



How to Write a Social Story

A guide for the Professional Support Worker



What is a Social Story?

Social Stories were originally developed by Carol Gray (a teacher) in 1991 for working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Nowadays, people use the term “social story” to refer to many different types of Easy English or simple English texts that are supported by pictures. Social stories are a description of a particular situation, event or activity and include information about what to expect in that situation and why.

Why write a Social Story?

Social stories or Easy English documents are useful for people with ASD, intellectual disability or limited literacy skills. They can be used to convey information about a number of topics including:

- Self-care skills
- Understanding social situations
- Understanding the person’s own experiences (e.g. sensory difference, anger)
- Explain changes or distressing events (e.g. coping with the death of a loved one)
- To provide positive feedback in order to develop self-esteem
- To explain a behavioural strategy (e.g. what to do when angry)

How do I write a Social Story?

1. Text:
 - Keep language simple
 - Explain any complicated words or concepts
 - Use short sentences
 - Write in the person’s preferred style of language (i.e. second person or third person)
2. Pictures:
 - Support each sentence or dot point with a relevant picture
 - Pictures should be around the same size and placed directly under or beside the text
 - You can find pictures at:
 - <http://www.arasaac.org>
 - Google image search
 - Take your own photos
3. Formatting:
 - Make sure text is large enough for the person to read (at least size 14 font)
 - Use a simple font (such as Arial)
 - Make sure there is enough space between each sentence and supporting picture
 - Make sure the page is not too cluttered
 - Consider the person’s needs (i.e. extra-large, high-contrast text and pictures for someone with visual difficulties, or special fonts for people with dyslexia)

How do I make a Social Story more interesting for the person I support?

- Use photos of the person, and real-life situations/places
- Create a bitmoji (on the bitmoji app) of the person and use this in the social story [Bitmoji](#)
- Use the person’s special interest or favourite character e.g. “how Thomas the Tank Engine makes friends” or “How Taylor Swift brushes her teeth”

