and necessary for in order to address their significant struggle with social interactions and relationships. These individuals may have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Social Pragmatics (Communication) Disorder (SPCD), or Nonverbal Learning Disorder.

THEORY OF MIND MODEL

Individuals diagnosed with ASD or SPCD have a profound difficulty understanding the minds of other people, their emotions, feelings, beliefs, and thoughts. It has been proposed that this may underlie many of the other difficulties experienced by people with ASD, including social and communication problems, and some challenging behaviors.

Fletcher-Watson, McConnell, Manola, & McConachie, 2014

WHAT IS SOCIAL COACHING?

SOCIAL COACHING IS A ONE-TO-ONE SKILLS BASED TRAINING THAT HELPS DEVELOP AN INDIVIDUAL’S ABILITY TO BETTER NAVIGATE THE SOCIAL WORLD AND TO CREATE POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS

Just as you would take an academic or immersion approach in learning a new language, you want to do the same when learning and improving your social abilities. The more time spent learning and practicing the skill, the better!

Similar to a sports or athletic coach, the social coach aims to provide support and to help the individual build on and fine-tune the skills they already have.

Skills include:

- Understanding nonverbal communication and awareness of body language, gestures, and facial expressions of self and others
- Active listening
- Conversational and social reciprocity skills (e.g., starting a conversation, exiting conversations, turn-taking)
- Perspective-taking and flexibility in thinking
- Creating, developing, and maintaining friendships and relationships
- Problem-solving and conflict resolution
- Understanding non-literal language, such as sarcasm, analogies, and metaphors

SOCIAL COACHING METHODS

Depending on the needs of the individual, a variety of strategies will be used within the meeting to teach and practice skills, including:

- Role playing
- Rehearsals
- Video analysis
- Mirrors
- Visualization

A “Social Autopsy” is a step-by-step approach to discuss and problem-solve what was difficult for the individual in a real life scenario. This method provides meaningful feedback and practice for the individual.

Homework assignments are a natural part of the coaching process so the individual will practice their skills outside of the meeting.

When working with children, caregivers may be brought into parts of meetings for the purpose of learning the skill their child is being taught and how to help the child generalize that skill outside of the meeting.

“PARENTS CAN ENHANCE THE CHILD’S ACQUISITION OF SKILLS TO HELP TRANSFER THE NEWLY ACQUIRED SKILLS TO HOME AND COMMUNITY SETTINGS”

Maglione et al., 2012



COACHING MEETINGS

FREQUENCY

Ideally, the coaching is provided three times per week for 90 minutes per meeting. The regular frequency of the coaching is very important to provide consistent opportunities to learn and practice newly acquired social communication skills.

Individuals who have or are identified as having social communication difficulties should actively be engaged in a minimum of 25 hours per week of interventions specifically targeting those difficulties. Maglione et al., 2012

Additionally, in some situations the coach may be available for coaching by phone to provide in-the-moment support.

STRUCTURE

The first half of the meeting is to practice and maintain spontaneous conversation. Additionally, the coach will be assessing the individual’s body language and mannerisms within conversation to address during the meeting .

The second half of the meeting will be focused on the weekly lesson. Each week a different topic may be presented, such as conflict resolution or cognitive flexibility. The focus of these lessons are customized to the individual’s needs and specifically targeting social skills deficits.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Depending on the needs of the individual, social coaching meetings may also occur in the community, such as in a coffee shop or a restaurant. This allows for the individual to practice their skills in real life scenarios with the coach’s immediate support and feedback. Additionally, this allows the coach to observe the individual outside of the familiar and predictable office environment.