

Bully Proofing Strategies for Youth with Special Needs: Evidence-Based Skills for Handling Teasing, Physical Bullying, Cyber Bullying, and Rumors/Gossip



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Overview of Lecture

- Social deficits among youth with special needs
- Consequences of peer rejection
- Overview of PEERS
- PEERS intervention strategies:
 - Handling teasing
 - Handling physical bullying
 - Addressing cyber bullying
 - Minimizing rumors and gossip
- Summary of research
- Resources



Social Deficits Among Youth with Special Needs

- Poor social communication
 - One-sided conversations
 - Repetitive themes
 - Focus on restricted interests
- Poor play skills
 - Inappropriate peer entry during play
 - Poor sportsmanship
- Poor social awareness
 - Difficulty understanding social cues
 - Difficulty understanding the purpose of peer groups
- Poor social motivation
 - Less involvement in social activities
 - Lack of peer entry attempts
- Poor social cognition
 - Difficulty understanding the perspectives of others
 - Poor theory of mind



(Volkmar & Klin, 1998; Bauminger & Kasari, 2000; Orsmond, Krauss, & Seltzer, 2004; Koning & Magill-Evans, 2001; LeCouteur et al., 1989; Marks, Schrader, Longaker, & Levine, 2000; Ghaziuddin & Gerstein, 1996; Twatchman-Cullen, 1998; Hemphill & Siperstein, 1990; Church, Alisanki, Amanullah, 2000; Constantino, 2005)

Consequences of Social Deficits for Youth with Special Needs

- Peer rejection
 - Teasing and bullying
 - Bad reputations
 - ADHD, Impulse control issues
- Social neglect and isolation
 - Very few get-togethers
 - Limited peer network
 - Few friendship options
 - No peer group / crowd
 - Depression, anxiety
- Peer conflict
 - Arguments may result in the termination of friendship
- Lack of close reciprocal friendships
 - Friendships usually focused on restricted interests
 - Poor friendship quality



(Volkmar & Klin, 1998; Bauminger & Kasari, 2000; Orsmond, Krauss, & Seltzer, 2004; Koning & Magill-Evans, 2001; LeCouteur et al., 1989; Marks, Schrader, Longaker, & Levine, 2000; Ghaziuddin & Gerstein, 1996; Twatchman-Cullen, 1998; Hemphill & Siperstein, 1990; Church, Alisanki, Amanullah, 2000)

Consequences of Bullying and Peer Victimization Among Adolescents

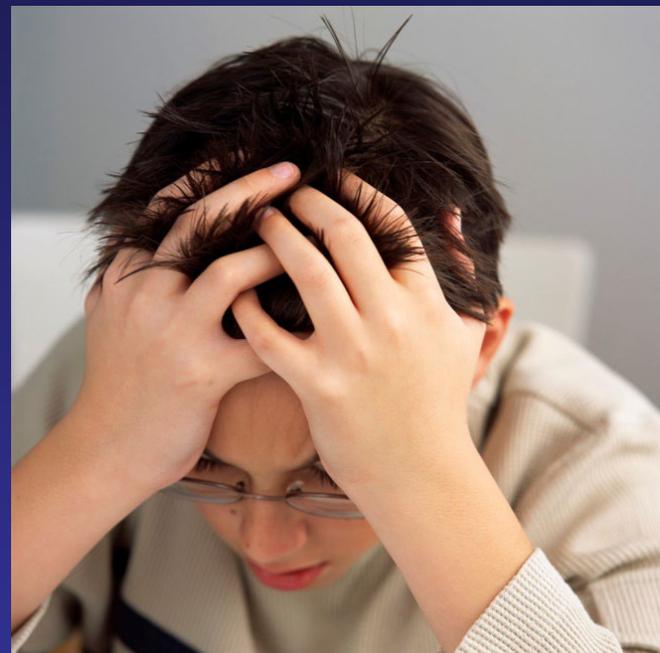
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Low self-esteem
- Poor academic performance
- Early withdrawal from school
- Juvenile delinquency
- Substance abuse
- Suicidal ideation
- Suicide attempts



(Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Nansel et al., 2001; Buhrmeister, 1990; Matson, Smirolfo, & Bamburg, 1998; Miller & Ingham, 1976)

Prevalence of Bullying Among Adolescents

- 30% of middle and high school students report frequent involvement in the bullying dynamic
 - 13% bully
 - 11% victim
 - 6% both
- National Center for Educational Statistics:
 - 28% of adolescents reported being the victims of bullying within a six-month period
- 54% of adolescents with special needs are bullied
 - Bothered, stolen from, physically harassed



(Nansel et al., 2001; Dinkes et al., 2006; Olweus, 1993; Rose et al., 2009; Espelage & Swearer, 2003)

Bullying and Peer Victimization Among Adolescents with ASD

- Teens with ASD are NINE times more likely to experience peer victimization than “non-disabled” peers
- 94% of teens with ASD report experiencing some form of peer victimization in the previous year
- Teens with ASD and comorbid ADHD are FOUR times more likely to engage in bullying behavior
 - Teens with ASD without ADHD do not differ from typically developing teens in rates of engaging in bullying behavior



(Olweus, 1973, 1993; Rose et al., 2009; Dinkes et al., 2006; Poteat & Espelage, 2007; Nansel et al., 2001; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Schwartz, 2010; Perry et al., 2001; Doren et al., 1996; Little, 2001, 2002; Montes & Halterman, 2007; van Roekel et al., 2010; Whitney et al., 1992; Martlew & Hodson, 1991; O' Moore & Hillery, 1989)

Risk Factors for Bullying Among Adolescents with ASD

High Risk Factors:

- Fewer friendships
- Less peer support
- Less socially competent

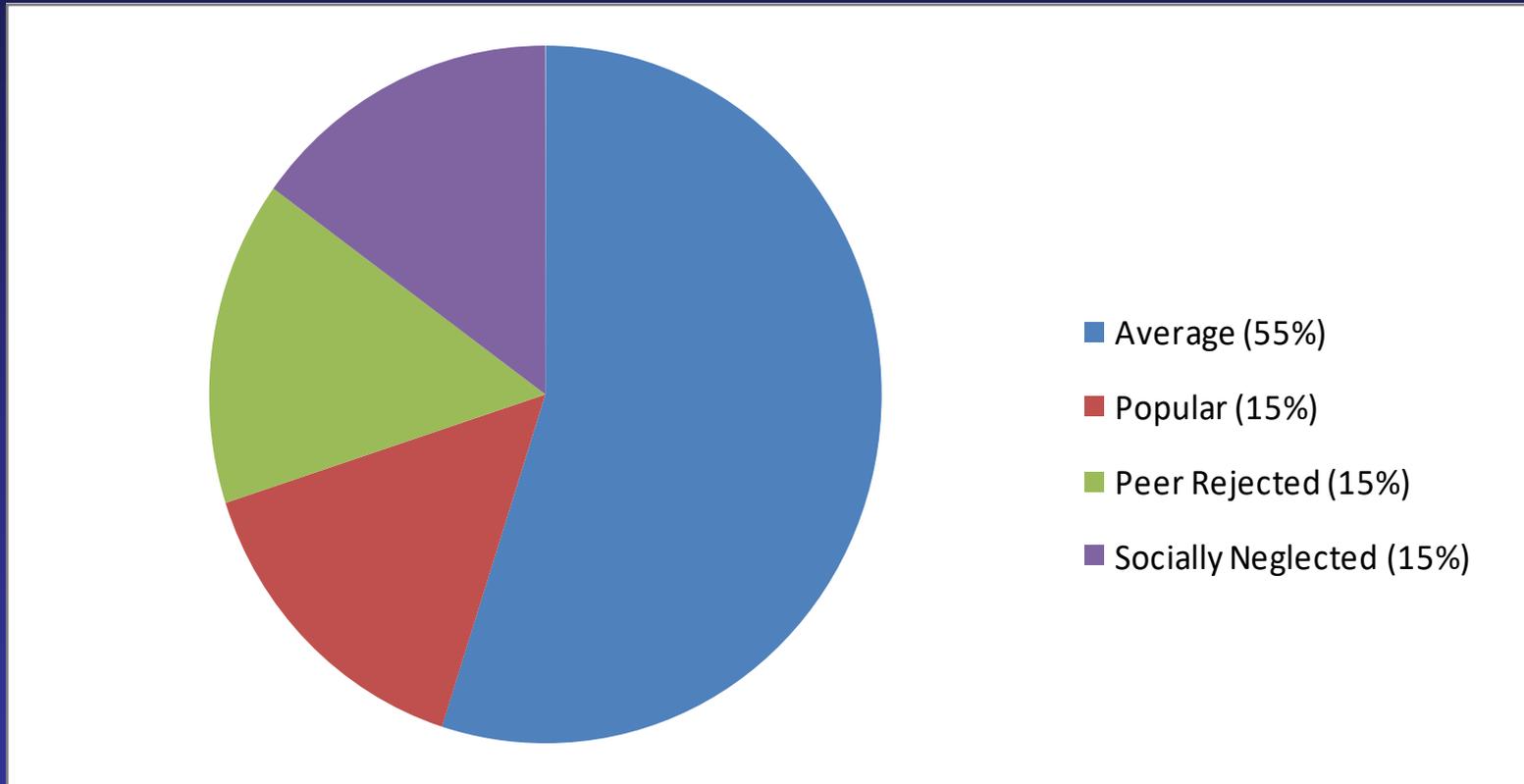
Protective Factors:

