

Assessing Social Communication in Asperger Syndrome

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About Your Presenter

Timothy P. Kowalski, M.A.,C.C.C. is a Speech-Language Pathologist in Winter Park , Florida who has had extensive experience in treating individuals with psychiatric and behavioral/emotional deficits in acute, residential, and outpatient settings. He presents extensively on social, emotional and behavior disorders, Asperger syndrome and autistic spectrum disorders at local, state, national, and international settings. He is a consultant for academic facilities for children with and without developmental and autistic spectrum disabilities and served on the board of directors for the Greater Orlando Chapter of the Autism Society of America. He is the author of the *Source for Asperger's Syndrome*, published by LinguiSystems, Inc., and *Assessing Communication Skills in Asperger's Syndrome: An Introduction to The Conversational Effectiveness Profile*. He is also the recipient of the "TEAMS 2000 Speech-Language Pathologist of the Year" award for his work with autism in the four county region of greater Orlando. He is a graduate of Case Western Reserve University and Southern Connecticut State University and has been residing in Orlando since February 1983.

Classification Systems

- 1994 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – IV, Text Revised (DSM-IV, TR)
- International Classification of Diseases –10th Edition (ICD-10)
- Gillberg's Criteria

DSM–IV, TR

American Psychiatric Association, Ed.(1994). *1994 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Washington, D.C.

- Qualitative impairment in social interaction ...
 - marked impairment in use of multiple nonverbal behaviors such as eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body postures, and gestures to regulate social interaction
- Restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities...
 - encompassing preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and restricted patterns of interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus
- There is no clinically significant general delay in language
 - there is no clinically significant delay in cognitive development or in the development of age-appropriate self-help skills, adaptive behavior (other than social interactions), and curiosity about the environment in childhood

ICD-10

World Health Organization. (1989). *Tenth Revision of the International Classification of Disease*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

- There is no clinically significant general delay in spoken or receptive language or cognitive development. Diagnosis requires that single words should have developed by 2 years of age or earlier...
- Qualitative abnormalities in reciprocal social interaction...
 - Failure to adequately use eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body posture, and gesture to regulate social interaction

- The individual exhibits an unusually intense, circumscribed interest or restricted, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests and activities...
 - An encompassing preoccupation with stereotyped restricted patterns of interest that are abnormal in content or focus; or one or more interests that are abnormal in their intensity and circumscribed nature though not in content or focus

Gillberg's Criteria

Gillberg, C. (2002) *A Guide to Asperger's Syndrome*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Speech and language peculiarities
 - delayed early development possible
 - superficially perfect expressive language
 - odd prosody, peculiar voice
 - impaired comprehension especially with literal and implied meanings
- Nonverbal communication problems
 - limited use of gestures
 - clumsy body language
 - inappropriate facial expression
 - difficulty with physical expression

Assessing Social Communication: Educational & Clinical Models

- purpose
- A.S. is medical not educational dx
- validity of testing tools

Qualifying for E.S.E. Placement

- E.S.E. label
- qualify services based on educational standards not standardized testing

IDEA 2004

- significant changes will have a positive impact on students presenting with AS

Impact #1

- Schools may not focus predominately or exclusively on academics in their evaluations but must consider all areas of the child's functioning at school

Impact #2

- The requirement to assess developmental and functional performance requires consideration of the effect of learning problems e.g. reading, writing, and math learning disabilities, based on functional impact, regardless of response to intervention or discrepancy scores

Impact #3

- Evaluations must be provided in the language and form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally and functionally.

Pragmatic Language Assessment Tools

1. *Conversational Effectiveness Profile*
Kowalski, T. (2005). Assessing communication skills in Asperger's Syndrome: An introduction to the Conversational Effectiveness Profile. *Florida Journal of Communication Disorders*. 22, 29-34.
 - observational rating scale comprised of 6 domains:

- social interaction
- social communication
- academic communication
- nonverbal communication
- perspective taking
- social-emotional

Conversational Effectiveness Profile

Name: _____ Date: _____
Birth Date: _____ C.A.: _____

Note: For all responses, use the following behavioral rating score:

1. Behavior is appropriate.
2. Behavior is somewhat inappropriate.
3. Behavior is extremely inappropriate.

Social Interaction

This section is designed to compare the individual's ability to interact with others as well as the style of interaction the individual frequently employs.

