IMPLEMENTING PEER MEDIATED INTERVENTIONS IN HIGH SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS WITH ASD: GUIDELINES AND CASE EXAMPLES
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AGENDA

- Introduction & Background
- Peer-Mediated Interventions
- Case Examples
- Questions/Discussion
Areas of Need for Students with ASD

- Social-communication skills
  - Expressive communication, comprehension, pragmatics

- Relationships
  - Forming and maintaining friendships, differentiating between types of relationships

- Behavioral
  - Impact of circumscribed interests, repetitive behaviors, interfering behaviors, etc. on engagement and participation

APA 2013; Carter et al., 2014; Kanne & Mazurek, 2011; Paul et al., 2009
High School Setting

- Environmental complexities
  - Changing classes
  - Many communication partners across the day

- Social Complexities
  - Nuanced social situations
  - Complex relationships

- Importance of peers
  - Increased emphasis on peer culture
  - Many social situations occur outside of the purvey of adults

Brown & Klute, 2003; Carter et al., in press; Lynch et al., 2013
Why is this important?

- Social skills & “soft skills” are critical for post-secondary success
- “High school is the last best chance.” (Peter Gerhardt)
- Decreasing services & supports in high school
- “Dropping off the cliff” after high school

...nearly 80% still live at home, almost half have no jobs or postsecondary training, 40% never have contact with friends, 17% never feel hopeful about the future, 21% never engage in outside activities, and many experience a decrease in insurance coverage and therapy services.

— Paul Shattuck

[After high school] they are completely without any supports at that point, and from then on their world seems to get smaller and smaller the child is almost always at home.”

— Teacher
Evidence-Base for Interventions

- Fewer evidence based practices in middle and high school settings (National Professional Development Center & National Autism Center)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student interventions</th>
<th>Peer interventions</th>
<th>Educator interventions</th>
<th>School-wide interventions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Social skills training</td>
<td>• Peer education</td>
<td>• Fading adult proximity</td>
<td>• Disability awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social cognitive instruction</td>
<td>• Peer interaction training</td>
<td>• Facilitative role (rather than direct)</td>
<td>• School-wide peer programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication systems</td>
<td>• Peer-mediated support interventions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Behavioral interventions</td>
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Bellini et al., 2007; Carter et al., 2014; NPDC, 2011; Reichow & Volkmar, 2010
Benefits of Peer-Mediated Interventions

- Effective across a wide range of ages
  - Impact on social interactions
  - Impact on engagement
- Can implement across various settings within a school
- Availability and consistency of peers
- Positive benefits to peers
  - Academics (in some studies)
  - Experiences
Peer-Mediated Interventions

Process for Selecting and Implementing Peer-Mediated Interventions in High School Settings
Types of Peer Mediated Interventions

Peer Supports

- **Setting**: In class — academic or specials
- **Peers**: 2-3 peers per class
- **Goals**: Engagement, independence, social skills

Peer Networks

- **Setting**: Out of class — lunch, clubs, etc.
- **Peers**: 3-6 peers in the network
- **Goals**: Social skills, peer relationships, school participation
## Steps for Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer Supports</th>
<th>Peer Networks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify goals for student with ASD</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Identify and ask peers</td>
<td>2. Identify and ask peers</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Develop a peer support plan</td>
<td>3. Orient student &amp; peers to the network</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Orient student &amp; peers to their role</td>
<td>4. Meet weekly as a peer network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Implement peer supports in classroom</td>
<td>5. Encourage contact outside of the meetings</td>
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### Goal Setting

#### Domain II: Community Engagement

**Subdomain: Conversation**

**Skill Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Evaluation</th>
<th>Priority Ranking</th>
<th>Success Monitoring &amp; Notes (e.g. setting, with whom, examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CV1. Initiates conversation when appropriate +  
*Note: All items in this subdomain may include use of AAC or other communication devices/forms* | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 |
| CV2. Asks on-topic questions during conversation exchange + | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 |
| CV3. Responds to questions during conversation exchange + | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 |
| CV4. Makes comments related to topic + | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 |
| CV5. Takes turns during conversation + | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 |
| CV6. Listens to others during conversation | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 |
| CV7. Maintains appropriate proximity to conversation partner + | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 |
| CV8. Looks in direction of speaker | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 |
| CV9. Selects age & environment appropriate conversation topics + | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 |
| CV10. Ends conversation appropriately  
*Note: May include using a closing phrase, saying good-bye* | 0 1 2 | 0 1 2 |
Planning

Peer Supports

- Peer Support Plan
  - Generate ideas with peers (and student)
    - For various in-class situations
  - Record ideas on PSP
  - Revise as needed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer Support Plan</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student could</td>
<td>Classmates could</td>
<td>The facilitator could</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>When there are lectures or whole group instruction…</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student could</td>
<td>Classmates could</td>
<td>The facilitator could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selecting Peers

- Interested and excited
- Motivated to develop a social relationship with student
- Positive peer model
- Shared interests or experiences (especially for PN)
- Shared class (PS) or time (PN) with student
- Likely to stay involved for semester

