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## Using Scripted Stories to Support Children Manage Their Emotions

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### INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the “Social Stories” website created by the Head Start Center for Inclusion. The questions and activities in this handout could be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

### Goals

- ◆ Understand how scripted stories can support children’s emotions by providing guidance for managing their strong emotions in positive and effective ways.
- ◆ Explore ways to create and use Social Stories to help children understand and manage their strong emotions.

### Activity

- ◆ Visit “Social Stories,” the Head Start Center for Inclusion’s website, read the questions and answers about Social Stories, and view the featured examples.
- ◆ Use the questions below to guide your creation and use of Social Stories to support children manage their strong emotions.

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**“The art and science of Social Stories tailor’s each story to its audience.”**

**Carol Gray**

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## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆ Before exploring this resource, what did you know about Social (or scripted) Stories? What questions did you have about them? Have you ever used a scripted story with a child? How did the child react?
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- ◆ Scripted stories are often created for and used with children with autism and behavior disorders. They are also helpful for children who are “experiencing challenges with an activity, routine, event or situation at school, home, or another environment.” Who else could benefit from reading scripted stories about managing strong emotions? How can scripted stories help children **manage their emotions** about challenging activities or situations?
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- ◆ After reviewing the examples of scripted stories, what are the most important components of a scripted story? What elements should all scripted stories include?
    1. Read the “Feeling Frustrated” story. How could the words and pictures in this story help a child understand and manage frustration?
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- ◆ Identify a child in your class who would benefit from an individualized scripted story to help them manage a specific emotion. Follow the steps outlined in the resource to write a story and then plan to share that story with them.
  1. Write the scripted story
    - Choose one emotion to focus on in the story
    - Include personal information about the child to make it their own
    - State facts about the emotion and how the child would recognize that they are feeling that emotion
    - Provide one or two ideas for what the child should do when they experience that emotion
  2. Plan to share the story with the child
    - Set a time to introduce the story in a one-on-one setting when the child is feeling calm. Make the reading experience enjoyable and relaxing.
    - Read the story to the child at least once each day. You can read the story multiple times a day, if needed.
    - Read the story prior to the times when the child is likely to experience the strong emotion. For example, read a story about frustration prior to going outside if the child typically experiences frustration during recess.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about writing and using scripted stories to support children to manage their emotions:

- ◆ **Source:** Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
- ◆ **Tip Sheet:** “Scripted Stories for Social Situations”
- ◆ **Link:** [https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/ScriptedStory\\_tips-sheet.pdf](https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/ScriptedStory_tips-sheet.pdf)
- ◆ **Description:** This handout provides helpful tips for writing personalized and impactful scripted stories for children.

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- ◆ **Source:** Carol Gray: Social Stories
  - ◆ **Website:** “What is a Social Story?”
  - ◆ **Link:** <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/>
  - ◆ **Description:** Carol Gray, educational consultant and former special education teacher, developed Social Stories as a tool for supporting children with autism. This website provides background information about her journey creating Social Stories and additional resources for understanding their impact on children with autism.