- Friendships are known to protect against victimization



(Olweus, 1973, 1993; Rose et al., 2009; Dinkes et al., 2006; Potat & Espelage, 2007; Nansel et al., 2001; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Schwartz, 2010; Perry et al., 2001; Doren et al., 1996; Little, 2001, 2002; Montes & Halterman, 2007; van Roekel et al., 2010; Whitney et al., 1992; Martlew & Hodson, 1991; O' Moore & Hillery, 1989)

Categories of Peer Acceptance in Adolescence



Social Skills Training

- Social skills training is very common for children with ASD and other special needs
- Very few programs for adolescents and adults with special needs
- Most programs do not use evidence-based curricula
- Often fail to tailor teaching methods to the cognitive style of the participants
- Do not teach ecologically valid social skills
- Do not include homework assignments
- Skills do not generalize to other settings
- Do not include parents and/or teachers in the treatment
- Do not assess outcome or durability of treatment gains over time

J Autism Dev Disord (2008) 38:353–361
DOI 10.1007/s10803-007-0402-4

ORIGINAL PAPER

Social Skills Interventions for Children with Asperger's Syndrome or High-Functioning Autism: A Review and Recommendations

Patricia A. Rao · Deborah C. Beidel · Michael J. Murray

J Autism Dev Disord (2010) 40:149–166
DOI 10.1007/s10803-009-0842-0

ORIGINAL PAPER

Social Skills Interventions for Individuals with Autism: Evaluation for Evidence-Based Practices within a Best Evidence Synthesis Framework

Brian Reichow · Fred R. Volkmar

J Autism Dev Disord (2007) 37:1858–1868
DOI 10.1007/s10803-006-0320-x

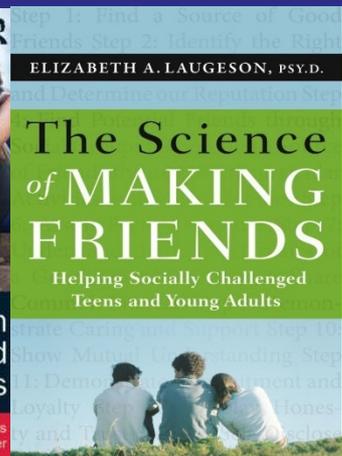
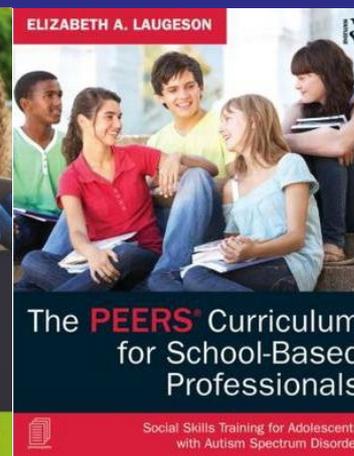
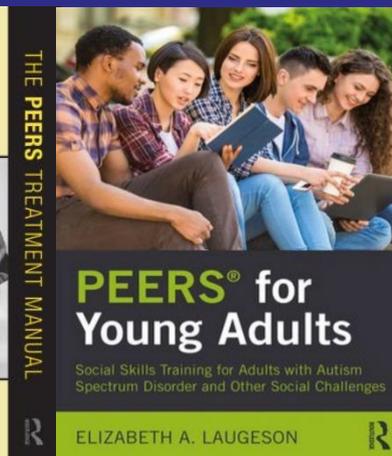
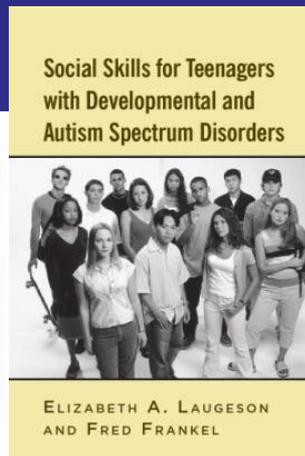
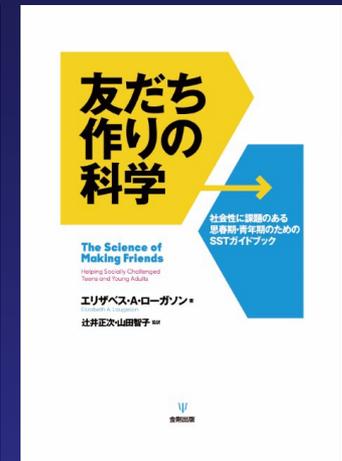
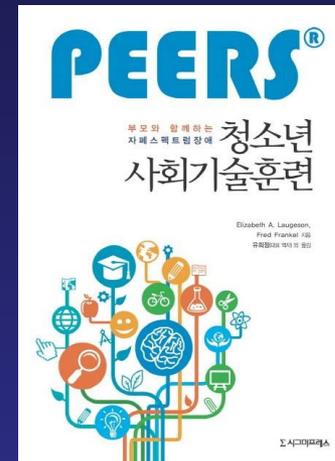
ORIGINAL PAPER

Social Skills Development in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Review of the Intervention Research

Susan Williams White · Kathleen Keonig · Lawrence Scabill

Background about PEERS®

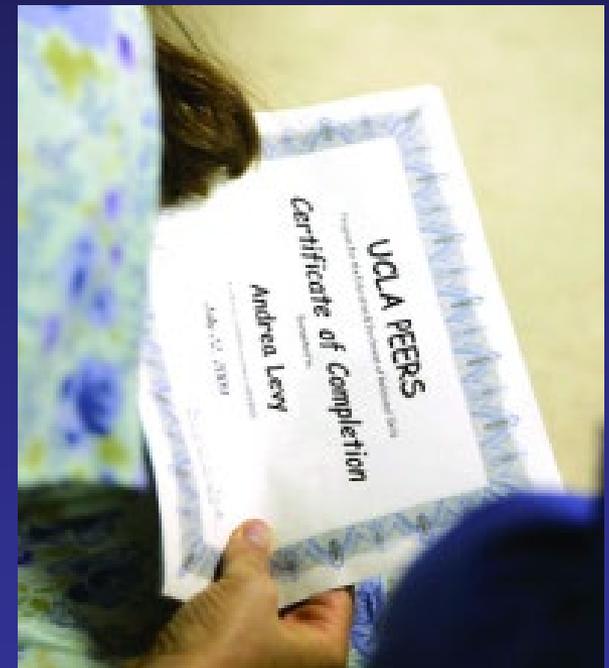
- International program
 - Developed at UCLA in 2004
 - Adolescent program has been translated into over a dozen languages
 - Used in over 30 countries
- Evidence-Based Social Skills Programs:
 - PEERS® for Preschoolers
 - PEERS® for Adolescents
 - PEERS® for Young Adults



Overview of PEERS[®] Curriculum

- Conversational skills
- Electronic communication
- Choosing appropriate friends
- Appropriate use of humor
- Peer entry strategies
- Peer exit strategies
- Good sportsmanship (teens only)
- Get-togethers
- Dating etiquette (adults only)
- Peer rejection
- Peer conflict
- Graduation

Photo of PEERS courtesy of Associated Press



(Laugeson & Frankel 2010; Laugeson 2013;
Laugeson 2014; Laugeson 2017)

Defining Bullying

- Subtype of aggression
- Negative actions directed at a student or groups of students that are either:
 - Repetitive
 - Chronic
 - Characterized by power imbalance
- Bullying behaviors take on a variety of forms including:
 - Physical
 - Verbal
 - Relational (rumor spreading, social exclusion)
 - Electronic (cyber bullying)



(Olweus, 1973, 1993; Rose et al., 2009; Dinkes et al., 2006; Poteat & Espelage, 2007; Nansel et al., 2001; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Schwartz, 2010; Perry et al., 2001; Doren et al., 1996; Little, 2001, 2002; Montes & Halterman, 2007; van Roekel et al., 2010; Whitney et al., 1992; Martlew & Hodson, 1991; O' Moore & Hillery, 1989)

Clinical Example: Teasing

QUESTIONS:

What are most young people told to do in response to teasing?

