

應用PEERS®社交訓練小組經驗分享

**Applying the PEERS® Social Skills
Training Program on Adolescents
with Special Educational Needs**

Introduction



Two key questions.....

- After they finished their secondary study, are there any specific difficulties and concerns embedded with studying in tertiary education?
- Are the prevailing symptoms remain the same even when they grow up and study in tertiary education?

Concern of ASD students in tertiary education

- Study? Career Choices
- Peer/ Friendship Establishment
- Self-esteem (Approach vs Avoidance)
 - Bullying experience leading to fight/flight choices

Social Skills Deficit

- **Poor social awareness**
 - Poor eye-contact
 - Difficulty understanding social cues
- **Poor social motivation**
 - Less involvement in social activities
 - Lack of peer entry attempts
 - Fewer social initiations
- **Lead to**
 - Strange to classmates
 - Unfamiliar with peers norms -
Difficult to engage in group work

Importance of social life of student

- Social skill deficit – often seen in ASD students
- Affecting communication, establishing meaningful friendship and social life
- Social withdrawal, isolated or bullying
- Peer rejection is strong predictor in mood problem (anxiety, depression) and poor academic performance
- In return, the impact not only happen in classroom, but also have a long term effect.
- Social group intervention enhance job hunting and interviewing opportunity – Vocational-focused

Importance of Social Relationships

- **Lack of social relationships** may lead to:
 - Decreased employment opportunities
 - Decreased independent living possibilities
 - Severe mental health problem (depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety)

**Program for the
Education and
Enrichment of
Relational Skills -
PEERS[®]**

PEERS[®]

- Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills[®]
- An evidence-based social skills intervention for teens and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), depression, anxiety, and other social impairments
- co-developed by ***Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson***, a licensed clinical psychologist and an assistant clinical professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the UCLA

The Two Curriculums

- Hospital-based, parent-assisted outpatient model
(facilitated by mental health professionals in clinical settings)
- School-based, non-parent-assisted model
(facilitated by teaching professionals in classroom settings)

School-based, non-parent-assisted model

- The curriculum is intended for higher functioning adolescents without significant intellectual disabilities, focusing on skills related to **making and keeping friends and managing peer conflict and rejection**.
- To be completed in 16 weeks of lessons:
daily, 30-60 minutes per day, 4-5 days per week

Key Topics in PEERS®

1. Having Two-way conversations
2. Entering and exiting conversations
3. Electronic forms of communication
4. Choosing appropriate friends
5. Using humor appropriately
6. Being a good sport
7. Having successful get-togethers
8. Managing arguments with friends
9. Handling teasing, physical bullying & other forms of social rejection

Program Features

- Didactic Lessons
- Role Play Demonstrations
- Perspective-taking Questions
 - “What do you think that was like for that person?”
 - “What do you think they thought of the other person?”
 - “Do you think they will want to talk to the person again?”
- The ‘Tick’ Reinforcement System

PEERS® Group

Demographics of the pilot PEERS[®] group

- Several batch of sessions were conducted
- Student's characteristics
 - Diagnosed with different SEN types
 - Significant difficulties engaging in social activities
 - Highly motivated engaging in social activities

Outcomes of the PEERS[®] group

- Participants' feedback:
 - The quality of guidance of the coaches
 - The activity can enhance my understanding and interest of the topic.
 - I am interested in participate in similar activity in the future
 - I (Student) have learnt a lot of practical skills such as how to enter the conversation. Thank you the teacher and coaches for teaching us in such an interactive and funny way
 - This programme can be introduced as one of the student development activities.

Outcomes of the PEERS[®] group

- Observation from coaches:
 - A positive relationship between participants has been developed
 - Overall atmosphere is very satisfying, students are cooperative and joyful.
 - Using 'ticks' and points are very good tools to motivate students to get themselves involved throughout the group.
 - Students showed very good social interaction and relationship establishment at the end of the programme.

Outcomes of the PEERS[®] group

- Difficulties/ Obstacles encountered:
 - Students encountered difficulties when thinking perspective-taking questions. Eg. What do you think of B think of A?
 - Students were shown difficulties to generalize and sustain their skills learnt from the group after several months, possibly due to limited time of training.
- Suggested Improvements
 - Increase the proportion of behavioural coach to students based on the social capability of students.
 - Increase repetition of behavioural rehearsal and one-to-one coaching to consolidate their learning.

Adaption made in Vocational Education Setting

- Sessions are selected based on the characteristics of students
 - For students in tertiary education, students are usually more social competent. Therefore, the first few weeks of the curriculum could be omitted or condensed into one lesson.
 - Appropriate Use of Humor
 - Handling Argument
 - Changing Reputation
 - Handling teasing and embarrassing Feedback
- Elements on career development should be added into the PEERS curriculum if apply in tertiary education

Q & A

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