*THINK CREATIVELY*
Training Peers

- Optional (especially for PN)
  - Ask the student
  - May be needed for students who:
    - Use less conventional means of communication
    - Have challenging behaviors

- Potential topics to cover
  - Strengths and interests
  - Communication strengths, modalities, & needs
  - Student goals
  - Unique behaviors
Implementation

Peer Supports

- Hold planning meeting
  - Brainstorm for PSP
- Facilitate peer supports in class
  - (Re)Arrange seating
  - Support and/or touch base with peers

Peer Networks

- Hold orientation meeting
  - Introduction to group
  - Setting the stage
- Facilitate weekly network meetings
  - Conversation/activities
  - Discuss/plan out of group interactions (last/next wk)
  - Remind of next meeting
Implementation: Facilitation Techniques

- Modeling
- Highlight similarities
- Focus on strengths
- Teach peers specific skills to encourage interaction (e.g., prompting, visual supports)
- Redirect interactions (to peers & students)
- Help to interpret communication and behaviors

*Ultimate goal is to fade support!*
Progress Monitoring

- Check-in with student and peers
- Provide feedback
  - Point out what is going well
  - Offer suggestions (facilitation techniques)
  *Can be verbally or in writing
- DATA!!!
  - Self-monitoring by student
  - Data from peers, TA, teachers, etc.
Case Examples
Meet Brian

- 9th grade
- Exclusively in self-contained classroom

- Challenges
  - Initiating communication
  - Responding to questions
  - Using adequate volume

- Strengths
  - Responds well to visual supports
  - Good attentional engagement
What did we do?

Goals & Plan
- Using a louder voice
- Responding to questions

Implementation
- Direct training for volume
- Peer Network - lunch

Outcomes
- Using louder voice (at times)
- Responding to peers’ questions
What is LOUD?

At school my teachers and friends want me to talk LOUD so they can hear me.

LOUD means that my friends sitting way over here can hear me.

LOUD means I use a voice that sounds BIGGER. Not a teeny tiny voice. Not a whisper.
Intervention Snapshot: Peer Network

- **Implementation:**
  - Weekly meeting – 5 peers, 1 other student from Brian’s class
  - Jenga game with questions
  - Peer writes choices on dry erase board
Meet Charles

- 12th grade
- Primarily served in a separate classroom
- Attending a gym class 1x per week

- Challenges
  - Rarely initiates conversation
  - Does not continue conversations

- Strengths
  - Follows/imitates peers in class
  - Responds to questions
What did we do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals &amp; Plan</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Asking questions</td>
<td>• Peer Networks - lunch</td>
<td>• Asked questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase interactions with peers</td>
<td>• Peer Supports - gym</td>
<td>• Increased social interactions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intervention Snapshot: Peer Networks

**Ideas**
- Do you like golf?
- Do you like Duke or UNC?
- Have you gone bowling before?
- Are you a good swimmer?
- What movie do you like?
Intervention Snapshot: Peer Supports

Peer Supports – Gym Class

Goals
1. Increase social interactions in class
2. Maximize engagement during class

During **downtime** (e.g., beginning of class, walking outside)...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student could...</th>
<th>Peers could...</th>
<th>Facilitator could...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greet peers</td>
<td>Greet student</td>
<td>Remind student and peers to check in with each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start conversations with peers</td>
<td>Start conversations with student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During **large group activities** (e.g., stretching, lines)...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student could...</th>
<th>Peers could...</th>
<th>Facilitator could...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage peers (high fives, fist bumps, praise, etc.)</td>
<td>Encourage student (high fives, fist bumps, praise, etc.)</td>
<td>Remind student and peers to encourage each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for help if needed</td>
<td>Help student with form during activities</td>
<td>Check in with student and peers about form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start short conversations while waiting in line</td>
<td>Start short conversations while waiting in line</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

During **small group activities** (e.g., 3-student groupings)...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student could...</th>
<th>Peers could...</th>
<th>Facilitator could...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage peers (high fives, fist bumps, praise, etc.)</td>
<td>Encourage student (high fives, fist bumps, praise, etc.)</td>
<td>Remind student and peers to encourage each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for help if needed</td>
<td>Remind student to encourage other peers</td>
<td>Check in with student and peers about form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help student with form during activities</td>
<td>Help student with form during activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meet Quinton

- 10th grade
- Attends regular education classes

- Challenges
  - Rarely joins in conversations with peers
  - Does not initiate interactions in class
  - Works on his own during group time

- Strengths
  - Attends well during class
  - Interest in outdoors and welding
What did we do?

**Goals & Plan**
- Interact with peers
- Participate in group work

**Implementation**
- Peer supports (Earth Science)

**Outcomes**
- Increased social interactions
- Successfully worked with group
Intervention Snapshot: Peer Supports

**Peer Supports – Earth Science**

**Overall goal:** Support each other in participating in class and engaging with other students in the class.

**Individual goals:**
- [PEER]: Ask questions when needed
- [PEER]: Participate more in class (raising hand, engaging in small group activities, etc.)
- [FOCAL STUDENT]: Get to know more people, be more attentive
- [FOCAL STUDENT]: Participate in class (raising hand, talking to classmates during group work, etc.)