What do most youth with special needs do in response to teasing?



PEERS[®] Strategies for Handling Teasing

- Do not walk away, ignore the person, or tell an adult
- Don't show you're upset or tease back
- Act like what the person said did not bother you
- Provide a SHORT COMEBACK that shows what the person said was stupid:
 - Whatever!
 - Anyway...
 - So what?
 - Big deal!
 - Who cares?
 - Yeah and?
 - And your point is?
 - Am I supposed to care?
 - Is that supposed to be funny?
 - (Shrug shoulders)
 - (Roll eyes)
- Then walk away or remove yourself

(Laugeson & Frankel 2010;
Laugeson 2013; Laugeson
2014; Laugeson 2017)

Handling Teasing: Male Example



Handling Teasing: Female Example



Clinical Example: Physical Bullying

QUESTIONS:

What are most children and teens told to do in response to physical bullying?

What do most youth with special needs do in response to physical bullying?



Avoiding Physical Bullying

- Avoid the bully
 - Stay out of reach of the bully
 - If the bully can't find you, he can't bully you
- Plan your route
- Lay low when the bully is around
 - Don't draw attention to yourself
 - If the bully doesn't notice you, he won't bully you
- Don't provoke the bully
 - Don't use the strategies for teasing with the bully
- Don't tease the bully
- Don't police the bully
 - Don't tell on the bully for minor offenses
 - Discretely tell an adult if someone is in danger
- Don't try to make friends with the bully
- Hang out with other teens
 - Bullies like to pick on teens who are by themselves
- Stay near adults when the bully is around
- Get help from an adult



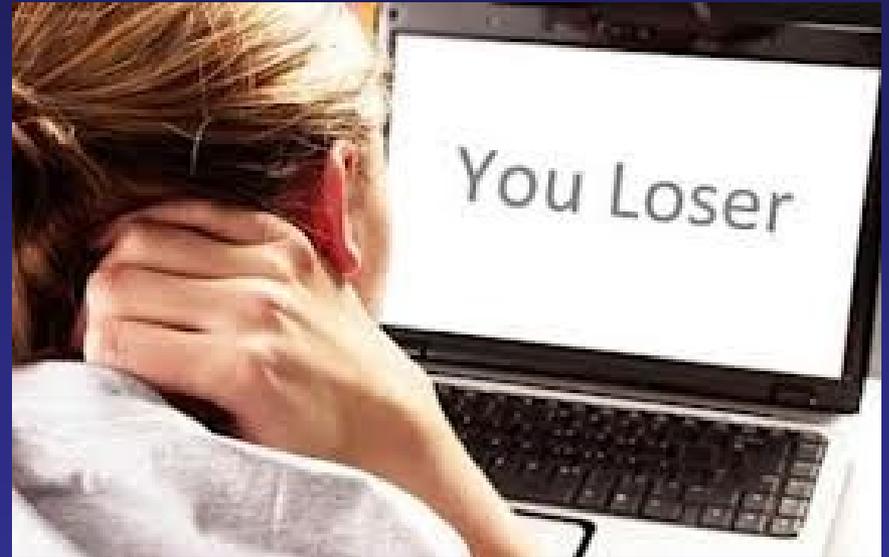
(Laugeson & Frankel 2010; Laugeson 2013; Laugeson 2014; Laugeson 2017)

Clinical Example: Cyber Bullying

QUESTIONS:

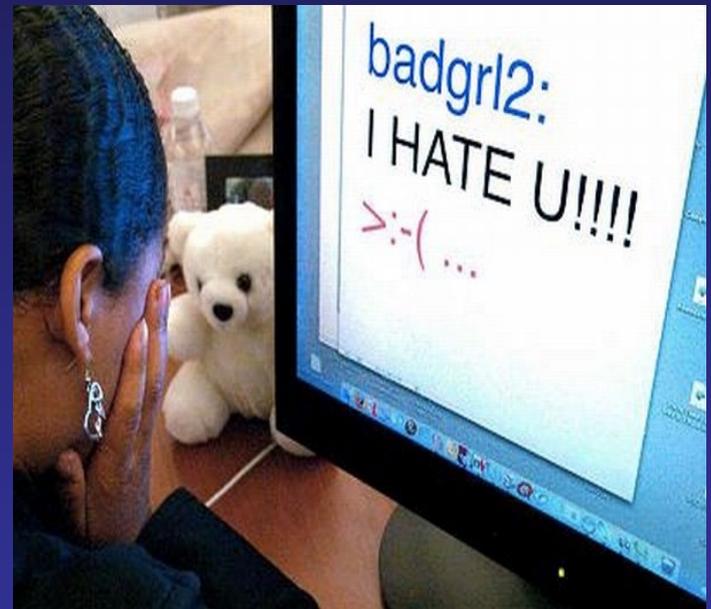
What are most teens told to do in response to cyber bullying?

What do cyber bullies want their victims to do?



Addressing Cyber Bullying

- Don't feed the trolls
- Don't react
- Have friends stick up for you
- Lay low online
- Block the bully
- Approve or block the tags
- Approve or block the comments
- Save the evidence
- Get help from supportive adults
- Report cyber bullying to the proper authorities
 - Webmasters
 - Service providers
 - School
 - Law enforcement (extreme cases)



(Laugeson & Frankel 2010; Laugeson 2013;
Laugeson 2014; Laugeson 2017)

Clinical Example: Rumors and Gossip

QUESTIONS:

What are most teens told to do when they are the target of rumors and gossip?

What is the natural response to someone spreading a rumor about you?



Minimizing Rumors & Gossip

How to avoid being the target of gossip:

- Avoid being friends with gossips
- Don't being enemies with the gossips
- Be as neutral as possible with the gossips
- Don't spread rumors or gossip about people



(Laugeson & Frankel 2010; Laugeson 2013; Laugeson 2014; Laugeson 2017)

Minimizing Rumors & Gossip

What to do if you're the target of gossip:

- Every instinct we have is **WRONG!**
- Don't try to disprove the gossip
- Don't show that you're upset
- Don't confront the source of the gossip
- Avoid the source of the gossip
- Act amazed anyone would **BELIEVE** or **CARE** about the gossip
 - “I can't believe anyone would believe that.”
 - “People are so gullible.”
 - “Can you believe anyone cares about that?”
 - “People need to get a life.”



(Laugeson & Frankel 2010; Laugeson 2013; Laugeson 2014; Laugeson 2017)

Minimizing Rumors & Gossip

Spread the rumor about yourself:

1. Find an audience
2. Find a supportive friend
3. Acknowledge the rumor
 - “Did you hear this rumor...”
4. Act amazed anyone would BELIEVE or CARE about the rumor
 - “I can’t believe anyone believes that.”
 - “People are so gullible.”
 - “People need to find something interesting to talk about.”
 - “People need to find a hobby.”
5. Repeat with other supportive friends

