

Social Skills Training Project
www.socialskillstrainingproject.com
 Jed Baker, Ph.D., Director
 29 Collinwood Road
 Maplewood, NJ 07040

Title: Success in Transition: Managing Frustration, Anxiety and Teaching Social Skills

Presenter bio: Jed Baker, Ph.D. is the director of the Social Skills Training Project, an organization serving individuals with autism and social communication problems. He is on the professional advisory board of Autism Today, ASPEN, ANSWER, YAI, the Kelberman Center and several other autism organizations. In addition, he writes, lectures, and provides training internationally on the topic of social skills training and managing challenging behaviors. He is an award winning author of 8 books, including *Social Skills Training for Children and Adolescents with Aspergers Syndrome and Social Communication Problems*; *Preparing for Life: The Complete Handbook for the Transition to Adulthood for Those with Autism and Aspergers Syndrome*; *The Social Skills Picture Book*; *The Social Skills Picture Book for High School and Beyond*; *No More Meltdowns: Positive Strategies for Managing and Preventing Out-of-Control Behavior*; *No More Victims: Protecting those with Autism from Cyber Bullying, Internet Predators & Scams*; *Overcoming Anxiety in Children and Teens*; and *School Shadow Guidelines*. His work has also been featured on ABC World News, Nightline, Fox News, the CBS Early Show, and the Discovery Health Channel.

Brief narrative description: A model for successful transition to adulthood will be presented. He will review research on predictors of positive outcome. The energy that drives success comes from a hopeful attitude from both caregivers and individuals on the spectrum. A positive attitude is carefully crafted from an awareness of one's strengths that can outweigh challenges. Research on caregiver attitudes associated with better outcomes is reviewed. Success also depends on receiving the right supports and coping skills to handle frustration, anxiety and social challenges. How to calm during a meltdown and how to prevent repeat problems by anticipating common triggers are described. The importance of developing a growth mindset that encourages persistence in the face of setbacks and willingness to get help is highlighted. The second part of the presentation details key components of skills training including strategies to motivate, ways to teach social skills based on language functioning level, how to generalize skills into the natural setting and increase acceptance from peers. Information is imparted though lecture, interactive exercises, and video clips.

Outline of full day presentation

-Predictors of success in transitioning to adulthood

- Dream big, yet realistically
- Motivation: awareness of strengths and challenges,
- Growth mindset: Perseverance and willingness to seek out help
- Emotional, social and behavioral support
- A model for success

-Understanding of challenging behaviors precedes effective intervention

- Fear as the most common feeling behind oppositional/defiant behaviors in children with ASD, ADHD, Bipolar and multiple learning disabilities
- Children's challenging behaviors create fear and anxiety in caregivers
- How caregivers can first manage their own anxiety before managing their children's behaviors
- Developing the right attitude to manage challenging behaviors: Research on hope and attributional style of teachers and parents

-Managing and preventing anxiety and frustration:

- Identifying common triggers to frustration and anxiety

- Fear of failure: academic demands, mistakes and losing
 - Waiting, accepting no, changes in schedule, attention related behaviors
 - Practical treatment of anxiety: modify triggers, understand alarm system, motivate participation, think like a scientist, create fear ladders, exercise, meditation, and biological interventions
 - Unexpected triggers: Trust that all problems can be resolved
- Why most social skills programs fail! Six key Components of Social Skills Training
- One size does not fit all: Prioritizing relevant skill goals
 - Knowing what to do does not mean one will do it: Establishing motivation to use skills
 - Skill acquisition: strategies to teach skills based on language ability
 - Generalization strategies: prompting skills in real settings
 - Having skills does not insure peer acceptance: Creating accepting peer environments
 - Measuring progress
 - Q and A for specific skill lessons including
 - Empathy
 - Conversation
 - Conflict management
 - Friendship seeking and maintenance
 - Dating and sexuality issues
 - Employment issues

Outcome objectives:

1. Identify predictors of success in transitioning to adulthood
2. Understand how best to think about challenging behaviors to insure better outcomes.
3. Learn strategies to deal effectively with anxiety and frustration; both to deescalate and prevent meltdowns.
4. Identify ways to motivate verbal and non-verbal students to want to socialize.
5. Learn how to choose effective strategies for teaching and generalizing skills.
6. Create programs for typical peers to accept students with disabilities, reduce bullying and model positive behaviors.