Make sure you are helping to support each other in working towards these individual goals. Below are some ways that you can help to support each other in achieving the overall goal and your individual goals. You and your group may be a good model for other students as well.

**During downtime...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I could...</th>
<th>Peers could...</th>
<th>Facilitator could...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk quietly to peers if appropriate</td>
<td>Talk quietly with me if appropriate</td>
<td>Encourage short conversations if appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make peers feel welcome</td>
<td>Start conversations with me</td>
<td>Remind peers to talk loudly to each other if appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help peers be engaged</td>
<td>Be responsive to me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remind peers to get materials ready</td>
<td>Check in to make sure I am ready for class</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Make sure I am ready to be focused</td>
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**During whole group instruction...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I could...</th>
<th>Peers could...</th>
<th>Facilitator could...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stay engaged and listen to the teacher</td>
<td>Remind me to stay on task</td>
<td>Let students know when they are doing a good job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate by paying attention and answering questions</td>
<td>Remind me to participate or ask questions</td>
<td>Remind students to be engaged and on task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remind others to participate and stay on task</td>
<td>Check in to see if I am following along with the worksheet</td>
<td>Remind students to ask questions</td>
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**Peer Interactions**

![Peer Interactions Chart]

**Initiations**

![Initiations Chart]
Meet Barry

- 10th grade
- Exclusively in self-contained classroom

- Challenges
  - Appropriate communication
  - Maintaining engagement

- Strengths
  - Initiates interactions on preferred topics
  - Enjoys joking around
What did we do?

**Goals & Plan**
- Responding to greetings
- Participating in activities with peers

**Implementation**
- Peer Networks

**Outcomes**
- Increased response to peers
- Participated in games & activities
Intervention Snapshot: Peer Networks

Goal — When responding to initial greeting in the classroom, Barry will socially greet ("hi", high 5, call name, fist bump) the other person for 6/8 opportunities a week with no additional prompting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Responded Independently (v)</th>
<th>Responded with Physical Prompting (v)</th>
<th>Responded with Verbal Prompting (v)</th>
<th>Responded with Visual Prompting (v)</th>
<th>Did not respond (v)</th>
<th>Who did Barry respond to? (Add name)</th>
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Resources

- **CSESA Website:**
  [http://csesa.fpg.unc.edu/](http://csesa.fpg.unc.edu/)

- GAS
- SSS-C
- EBPs

- **Understanding Autism**
  - Collection of resources for secondary school teachers
    - DVD series
    - Guide booklet
    - Professional development package
Resources on Peer-Mediated Interventions


- [http://www.pattan.net/Videos/Browse/Training%20Series/Starting+Points+and+Possibilities+Promoting+Inclusion+Learning+and+Relationships+for+Students+with+Complex+Needs](http://www.pattan.net/Videos/Browse/Training%20Series/Starting+Points+and+Possibilities+Promoting+Inclusion+Learning+and+Relationships+for+Students+with+Complex+Needs)
Resources

- [http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/assets/files/tipSheets/peerinterventionasdtips.pdf](http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/assets/files/tipSheets/peerinterventionasdtips.pdf)

Peer-Based Intervention and Autism Spectrum Disorders

**Tips and Resources for Teachers**

**Step 1: Select Peers**
Peers selected to be part of the intervention should possess key characteristics:
- Peers should be of a similar age and, if possible, share similar interests to the student with ASD.
- Peers should be motivated to participate. Peers who volunteer will be more invested in the process and more responsive to the strategies than those who are unmotivated.
- Peers should possess strong social and communication skills, for example, an outgoing individual who is capable of participating in successful social interactions with a variety of people would be a better intervention partner than a peer who is shy and prefers to keep to him/herself.

**Step 2: Train and Support Peers**
Begin by teaching the peers to recognize and appreciate similarities and differences. Teach the peers to use good disability etiquette (resources on hand). Be sure they understand autism generally and address any myths or misconceptions they have about students with ASD. Next, share information about the student with ASD, likes, dislikes, strengths, and challenges and discuss the goals of the intervention. What do you want the student with ASD to gain from this intervention? What will the peer(s) gain?

One of the peers seems to have an understanding of ASD and the student with ASD, teach specific strategies for initiating and maintaining interactions with that student. Useful strategies to teach peers may include some or all of the following:
- How to gain the attention of the student with ASD.
- How to use developmentally appropriate language.
- How to enhance motivation by offering choices.
- How to model appropriate and complex play/conversation skills.
- How to encourage conversation and turn-taking.
- How to reinforce appropriate social behaviors.
- How to use visual supports.

These strategies can be taught through definition, discussion, modeling and role-play with the peers in a small group setting.

Peers should be dependable. Dependability is important for both the peer and the student with ASD. A student who is frequently absent will miss critical teaching and practice time. Furthermore, the student with ASD will be more comfortable with a student frequently seen around the school than a student who has sporadic attendance.

It is recommended to train more than one peer to avoid burnout and support generalization, but keep the number manageable for the student with ASD.
Thank you!

Any questions, thoughts, discussion?


References


For your subjects when they graduate:

1) Something to do
2) Somewhere to be
3) Someone to love.

Good luck!!