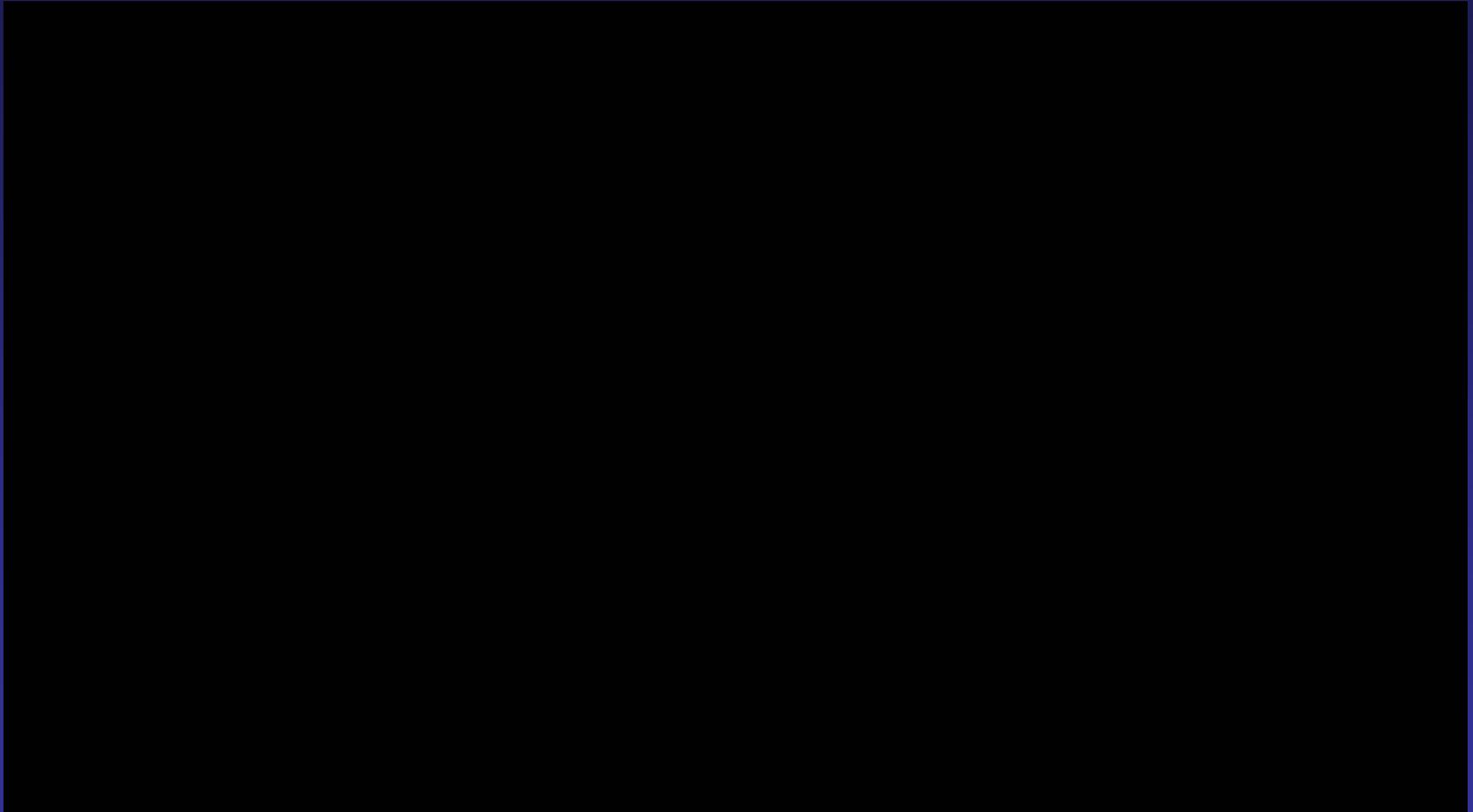


(Laugeson & Frankel 2010; Laugeson 2013; Laugeson 2014; Laugeson 2017)

Bad Role-Play: Handling Rumors and Gossip



Good Role-Play: Handling Rumors and Gossip



PEERS[®] Evidence-Base: Parent-Assistance with Teens and Adults

J Autism Dev Disord (2009) 39:596–606
DOI 10.1007/s10803-008-0664-5

ORIGINAL PAPER

Parent-Assisted Social Skills Training to Improve Friendships in Teens with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Elizabeth A. Laugeson · Fred Frankel ·
Catherine Mogil · Ashley R. Dillon

J Autism Dev Disord
DOI 10.1007/s10803-011-1339-1

ORIGINAL PAPER

Evidence-Based Social Skills Training for Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders: The UCLA PEERS Program

Elizabeth A. Laugeson · Fred Frankel ·
Alexander Gantman · Ashley R. Dillon ·
Catherine Mogil

J Autism Dev Disord
DOI 10.1007/s10803-015-2504-8



S.I. : ASD IN ADULTHOOD: COMORBIDITY AND INTERVENTION

A Randomized Controlled Trial to Improve Social Skills in Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder: The UCLA PEERS[®] Program

Elizabeth A. Laugeson^{1,2} · Alexander Gantman^{1,2} · Steven K. Kapp^{1,3} ·
Kaely Orenski^{1,4} · Ruth Ellingsen^{1,5}

J Autism Dev Disord
DOI 10.1007/s10803-011-1350-6

ORIGINAL PAPER

Social Skills Training for Young Adults with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Randomized Controlled Pilot Study

Alexander Gantman · Steven K. Kapp ·
Kaely Orenski · Elizabeth A. Laugeson

PEERS[®] Evidence-Base: Replication Studies for Youth with ASD

J Autism Dev Disord
DOI 10.1007/s10803-013-1900-1

ORIGINAL PAPER

A Replication and Extension of the PEERS Intervention: Examining Effects on Social Skills and Social Anxiety in Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Kirsten A. Schohl · Amy V. Van Hecke ·
Audrey Meyer Carson · Bridget Dolan ·
Jeffrey Karst · Sheryl Stevens

J Autism Dev Disord
DOI 10.1007/s10803-013-1883-y

ORIGINAL PAPER

Measuring the Plasticity of Social Approach: A Randomized Controlled Trial of the Effects of the PEERS Intervention on EEG Asymmetry in Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Amy Vaughan Van Hecke · Sheryl Stevens · Audrey M. Carson ·
Jeffrey S. Karst · Bridget Dolan · Kirsten Schohl · Ryan J. McKindles ·
Rheanna Remmel · Scott Brockman

J Autism Dev Disord
DOI 10.1007/s10803-014-2231-6

ORIGINAL PAPER

Parent and Family Outcomes of PEERS: A Social Skills Intervention for Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Jeffrey S. Karst · Amy Vaughan Van Hecke ·
Audrey M. Carson · Sheryl Stevens ·
Kirsten Schohl · Bridget Dolan

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Randomized Controlled Trial of the Korean Version of the PEERS[®] Parent-Assisted Social Skills Training Program for Teens With ASD

Hee-Jeong Yoo, Geonho Bahn, In-Hee Cho, Eun-Kyung Kim, Joo-Hyun Kim, Jung-Won Min,
Won-Hye Lee, Jun-Seong Seo, Sang-Shin Jun, Guiyoung Bong, Soochurl Cho, Min-Sup Shin,
Bung-Nyun Kim, Jae-Won Kim, Subin Park, and Elizabeth A. Laugeson

J Autism Dev Disord
DOI 10.1007/s10803-016-2911-5



ORIGINAL PAPER

A Replication and Extension of the PEERS[®] for Young Adults Social Skills Intervention: Examining Effects on Social Skills and Social Anxiety in Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Alana J. McVey¹ · Bridget K. Dolan¹ · Kirsten S. Willar^{1,2} · Sheryl Pleiss^{1,3} ·
Jeffrey S. Karst^{1,4} · Christina L. Casnar⁵ · Christina Caiozzo¹ · Elisabeth M. Vogt¹ ·
Nakia S. Gordon¹ · Amy Vaughan Van Hecke¹

J Autism Dev Disord
DOI 10.1007/s10803-016-2969-0



ORIGINAL PAPER

Parents Perceive Improvements in Socio-emotional Functioning in Adolescents with ASD Following Social Skills Treatment

Danielle N. Lordo¹ · Madison Bertolin¹ · Eliana L. Sudikoff¹ · Cierra Keith¹ ·
Barbara Braddock² · David A. S. Kaufman¹

PEERS[®] Evidence-Base

Short Report

Predicting treatment success in social skills training for adolescents with autism spectrum disorders: The UCLA Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills

Ya-Chih Chang¹, Elizabeth A Laugeson¹, Alexander Gantman¹, Ruth Ellingsen¹, Fred Frankel¹ and Ashley R Dillon²



Autism
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DOI: 10.1177/1362361313478995
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J Autism Dev Disord
DOI 10.1007/s10803-017-3121-5



BRIEF REPORT

Brief Report: Does Gender Matter in Intervention for ASD? Examining the Impact of the PEERS[®] Social Skills Intervention on Social Behavior Among Females with ASD

Alana J. McVey¹ · Hillary Schiltz¹ · Angela Haendel¹ · Bridget K. Dolan¹ · Kirsten S. Willar^{1,2} · Sheryl Pleiss^{1,3} · Jeffrey S. Karst^{1,4} · Audrey M. Carson^{1,5} · Christina Caiozzo¹ · Elisabeth Vogt¹ · Amy Vaughan Van Hecke¹

J Autism Dev Disord
DOI 10.1007/s10803-014-2108-8

ORIGINAL PAPER

The ABC's of Teaching Social Skills to Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Classroom: The UCLA PEERS[®] Program

Elizabeth A. Laugeson · Ruth Ellingsen · Jennifer Sanderson · Lara Tucci · Shannon Bates

Article

Examination of a Parent-Assisted, Friendship-Building Program for Adolescents With ADHD

