

Speech & Language Therapy Case Study

Young Person: D

Date: 06.12.2019

Age: 13

Case study focus: To develop D's social skills and relationships with peers.

Background:

D is a day student at Underley Garden School. Initial assessment of D's language skills highlighted that she is within the average range for her age. However, her social skills are less developed than would be expected for someone of her age. D has expressed on several occasions to staff that she wants to make friends at her new school.

D struggles to engage in activities not of her choosing and to interact with her peers. This impacts on her participation in group activities and opportunities to develop her social skills. D enjoys art and creative writing.

What I did:

I developed a weekly social skills programme for D and two peers to attend. To encourage D to participate, the programme incorporated D's interest in art. The group was based on the principals of Lego Therapy (LeGoff et al 2014). Lego Therapy is a collaborative play therapy where young people work together to build Lego models in order to develop skills in team work, joint attention, sharing, turn-taking and eye-contact, as well as developing verbal and non-verbal language skills (LeGoff et al 2014). In Lego Therapy, a group of three young people take it in turns to fulfil one of three roles; the engineer (gives the instructions), the supplier (locates the bricks) and the builder (builds the model). I applied this model to 'junk modelling', using recycling to create models and crafts as this would appeal more to D than Lego building.

I liaised with education staff to discuss potential group members. Two peers were chosen; one had started establishing a relationship with D and one was chosen as a positive role model for the group.

The group was run weekly for one term by SALT with one TA to support with behaviour management. Therapy targets were created for D:

1. D will attend 90% of Junk Modelling sessions in a positive frame of mind.
2. D will interact with her peers during Junk Modelling sessions on three occasions per session.

Outcomes:

D's therapy plan was reviewed at the end of this block of sessions. D's progress had been monitored and recorded weekly after each session. Her progress towards each target has been outlined below:

1. D will attend 90% of Junk Modelling sessions in a positive frame of mind.

Achieved – D initially did not engage with the session and arrived late. She attended reluctantly and would only speak quietly to a TA sat next to her. D now attends sessions at the same time as her peers and joins in with creating the models. D is also starting to join in with group conversations and will now speak directly to her peers.

2. D will interact with her peers during Junk Modelling on three occasions per session.

Achieved - Initially, D would not interact directly with her peers. When asked a question, she would answer quietly to the TA and they would have to relay it to the group. D will now participate in discussion around the model being built and will make suggestions on what the group could make next. She has also participated in several conversation starter activities with her peers.

Conclusion and evaluation:

D is likely to require continued support to develop her social skills and build friendships with peers. D is motivated by creative activities and using the medium of 'junk modelling' has facilitated her participation in a social skills group successfully. D has expressed that she would like to build relationships with some of the older young people in the school and appears motivated to participate in further social skills groups.

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