1. Interaction with adults. _____
2. Interaction with age-appropriate peers. _____
3. Interaction with younger children. _____
4. Ability to interact with many individuals simultaneously _____
5. Ability to establish multiple friendships _____
6. Participation in group activities. _____
7. Passive tendencies _____
8. Aggressive tendencies _____
9. Responsiveness _____
10. Ability to handle being "left out" _____

Social Communication

This section is designed to compare the individual's ability to communicate with others using non-verbal and verbal means.

Topic Maintenance

11. Ability to establish a topic _____
12. Ability to maintain topic relevancy _____
13. Ability to change a topic using signals _____
14. Ability to change a topic using verbal means _____
15. Relevancy of information _____
16. Ability to interrupt appropriately _____
17. Ability to terminate the conversation _____

Conversational Structure

- 18. Ability to initiate a conversation _____
- 19. Ability to establish a conversation outside of interest area _____
- 20. Ability to acknowledge others in conversation _____
- 21. Ability to delete redundant information appropriately _____
- 22. Ability to order information appropriately (new info follows old) _____
- 23. Use of pedantic speech _____

Word Structure

- 24. Ability to use generals/specifics _____
- 25. Pronoun use _____
- 26. Use of word referents _____
- 27. Ability to employ Theory of Mind (presupposition) _____

Manner/Effectiveness

- 28. Provides ambiguous information _____
- 29. Provides relevant information _____
- 30. Truthfulness of information (grandiosity) _____
- 31. Ability to establish joint activity _____
- 32. Tendency to present personal opinions as factual _____

Repair Structures

- 33. Requests clarification as needed _____
- 34. Spontaneously provides additional information _____
- 35. Provides additional information upon request _____
- 36. Requests repetition of information for clarification purposes _____

Functional Intent

A. Responsiveness

- 37. Looks at speaker when called _____
- 38. Delay of response _____
- 39. Ability to label information appropriately _____
- 40. Ability to describe objects appropriately _____
- 41. Ability to describe events appropriately _____
- 42. Ability to state facts appropriately _____
- 43. Ability to provide clarification appropriately _____

B. Requesting

- 44. Ability to request information appropriately _____
- 45. Ability to request permission appropriately _____
- 46. Ability to request yes-no responses appropriately _____

- 47. Ability to use Wh-Questions appropriately _____
- 48. Ability to request an action of another appropriately _____
- 49. Ability to request clarification appropriately _____
- 50. Ability to request attention appropriately _____
- 51. Ability to request help appropriately _____

C. Prosody

- 52. Ability to use appropriate rate of speech _____
- 53. Ability to use appropriate tone of voice _____
- 54. Ability to use appropriate pitch _____
- 55. Ability to use appropriate loudness _____
- 56. Ability to comprehend implied meanings via tone of voice _____
- 57. Ability to comprehend implied meanings via inflectional cues _____

D. Protests

- 58. Ability to state his opinion using appropriate means _____
- 59. Ability to disagree _____

E. Style of Conversation

- 60. Ability to shift the style of conversation according to person _____
- 61. Ability to shift the style of conversation according to the setting _____
- 62. Ability to shift the style of conversation according to humor _____
- 63. Ability to engage a listener appropriately _____
- 64. Ability to use politeness _____
- 65. Appropriateness to the situation _____
- 66. Ability to recognize other's moods _____
- 67. Ability to differentiate requests from demands _____

F. Humor

- 68. Comprehends humor _____
- 69. Uses humor appropriately _____

G. Greetings/Acknowledgements

- 70. Provides greetings _____
- 71. Uses greetings _____
- 72. Ability to acknowledge the presence of another individual _____

H. Problem Solving

- 73. Ability to solve problems affecting himself _____
- 74. Ability to solve problems affecting others _____
- 75. Ability to recognize problems affecting others _____
- 76. Ability to recognize problems affecting himself _____
- 77. Ability to establish cause-effect _____

78. Ability to use conflict-resolution _____

I. Deceit

79. Uses language to deceive _____

80. Lies _____

Academic Communication

This section is designed to compare the individual's ability to communicate in an academic setting with other students.