Denise M. Gardner¹, Alyson C. Gerdes¹, and Kelsey Weinberger¹

Journal of Attention Disorders
1-11
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Journal of Mental Health Research
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DOI: 10.1080/19315864.2012.730600



Long-Term Treatment Outcomes for Parent-Assisted Social Skills Training for Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorders: The UCLA PEERS Program

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PEERS[®] Research Snapshot: Long-term Follow-up Study

(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel 2013)

- Data was collected 1-5 years post-treatment
 - T1 – Pre-test
 - T2 – Post-test
 - T3 – 1-5 year follow-up
- 53 of 82 potential subjects
 - 64% response rate
- No significant differences between participants and non-participants at baseline
- Mean age at follow-up:
 - 17.5 years old
 - 11.4 grade level
- Mean time to follow-up:
 - 29 months

*Journal of Mental Health Research
in Intellectual Disabilities, 7:45-73, 2014
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ISSN: 1931-5864 print/1931-5872 online
DOI: 10.1080/19315864.2012.730600*



Long-Term Treatment Outcomes for Parent-Assisted Social Skills Training for Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorders: The UCLA PEERS Program

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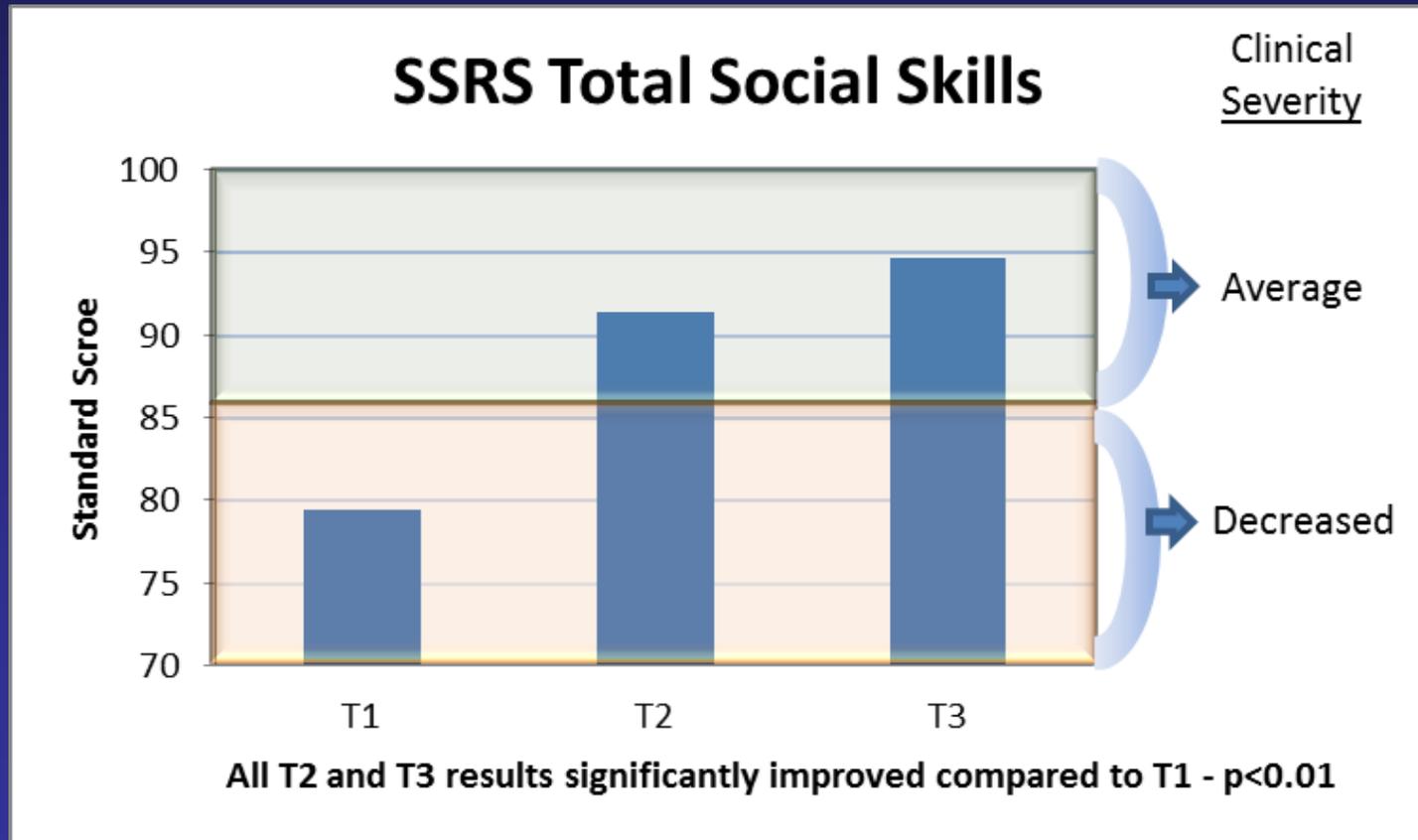
TINA D. CUNNINGHAM
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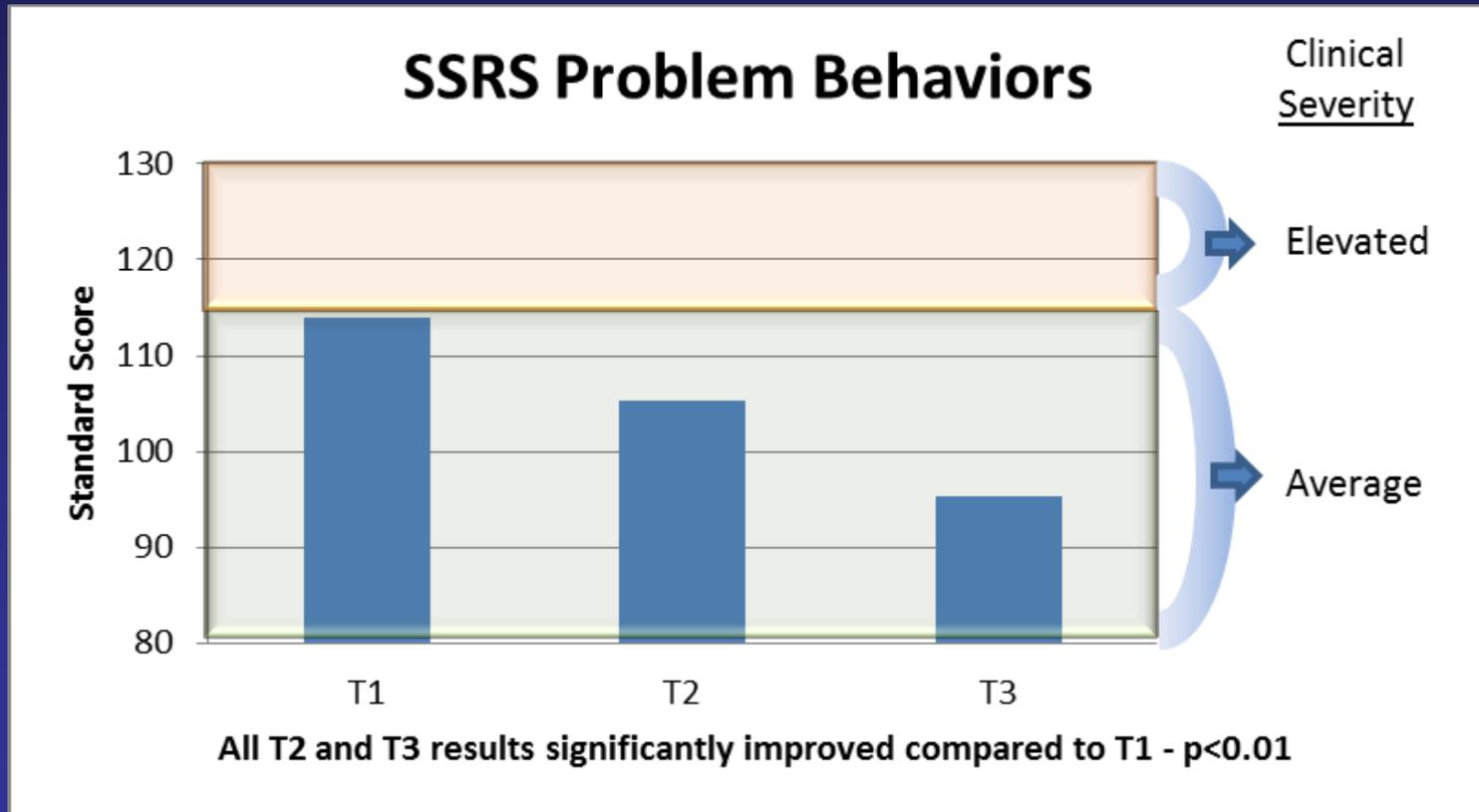
PEERS[®] Research Snapshot: Long-term Follow-up Study

