

Helping the General Education Teacher with Kids with Pragmatic Difficulties: Tips and Tricks for the classroom

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The buzz word:

PRAGMATICS

What is PRAGMATICS?

- ▶ Pragmatics is not doing the nice thing but its doing the socially appropriate / acceptable thing to get your point across
- ▶ (Michelle Garcia-Winner)

Relatively New to DSM-V

► Social Pragmatic Communication Disorder (SPCD)

Social Pragmatic Communication Disorder (SPCD)

- SCD is characterized by a persistent difficulty with verbal and nonverbal communication for social purposes that cannot be explained by low cognitive ability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, another medical or neurological condition, or low abilities in word structure and grammar.
- Manhattanpsychological.com

Key Areas of SPCD

- Responding to others
- Using gestures (like waving or pointing)
- Taking turns when talking or playing
- Talking about emotions and feelings
- Staying on topic
- Adjusting speech to fit different people or situations – for instance, talking differently to a young child versus an adult or

Continuation...

- Asking relevant questions or responding with related ideas during conversation
- Using words for a variety of purposes such as greeting people, making comments, asking questions, making promises, etc.
- Making and keeping friends

Autismspeaks.org

SPCD vs AUTISM

- [Gervyn B. Timler, PhD, CCC-SLP](#)
 - [Asha Leader Vol. 23 Issue 4 \(April 2018\)](#)
- ASD and SCD are mutually exclusive disorders—someone with ASD cannot also receive a diagnosis of SCD, and the reverse is also true. The two core diagnostic dimensions for ASD are restricted and repetitive behavior patterns and persistent difficulties in social communication and social interaction.
- The challenge for diagnosticians is that the social-interaction behaviors of children with ASD and SCD may look similar, because both disorders focus on diagnostic symptoms of functional impairments in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills.

Continued

- What distinguishes ASD from SCD most clearly is that children who receive an ASD diagnosis must show—or have a history of—restricted and repetitive patterns in behaviors, activities and interests.

Kids will social difficulties can be categorized into

- . Did not understand what the situation is and what they needed to do
- . Don't know what to do
- . Don't know how to do it
- . Can't do it due to other factors (i.e. impulsivity)
- . Don't want to do it (Choice)

What are the "social expectations"

- Doing the nice thing?
- Saying the correct things?
- Being polite?

Here is one big problem

- Social expectation changes depending on the situation.
- A behavior is acceptable in one situation and not in another
 - Example: Speaking loud, rough play

Pragmatics is not...

- . About doing the right and wrong thing, but rather being able to effectively express the message that you would want to send
- . Is what I'm doing socially acceptable?
- . Is my intent matching what I am showing?

What needs to be decoded by the listener to give an appropriate response

- . Verbal factors
- . Non-Verbal factors
- . Environmental factors

Verbal Factors

- . Vocabulary
- . Complexity of Utterances
- . Sarcasm
- . Double Meanings
- . Figure of Speech
- . Jokes
- . Ironies

Non-Verbal Factors

- ▀ Facial Expression
- ▀ Body Movement / Posture
- ▀ Tone of Voice / Prosody
- ▀ Proxemics

Environmental Factors

- . Understanding of social rules
- . Understanding of sarcasm, idioms
- . Perseverations
- . Understanding and use of Paralinguistic behaviors

Errors continued...

- . Conversational errors
 - . Initiation
 - . Maintenance
 - . Shifts
 - . termination
- . Pre-supposition errors
- . Perspective taking errors

Errors continued

- Inappropriate use of Nonverbal gestures
- Lack of tact (Abrupt honesty)
 - #KIIYH
- Limited or no Eye Contact
- Inappropriate body posture
- Not recognizing Personal Space

Teacher's Question

► **What Can I Do in the Classroom?**

Who could/should be involved?

- General education teachers
- Para-educators
- Classroom parents *
- Administration
- Other Staff

How can we provide this information

- SLP – Teacher consults
- Continuing Education Seminars
- In-Services

Behavior and Strategies

- Unable to generalize:
 - Show them how concepts apply to other situations
 - Be explicit with the "Big picture"
 - Tendency to focus on irrelevant pieces of information
 - Inability to take perspective
 - Needs to be explicitly explained , cannot have inferred meanings

Lack of tact (Abrupt honesty)

- . #KIIYH (Keep it in your Head)
 - . Not everything that goes in our head comes out our mouth
- . What is the point you are trying to make?
- . How would the other person feel
- . How can you word it properly
- . Can you rephrase it for me?

TOO MUCH INFORMATION (TMI)

- Discuss with the student if the information is really necessary
- Do you think I need to know this?

TYPES OF INFORMATION

- NEED TO KNOW INFORMATION
 - Main Detail
- NICE TO KNOW INFORMATION
 - Supporting Detail
- DON'T NEED TO KNOW
 - Unrelated Detail

Eye Contact

- You have do determine how important it is for you and your situation
- Eye contact expectations can change culturally
- Maybe they could look at least in the communication partners direction

Difficulty with Facial Expression and Body Posture

- . Feedback is very important – visual , auditory
- . What is the message you are trying to convey
- . Is what you are doing conveying that message
- . mirroring

Difficulty with Personal Space

- . Appropriate distance differs based on
 - . Relationship
 - . Purpose
 - . Is your distance appropriate for both?

Difficulty with Pre-Supposition

- . What do you think I know about it?
- . What should I know about it?
- . Why do you thin? I know / don't know about it