81. Ability to respond appropriately to teacher requests _____

82. Ability to reorient to academic agenda appropriately _____

83. Ability to obtain teacher's attention appropriately _____

84. Ability to request clarification from teacher _____

85. Ability to participate in classroom discussions _____

86. Ability to interact with classroom peers _____

87. Ability to paraphrase text _____

88. Ability to summarize a story providing key information _____

89. Ability to respond to questions requiring inferential reasoning _____

Nonverbal Communication

This section is designed to compare the individual's ability to communicate with others using non-verbal means.

90. Ability to recognize "personal space" boundaries _____

91. Ability to touch appropriately _____

92. Comprehends facial expression _____

93. Comprehends eye gaze _____

94. Comprehends gestures _____

95. Comprehends body language _____

96. Ability to use facial expression _____

97. Ability to use eye gaze _____

98. Ability to use gestures _____

99. Ability to use body language _____

100. Ability to use eye contact _____

Perspective Taking

This section is designed to compare the individual's ability to recognize and use appropriate perspective taking.

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 101. Ability to recognize another's viewpoints | _____ |
| 102. Ability to recognize another's interests | _____ |
| 103. Ability to recognize another's feelings | _____ |
| 104. Ability to demonstrate concern for another's problems | _____ |

Social-Emotional

This section is designed to compare the individual's ability to recognize emotional states and use appropriate terminology.

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 105. Ability to recognize personal emotional states | _____ |
| 106. Ability to recognize emotional states in others | _____ |
| 107. Ability to express personal emotional state | _____ |
| 108. Ability to use appropriate self-control | _____ |
| 109. Ability to lose a game graciously | _____ |
| 110. Perfectionist quality | _____ |
| 111. Degree of anxiety in social settings | _____ |

2. *Dore's Conversational Acts*

Stickler, K. R. (1987). *Guide to Analysis of Language Transcripts*. Eau Claire, WI: Thinking Publications.

- used to assess the function behind an utterance
- comprised of 3 parts based on the message's
 - meaning
 - syntax
 - speaker's intent
- Requests
 - Statements that request information, action, or acknowledgment from another individual
 - yes-no questions
 - Wh-questions
 - clarification
 - requests for action or permission
- Descriptions
 - statements that provide factual information about the past and present such as:
 - identifications
 - properties
 - events
 - locations
 - times
- Statements
 - comments that are used for:
 - rules
 - evaluations
 - attributions
 - explanations

- facts
 - definitions
- Acknowledgments
 - comments that recognize and evaluate responses such as:
 - acceptances
 - approval/agreements
 - disapproval/disagreements
 - conversational returns
- Organizational Devices
 - comments that regulate contact and conversation such as:
 - boundary markers
 - calls
 - speaker selections
 - politeness markers
 - accompaniments
- Performatives
 - comments that serve to accomplish their task:
 - protests
 - jokes
 - claims
 - warning
 - teasing
- Miscellaneous
 - Utterances not classifiable elsewhere such as
 - no responses
 - unintelligible responses
 - exclamations

3. *Tough's Functions of Language*

Tough, J. (1977). *The Development of Meaning: A Study of Children's Use of Language Skills*. London, UK: Allen and Unwin.

- defines the role language has in problem solving and thinking
- identifies 4 major functions of language:
 - directive
 - interpretive
 - projective
 - relational
- Directive
 - ability to direct comments to self such as:
 - monitoring/verbalizing about his actions
 - describing and directing his actions toward a task
 - stating what he intends to do
 - ability to direct comments to others such as:
 - requested actions
 - providing instructions
 - verbalizing problem-solving tasks
 - anticipating future actions that impact himself or others
- Interpretive
 - reporting on present and past experiences such as:
 - label
 - verbal detail
 - associate and compare against previous experiences
 - recognize incongruity in a situation
 - express a sequence of events
 - using reasoning such as:
 - recognizing cause-effect
 - recognizing social rules and principles

- Projective
 - ability to use prediction such as:
 - stating information in the future
 - anticipating consequences
 - determining possible alternatives
 - stating possible cause-effects
 - recognizing problems and predicting solutions
 - ability to use empathy such as:
 - projecting into other's experiences
 - projecting into other's feelings
 - anticipating the reactions of others
 - ability to use imagination such as:
 - renaming items by providing more specificity
 - using imaginary play
 - role playing
- Relational
 - ability to use self-maintenance skills to express:
 - current needs
 - self-interest
 - justifications
 - criticism
 - threats
 - ability to use interactional skills such as:
 - emphasis
 - other strategies for recognition

4. *Fey's Pragmatic Patterns*

Fey, M. (1986). *Language Intervention with Young Children*. San Diego: College-Hill Press.