(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel 2013)



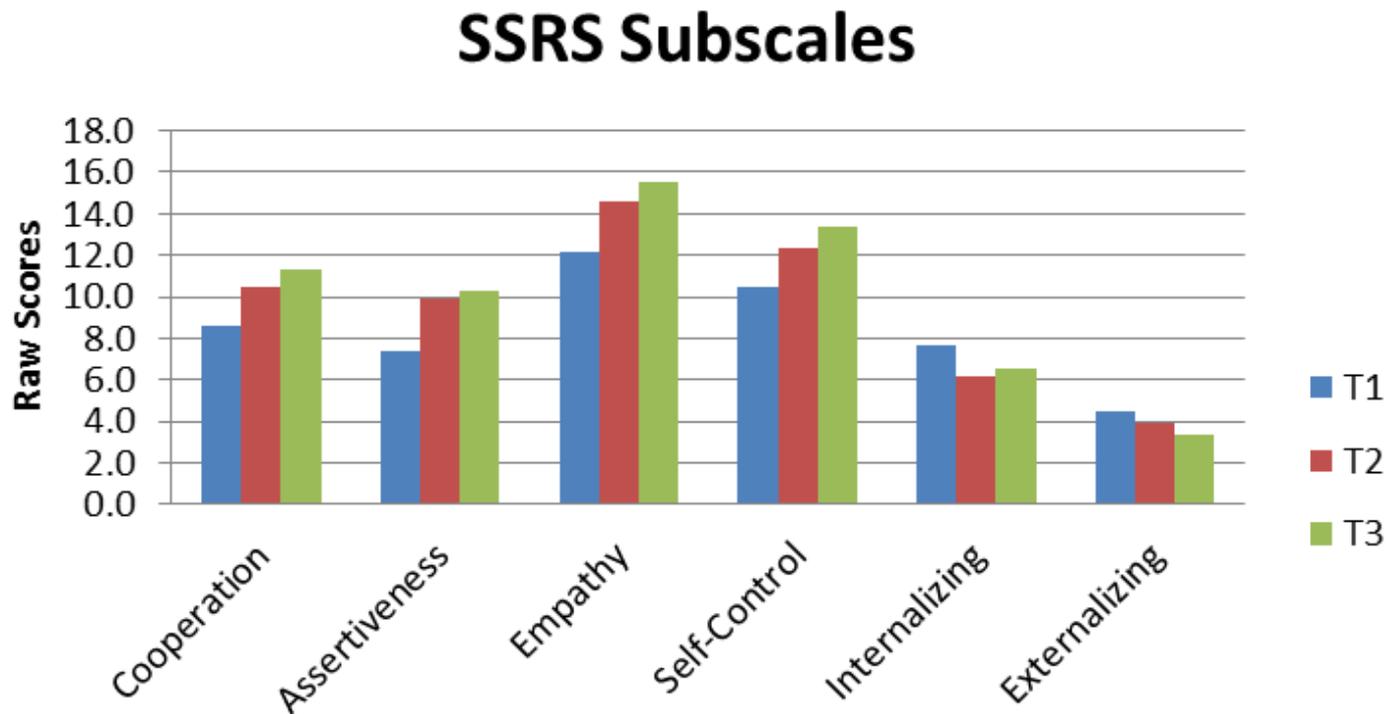
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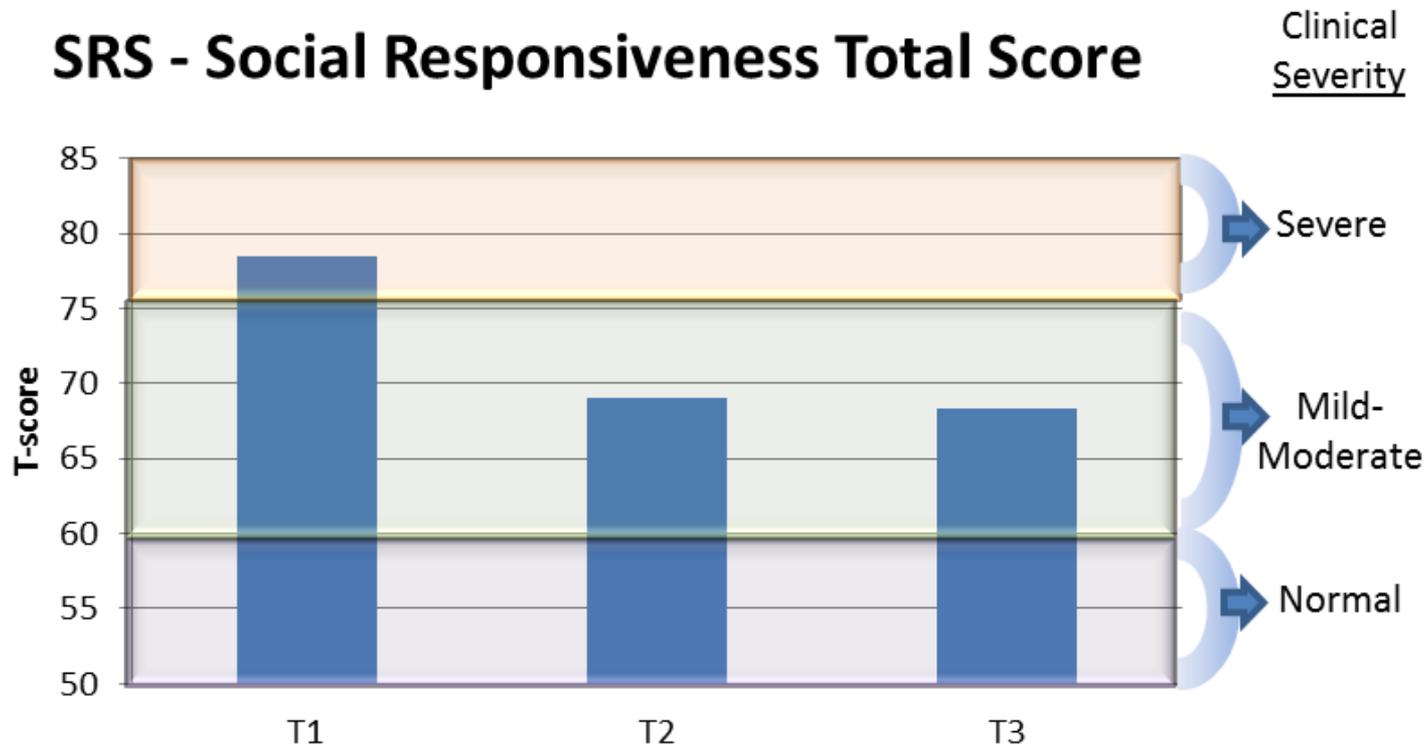


All T3 results significantly improved compared to T1 - $p < 0.01$

PEERS[®] Research Snapshot: Long-term Follow-up Study

(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel 2013)

