

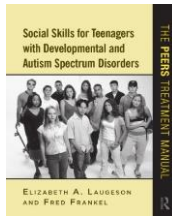
PEERS for Young Adults

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Overview of PEERS for Young Adults

(Adapted from Laugeson & Frankel, 2010)

- Addresses common social errors
- Teaches ecologically valid social skills
- Evidence-based for young adults with ASD (18-24)
- Caregiver-assisted
 - Parents, adult siblings, family members, life coaches, job coaches, peer coaches
- Focuses on relationship skills
 - Friendships
 - Romantic relationships



Common Social Challenges for Young Adults with ASD

- Difficulty with social communication
- Difficulty with social awareness
- Difficulty with social motivation
 - Engagement
- Difficulty with social cognition

Volkmar & Klin, 1998; Bauminger & Kasari, 2000; Orsmond, Krauss, & Seltzer, 2004; Koning & Magill-Evans, 2001; LeCouteur et al., 1989; Marks, Schrader, Longaker, & Levine, 2000; Ghaziuddin & Gerstein, 1996; Twitchman-Cullen, 1998; Hemphill & Siperstein, 1990; Church, Alisanki, Amanullah, 2000; Constantino, 2005)

Consequences of Social Deficits For Young Adults with ASD

- **Social neglect and isolation**
 - Withdrawn
 - Seen as shy by others
 - May go unnoticed
- **Peer rejection**
 - Teased and bullied
 - Unsuccessful attempts to socially engage others
- **Peer conflict**
 - Arguments may result in termination of friendship
 - Lack of close reciprocal friendships
 - Poor friendship quality

Friendships as a “Protective Factor”

- Predicts later adjustment in life
- Can buffer the impact of stressful life events
- Correlates positively with:
 - Self-esteem
 - Independence
- Correlates negatively with:
 - Depression
 - Anxiety

Buhrmeister, 1990; Matson, Smiroldo, & Bamberg, 1998; Miller & Ingham, 1976

Guidelines for Social Interaction

- **Ecologically valid social skills**
 - DO'S
- **Common social errors committed by those with ASD**
 - DONT'S
- Create rules around ecologically valid skills and common social errors
- Break steps down into concrete parts



Evidence-based Teaching Strategies

- Homework review (30 mins)
 - Troubleshoot homework problems
 - Individualize treatment
- Didactic instruction (30 mins)
- Conduct role-play demonstrations using peer coaches
- Behavioral rehearsal (20 mins)
- Reunification with caregivers (10 mins)

Importance of Social Coaches

- Caregivers provide social coaching during coachable moments in natural settings
- Assist with generalization of skills to home and community setting
- Use of buzzwords and phrases
- Aide in homework compliance
- Guidance on interpersonal problem-solving
- Provide opportunities for peer contacts
- Assist in finding social activities and social hobbies based on the young adult's INTERESTS

Weekly Didactic Topics

- Starting conversations and trading information
- Maintaining conversations and trading information
- Finding a source of friends
- Electronic communication
- Appropriate use of humor
- Entering and exiting conversations (three types)
- Get-togethers
- Dating etiquette (four sessions)
- Handling arguments and disagreements
- Handling direct & indirect bullying

Example: Entering Group Conversations

What are most young adults told to do in response to enter a group conversation?

Entering Group Conversations

- Listen to the conversation
- Watch from a distance
- Use a prop
- Identify the topic
- Find a common interest
- Move closer
- Wait for a pause
- Mention the topic
- Assess interest
- Introduce yourself

Evidence Support of Young Adult Program

ORIGINAL PAPER

Social Skills Training for Young Adults with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Randomized Controlled Pilot Study

Alexander Gutman¹, Steven K. Rupp¹,
Kath Overand¹, Elizabeth A. Langman¹

1 Autism Day School

DOI: 10.1002/aur.1264

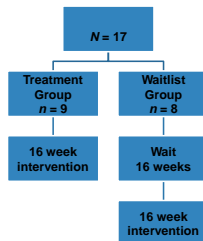
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A Randomized Controlled Trial to Improve Social Skills in Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder: The UCLA PEERS® Program

Elizabeth A. Langman^{1,2}, Alexander Gutman^{1,2}, Steven K. Rupp^{1,2},
Kath Overand^{1,2}, Ruth Ellingsen^{1,2}



Randomized Control Trial Results

Variable	Group		p
	Treatment (n = 9)	Delayed treatment (n = 8)	
<i>Demographics</i>			
Age (years)	19.9 (1.2)	20.9 (2.0)	0.22
Percent male	55.6	75.0	0.43
Percent Caucasian	55.6	75.0	0.83
KBIT-2 composite	96.7 (11.8)	108.5 (17.4)	0.12
Vinland-II composite	89.6 (7.5)	85.4 (8.0)	0.28
IQ	35.9 (5.2)	32.8 (4.3)	0.22
<i>Young adult measures</i>			
SELSA	132.6 (33.7)	133.2 (30.2)	0.97
TYASSK	14.0 (2.7)	13.0 (3.1)	0.49
QSQ hosted	1.00 (1.3)	0.50 (1.1)	0.41
QSQ invited	2.22 (4.9)	0.88 (1.8)	0.48
SSI Total score	237.4 (31.2)	243.4 (42.7)	0.75
<i>Caregiver measures</i>			
SRS Total score	110.8 (22.6)	102.6 (18.3)	0.43
SSRS social skills	78.7 (11.4)	83.6 (10.8)	0.37
QSQ hosted	0.78 (1.1)	0.38 (0.7)	0.40
QSQ invited	2.22 (5.2)	0.63 (0.9)	0.40
IQ	17.0 (8.4)	17.5 (8.4)	0.90

Programs & Trainings

• UCLA PEERS

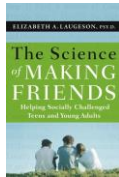
- Preschool (4-6 years old)
- Teen Group (12-18 years old)
- Young Adults (18+ years old)

• Additional Resources

- Science of Making Friends
- Friendmaker App on iTunes

• Certified Trainings at UCLA:

- May 18 – 20, 2016 for Mental Health Professionals
- June 23 – 25, 2016 for School-based Professionals



UCLA PEERS® Clinic



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