- Active Conversationalists
 - assertive and responsive
 - interested in their conversational partner
 - lend information to the conversation
 - may need assistance in expansion techniques
- Passive Conversationalists
 - responsive to conversation but doesn't add to it
 - fails to provide new and/or relevant information
 - need help in developing assertive acts
- Inactive Conversationalists
 - neither responsive or assertive
 - typically socially isolated
 - fail to participate in conversation
 - need help in developing interactions
- Verbal Non-communicator
 - assertive but unresponsive to partner
 - can initiate conversation
 - dominates conversation without regard to partner's needs/desires
 - need help in understanding how their comment relates to current topic

5. *Prutting Pragmatic Protocol*

Prutting, C. (1983). "Applied Pragmatics." In *Pragmatic Assessment and Intervention Issues in Language*, Edited by T. Gallagher and C. Prutting. San Diego: College-Hill.

- used with children 5 years of age and older
- defines how language signifies conversational intent in social settings

6. Communicative Partner Profile

Anderson-Wood, L. and Smith, B. (2000). *Working with Pragmatics*. Oxon, UK: Winslow Press Ltd.

- checklist based on the following skills:

- facilitating relationships
 - facilitating conversational interaction
 - facilitating communication development
 - non-facilitating strategies
 - training for communicative partners
7. *Muir's Informal Assessment for Social-Communication*
Muir, N., Tanner, P. and France, J. (1992). "Management and Treatment Techniques: A Practical Approach." Edited by R. Gravell, and J. France, *Speech and Communication Problems in Psychiatry*. Sand Diego: Singular Publishing Group, Inc.
- provides a quick overview of the social domain of language
 - uses a rating scale: 1 (severe) to 5 (normal)
 - geared more for psychiatric group treatment
8. *Adolescent Pragmatics Screening Scale*
Brice, A. (1992). The adolescent pragmatics screening scale: Rationale and Development: *Howard Journal of Communications*. 3: 177-193.
- can be used to identify pragmatic language deficits
 - provides a measure on 6 topical subtests and a composite total score
9. *Halliday's Functions of Language*
Miller, J. (1981). *Assessing Language Production in Children*. Baltimore: University Park Press.
- uses 7 categories to assess pragmatics
 - communication may function as:
 - interpersonal: intention to interact with others
 - textual: utterance is based on previous utterance
 - ideational/experiential: an attempt to express meaning
10. *Pragmatic Rating Scale*
Anderson-Wood, L. and Smith, B. (2000). *Working with Pragmatics*. Oxon, UK: Winslow Press Ltd.
- designed to compare communication performance against others
 - non-standardized rating scale

11. *Interaction Record*

Anderson-Wood, L. and Smith, B. (2000). *Working with Pragmatics*. Oxon, UK: Winslow Press Ltd.

- provides for a transcription of communication interaction
- provides for a visual demonstration of strengths and weaknesses

Misdiagnosis

- in one study of 32 students eventually identified as AS, 92% were provided other diagnoses or labels (Church, C., Alisanski, S. and Amanullah, S. (2000). “The social, behavioral, and academic experiences of children with Asperger syndrome.” *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*. 15(1): 12-20.)
- labels provided by:
 - school/clinical psychologists
 - primary care physicians
 - psychiatrists

Common Misdiagnoses

- ADHD
- autism
- communication disorder
- learning disorder
- emotional handicap
- obsessive-compulsive disorder
- bipolar disorder

It is hoped that you...

- learned something today that you didn't know before
- feel more confident and are more willing to work with Asperger's Syndrome-ish

type individuals

- will try and make their chaotic world more sensible
- Thank you for coming.