

SOCIAL AUTOPSIES

PURPOSE

- To analyse a social situation that was unsuccessful for the student with ASD and give them a better way to handle the situation if it happens again.

HOW TO USE

1. **Review What Happened:** Start the process when the individual is calm. It can be done later in the same day or the following day to allow for the student to be objective. Simply go through the events that occurred, without judgment. Have the student describe what they perceived happened. If required reframe it from others' perspectives.
2. **Identify the Misunderstanding:** Next, have the student try to identify the social misunderstanding made. If they can't determine it, help them. Obviously making them frustrated about it all over again isn't the point. The misunderstanding might be that they did not understand how other people would perceive their behaviour. Or it might be that they said something that the other person thought was bad.
3. **Identify Who Was Hurt:** It might be that everyone involved was hurt by the situation, including your student. You can talk about the impact on the student, but also talk about the impact it had on the other people involved. Talk about their perspectives of the situation. Help the student understand the different types of "hurt" (e.g., hurt feelings, actual damage, injury, damaged trust, etc.).
4. **Identify What to do to Fix the Mistake:** Is there something the student should do to rectify the situation? Should they apologise to the one who was hurt? Replace something that was broken? There may not be a way to actually repair the situation, but talking about possible ways to make it up to someone is good practice.
5. **Identify What to do Next Time:** What can be done to keep the situation from occurring again? What should the student do instead of the behaviour or error they displayed? For instance, should the boy call the girl on the phone rather than looking in her window? Should Bob say "Your hair is nice" or "It's OK" (for that kid who can't bring himself to say something nice when he hates it)?

TIPS

- Try to role play the situation with the student so they have the opportunity to practice the substitute strategy identified in step 5.

Social Autopsy Worksheet

What happened?

What was the social error? Who was hurt by the social error?

What should be done to correct the error?

What should be done next time?

Adapted from Lavoie, 1994