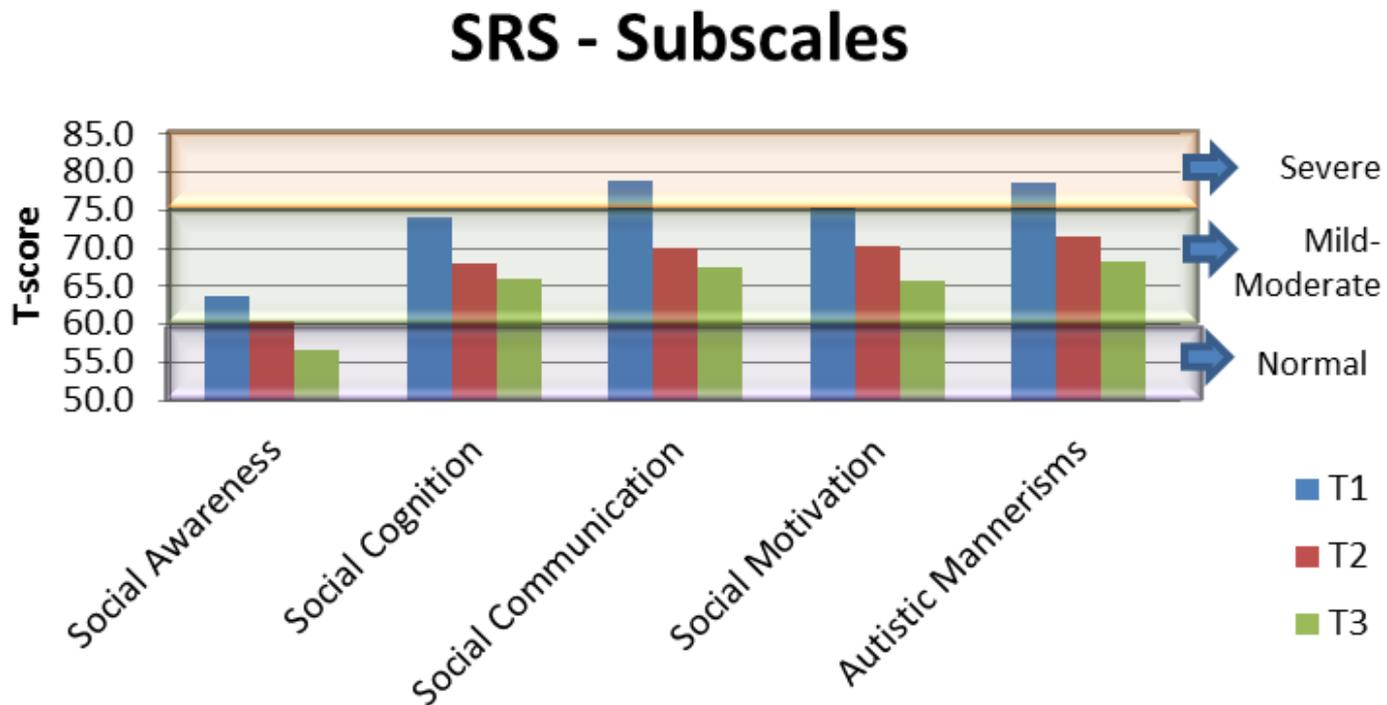
SRS - Social Responsiveness Total Score



All T2 and T3 results significantly improved compared to T1 - $p < 0.01$, $N = 27$

PEERS[®] Research Snapshot: Long-term Follow-up Study

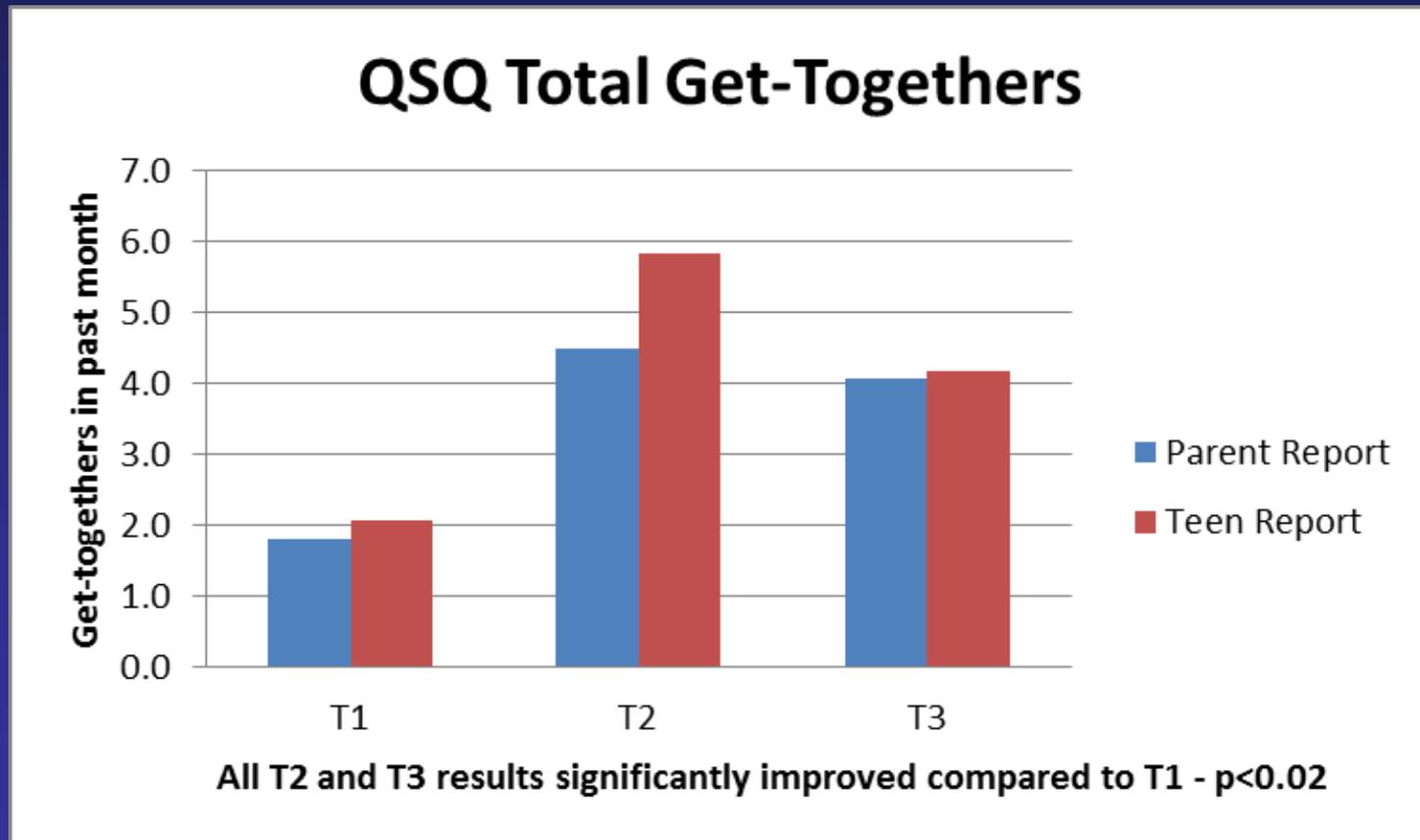
(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel 2013)



All T3 results significantly improved compared to T1 - $p < 0.02$, $N = 27$

PEERS[®] Research Snapshot: Long-term Follow-up Study

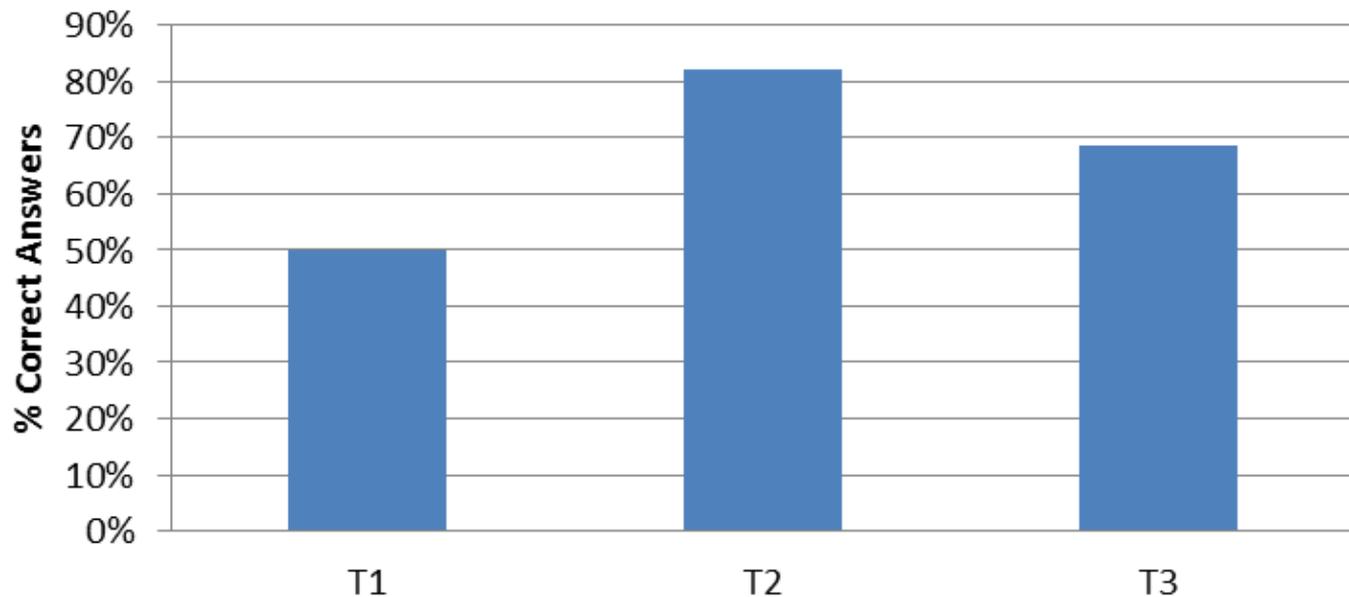
(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel 2013)



