

TalkAbout

Social Skills Interventions

What is it?

Developed by Alex Kelly.
A structured social communication skills programme delivered by teaching staff to support social skill development.

How it works

A structured weekly grouped session (ideally 4-8 students) over 12+ weeks.

How it may help

Modules cover self awareness and self esteem; body language; conversational skills; friendship skills; assertiveness

IMPORTANT

Consider group dynamics
Use programme or R2i pre-post data for evaluation
Adapt activities if needed - for ability

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Keep sessions consistent

Use humour and creativity

Encourage peer support

Embed learning into whole school

Remember to celebrate success (e.g. with certificates) and share progress with parents and other staff in school

TalkAbout Intervention:

Set up Group

- 4-8 students per group
- Weekly 45-60 minute sessions
- Establish group rules and expectations in Session 1

Deliver Programme

- Follow the **5-module structure** in order
- Use the **photocopiable worksheets** and **interactive activities**
- Include warm-up games and reflection time

Monitor Progress

- Keep session notes and attendance
- Use informal observations and student feedback
- Reassess using the Talkabout tool at the end

Peer Mentoring

Social Skills Interventions

What is it?

A structured programme where trained older students support younger peers through regular, friendly, and confidential conversations

How it works

Older students (Year 10-11) are trained to be mentors. Mentors have regular sessions with selected students.

How it may help

- Boost confidence and self-esteem
- Support academic progress
- Encourage positive communication
- Promote emotional wellbeing.
- Build a stronger school community

Define purpose

For example:

- Supporting transition
- Improving wellbeing and resilience
- Reducing bullying or isolation
- Enhancing academic motivation



Engage SLT
Evaluate the programme for impact.

How to set up Peer Mentoring:

1. Design the structure

Format: 1:1, small group, drop-in sessions

Frequency: Weekly, fortnightly, or flexible

Duration: Termly or year-long

Location: Quiet, supervised space (e.g. library, wellbeing room)

2. Recruit Mentors

Target older students (Years 10-13) who are:

- Responsible, empathetic, and good communicators
- Willing to commit time and attend training
- Recommended by staff or self-nominated

3. Train Mentors

Provide training on:

- Active listening and confidentiality
- Setting boundaries and safeguarding
- Problem-solving and signposting
- Diversity, inclusion, and empathy

4. Match mentors

Match based on:

- Shared interests or backgrounds
- Year group needs (e.g. Year 7 mentees)
- Staff input and student preferences

5. Launch programme

- Promote through assemblies, posters, tutor time
- Inform parents/carers and gain consent if needed
- Celebrate the launch with a small event or recognition

6. Supervise and Support

- Assign a staff coordinator (e.g. pastoral lead)
- Hold regular check-ins with mentors
- Provide a logbook or reflection journal
- Ensure safeguarding protocols are followed

Co-Operative Learning

Social Skills Interventions

What is it?

An educational approach where students work together in small groups to achieve shared learning goals.

How it works

Students are assigned specific roles and tasks within a group. Success depends on each student's contribution.

How it may help

Co-operative learning can build empathy, cooperation and respect among peers. It encourages teamwork, communication and critical thinking.

Setting it up

- Align group tasks with curriculum goals.
- Ensure objectives are measurable and achievable.
- Decide on student roles
- Plan in time for reflection

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Respect
Every
Voice

Share
responsibility

Celebrate
group
success

Reflect on
what
worked

Working example:

Assign Roles

- Facilitator: Keeps the group on task.
- Recorder: Takes notes and summarizes.
- Reporter: Shares findings with the class.
- Timekeeper: Manages time.

Ground Rules

- Respect all contributions.
- Listen actively.
- Resolve conflicts constructively.

Teacher's role

- Model active listening
- Teach communication and active listening skills
- Monitor group work and support when needed.

Restorative Conversations

Social Skills Interventions

What is it?

A structured, reflective conversation following incidents of conflict, disruption or harm which focuses on repairing relationships.

How it works

This intervention provides a framework to structure conversation that n following an incident, facilitated by a trusted adult.

