

# SOCCSS: SITUATION-OPTIONS-CONSEQUENCES- CHOICES-STRATEGIES-SIMULATION

## CHARACTERISTICS OVERVIEW CHART

Verbal Skills	Grade Levels	Cognitive Level	Areas Addressed
<input type="checkbox"/> Nonverbal	<input type="checkbox"/> PK	<input type="checkbox"/> Classic	<input type="checkbox"/> (Pre)Academic/Cognitive/Academic
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Behavior/Daily Living
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle/High	Functioning	<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior
			<input type="checkbox"/> Communication/Speech
			<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Emotional

## BRIEF INTRODUCTION

SOCCSS (Situation, Options, Consequences, Choices, Strategies, Simulation) is a social decision-making process designed to help students with autism (AU) understand social situations.

Students who struggle with social understanding can benefit from this problem-solving approach when learning to choose appropriate social behavior.

## DESCRIPTION

Individuals with AU often struggle with daily situations (e.g., personal communication, working as a group, or following unspoken social rules). For those who have difficulties understanding social environments and demonstrate poor self-awareness and self-management, SOCCSS is a useful strategy.

SOCCSS is a teaching strategy designed to help students understand social situations and interactions. Specifically, it offers problem-solving and decision-making techniques for analyzing situations by asking questions and making choices about how to deal with a problem and how to function in socially appropriate ways.

The SOCCSS strategy consists of a step-by-step process whereby the student learns discrete skills and how to apply his learning to a given situation. Many students with autism show deficits of

generalization skills. That is, even though they learn skills, they may not be able to use them across settings and situations. SOCCSS offers opportunities to interpret situations and to apply learned skills independently.

Examples of situations where SOCCSS may be used include:

- Using curse words in front of a principal
- Telling a teacher loudly about other students' behavior in class
- Correcting others' off-task behavior loudly in class
- Asking nonsubject-related questions frequently in class
- Replying bluntly to a teacher's question or request

## **STEPS**

The six steps of SOCCSS are as follows:

1. *Situation*. This step provides opportunities for a student to be aware of a social situation. The instructor helps the student identify factual information (e.g., Who was involved in the situation? What happened? When and where did it happen? Why did it happen?) related to the situation.
2. *Options*. In this step, the instructor and student discuss possible options the student has when the situation occurs. This brainstorming process enables the student to find alternative ways to deal with the situation.
3. *Consequences*. The instructor helps the student understand cause-and-effect. The instructor asks the student questions, such as "What would happen if you did ...?" "What would you be like if ... happened?" Through this process, the student learns the relationships in social interactions. Implementing role-play or drawing the situation while discussing (e.g., cartooning can be also helpful for students who have difficulties determining cause-and-effect relationships.
4. *Choices*. Based on the information identified through the previous procedure, the student makes a decision in this step to perform a socially appropriate behavior or interaction. The instructor helps the student prioritize the options and consequences and select the option that is most likely to work for the student, considering his needs and skill level.

5. *Strategies.* This step involves developing a plan to address the situation. The student should have ownership in developing the procedure and making the action plan with the instructor's help. He also needs to apply the skills he has learned. This process empowers the student and builds his action plan to solve the presenting problem.
6. *Simulation.* It is time to practice what the student has learned through the whole problem-solving procedure. According to Roosa (cited in Myles, 2005), who developed this strategy, several techniques can be used for this process: (a) imagery, (b) talking with another about the plan, (c) writing down the plan, or (d) role-playing. In addition, evaluation and generalization can be addressed during follow-up.

## **BRIEF EXAMPLE**

Emily is a middle school student. She does not have friends at school but wants to make a friend. Mr. Lee, her teacher, noticed that she did not reply to others' greetings. When her classmates say "hi" to her, she often ignores them and does not look at them. Sometimes she even says to the person who greets her, "Don't talk to me." She seems not to understand why people say to her "How are you?" even though they do not know each other well.

Mr. Lee decided to use a SOCCSS strategy to help Emily analyze such situations and make better choices when she interacts with others in school. Together he and Emily brainstormed problem situations and identified information related to them (e.g., who, what, when, where, and why). During the process of implementing SOCCSS, Emily noticed the social function of small talk or "empty words." She also became aware of the importance of greeting students to make a friend. She analyzed the situation and made her action plan for what to do when she encounters classmates or teachers outside class. She followed her plan in the hallway and received positive responses from her peers and teachers.

<b>SOCCSS Worksheet</b>		
Situation: Who _____ When _____ What _____ Why _____ Where _____		
Desired Outcome:		
Options	Consequences	Choices
Strategy: Action Plan (choose the option)		
Simulation	Select One	
Simulation Outcomes		
Follow-Up		

### **TIPS FOR MODIFICATION**

In order to help students understand the cause-and-effect relationship of social situations, video modeling may also be used. The instructor and student can video tape their role-playing to analyze and discuss while watching the video.

## SUMMARY

SOCCSS provides opportunities for students with autism to interpret and analyze problem situations and consequently follow a step-by-step process to solve them and make better decisions in the future.

## RESEARCH TABLE

Number of Studies	Ages (year)	Sample Size	Area(s) Addressed	Outcome
0				

## REFERENCES

Myles, B. S. (2005). *Children and youth with Asperger Syndrome: Strategies for success in inclusive settings*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

## RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- SOCCSS: iCAN Module: <http://www.autismnetwork.org/modules/social/soccss/index.html>  
iCAN (Interactive Collaborative Autism Network) Social Intervention Module.
- Myles, B. S. (2005). *Children and youth with Asperger Syndrome: Strategies for success in inclusive settings*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.  
This text provides further information about SOCCSS and other helpful strategies and interventions.