PEERS[®] Research Snapshot: Long-term Follow-up Study

(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel 2013)

TASSK Social Skills Knowledge



All T2 and T3 results significantly improved compared to T1 - $p < 0.01$

Cross Cultural Validation and Replication of PEERS®



SEOUL
NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY



THE UNIVERSITY
OF HONG KONG



大阪大学
OSAKA UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY



Erasmus
University
Rotterdam



MARQUETTE
UNIVERSITY



NYU

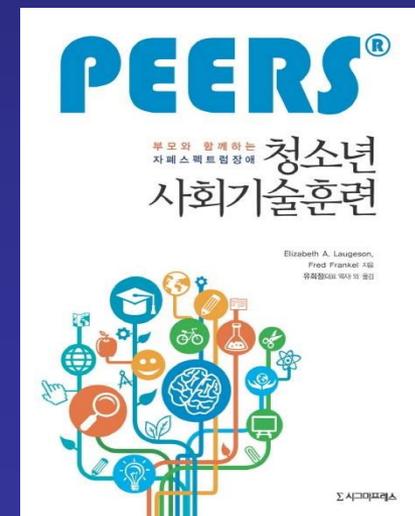
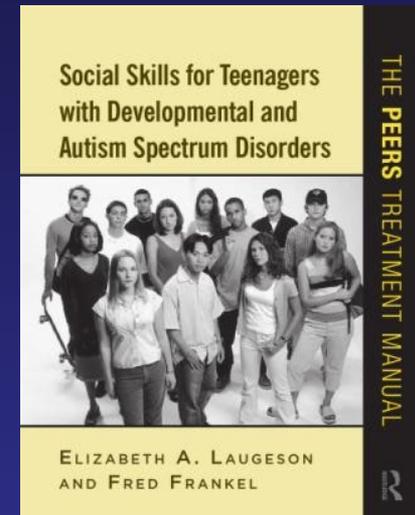
Virginia Tech.
VT



PEERS[®] for Adolescents

Weekly Parent-Assisted Treatment

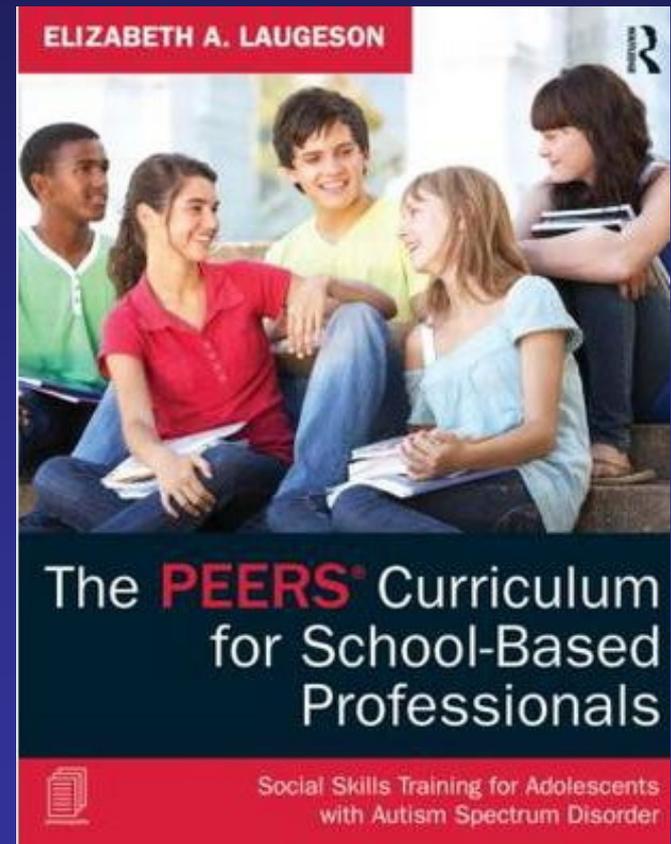
- Parent-assisted
 - Concurrent parent and teen sessions
 - Parents are trained as social coaches
- Appropriate for socially motivated teens
- Addresses core social deficits in ASD
- Focuses on relationship skills
- Teaches ecologically valid social skills
- 14-week curriculum
 - 90 minute weekly sessions
- Evidence-based:
 - Teens in middle and high school with ASD
 - Teens with ADHD
 - Teens with FASD
 - Teens with ID



PEERS[®] for Adolescents

Daily School-Based Intervention

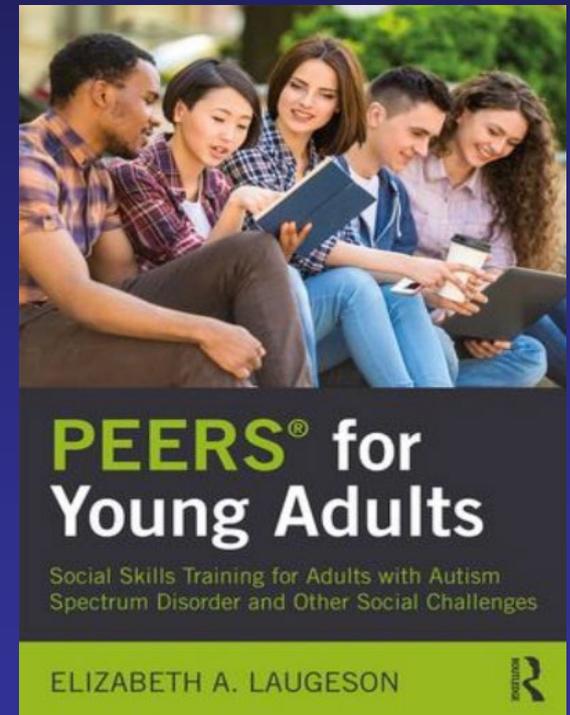
- Teacher-facilitated in the school setting
- 16-week curriculum
- 30-60 minute daily lesson plans
- Focuses on friendship skills
- Strategies for handling peer rejection/conflict
- Includes weekly comprehensive parent handouts
 - No parent group
- Evidence-based treatment for ASD
 - Middle school
 - High school



PEERS[®] for Young Adults

Weekly Caregiver-Assisted Treatment

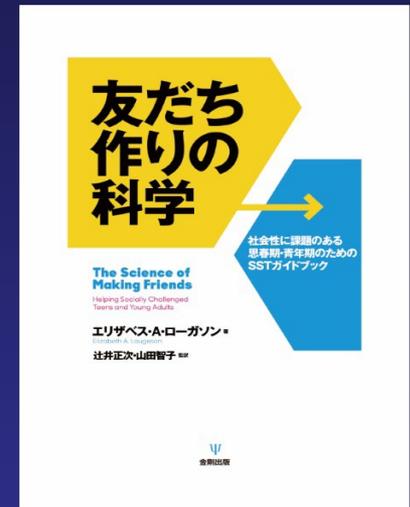
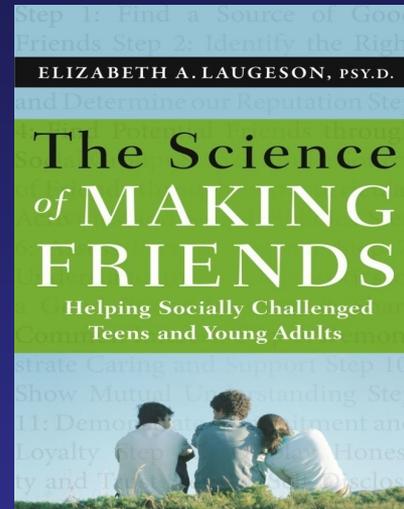
- Caregiver-assisted
 - Concurrent social coaching and young adult sessions
- Appropriate for socially motivated adults
- Addresses core social deficits in ASD
- Focuses on relationship skills
 - Friendships, dating, conflict, rejection
- Teaches ecologically valid social skills
- 16-week curriculum
 - 90-minute weekly sessions
 - Library of video role play demonstrations
- Evidence-based:
 - Young adults (18-24 years of age) with ASD



The Science of Making Friends: Helping Socially Challenged Teens and Young Adults

(Laugeson, 2013)

- Parent book
- Friendship skills
- Handling peer rejection and conflict
- Parent section
 - Narrative lessons
 - Social coaching tips
- Chapter summaries for teens and young adults
- Chapter exercises / homework
- Companion DVD
 - Role-play videos
- Mobile App: *FriendMaker*
 - Virtual social coach



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