How it may help

Restorative conversations can help strengthen relationships, build empathy, promote accountability and reduce repeat behaviours by exploring and understanding causes.

IMPORTANT

Restorative conversations work best when they're part of a whole-school approach that values and prioritises all relationships within the school community. The underpinning values of a restorative conversation should be used across all interactions, not just after incidents, to help build a school culture where everyone feels safe, heard and supported.



RESTORATIVE VALUES

- promote relationship building, conflict resolution and reconciliation
- create environments to support social and emotional development
- embrace qualities such as empathy, compassion, perseverance and cultural sensitivity

“ Prompts for Restorative Conversation ”

Setting the scene

For students with SEMH needs, the timing, environment and adult chosen to lead the conversation are critical. Ideally, the conversation should take place:

- In a quiet, neutral space
- With a trusted adult
- When the student is regulated and ready to reflect
- With a non-punitive tone, focused on repairing relationships

What happened?

How were you feeling at the time?
What were you thinking?
What have you thought about since?

Who has been affected?

How have they been affected?
Anyone else?
Was anyone else involved?
How have you been affected?
What has been the hardest thing for you? How do you feel now?
How have others been affected?

What needs to happen?

What will help you move on from this? What would that look like?
Do we all agree with that?
What do you think about what has been suggested?
If you can't do that, what can you do?
How does this leave you feeling?

Circle Time

Social Skills Interventions

What is it?

A way for a group of pupils to come together to talk, listen and share their thoughts and experiences, often about a certain topic.

How it works

Circle Time should be a structured, timetabled process of circle meetings which can involve staff and pupils.

How it may help

Circle Time aims to build emotional literacy skills and have a positive impact on young people's self-esteem, confidence, relationships.

Set up

- Between 6-18 participants
- Open circle of chairs or cushions - no tables or desk
- 'Talking object' to facilitate discussion
- Adult facilitator sits as part of the circle
- Keep it positive and emphasis problem solving
- Start with a game to help everyone relax or to trigger discussion

Ground Rules

To be established at the start of the session with all participants. Examples include:

- Only one person speaks at once
- You can 'pass' if you don't want to speak about something
- Respect must be shown to everyone and their views

Celebration based circles

Purpose: build positivity and recognition

Activity: share achievements, shout-outs and gratitude moments. Example activity could be anonymous note of appreciation to read aloud

Emotional Check- in Circles

Purpose: to build emotional awareness and connection

Activity: students share how they're feeling using prompts

Scenario-Based Circles

Purpose: explore social understanding and conflict resolution.

Activity: present scenario (e.g. friendship fallout, online conflict etc) and ask students to discuss. E.g. what might each person be feeling? What could be done differently? How could the situation be resolved?

Examples of ways to use Circle Time

Interest-based Circles

Purpose: build community through shared interests and provide safe space for identity exploration

Activity: let students choose or suggest topic (e.g. gaming, creative arts, films etc).

Problem solving circles

Purpose: address group or class issues collaboratively.

Activity: students identify a challenge and brainstorm solutions together e.g. 'the best thing about school is...' and 'the worst thing about school is...'

Comic Strip Conversation

Social Skills Interventions

What is it?

A comic strip about a specific situation, showing different emotional reactions, thought and speech bubbles.

How it works

The student and adult co-create a comic strip that illustrates a real or hypothetical social situation.

How it may help

This can help students identify and express emotions, improve social understanding, encourage empathy and support conflict resolution skills

Guide

1. Take a past or future event
2. Ask the student to describe it in their own words
3. You could also use any reports/statements from other people involved
4. Break the situation down into around 6-8 stages
5. Draw pictures that show what happened including anything that was said
6. From there - working with the student but as a mentor rather than equal partner - colour code what was said according to emotions
7. From there, add any possible thoughts

Emotion colour coding

Green: good ideas, happy, friendly

Red: bad ideas, anger, unfriendly

Blue: sad, uncomfortable

Yellow: frightened

Black: facts, truth

Orange: questions

Brown: comfortable, cosy

Purple: proud

Colourful combinations: confusion

Examples of ways to represent communication

