

Lucia Reardon MA, CCC-SLP

Lucia has been working in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders(ASD) for over 15 years, with a particular interest and focus on pragmatic language and social thinking that is a distinct challenge for individuals with ASD. She completed her undergraduate degree in Italian and Psychology at Hunter College in New York City and a graduate degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Maine, Orono. Currently, Lucia has a private practice specializing



in the evaluation and treatment of individuals ages 3 to adults for individuals with social thinking challenges, as well as consultation and trainings for special purpose programs, public and private schools, and the Maine Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Her clients include children and adults with ASD, AS, NLD, ADHD, PDD-NOS, Traumatic Brain Injury, and of course the child often described as “murky”. She consults and runs F.I.T. Groups at the Collaborative School in New Gloucester for Middle and High School students in conjunction with social workers and staff.

Lucia’s approach is influenced by the following ASD and Asperger specialists and brain researchers, having spent countless hours in conferences and trainings with Tony Attwood, Michelle Garcia Winner, Brenda Smith Myles, Fred Volkmar, Steven Gutstein, Carol Gray, Ross Greene, Jed Baker, Barry Prizant, and others, while continuing her own self study, reading authors, such as Dolores Gaus, Ami Klin, Sara Sparrow, Deidre Lovecky, Vicki Lord Larson, Daniel Goleman, and Tony Attwood. Together with her Colleague Jenna, she completed the Michelle Garcia Winner mentorship program in San Jose California.



Jenna Bradley M.S. Ed.

Jenna graduated with an undergraduate degree in Developmental Psychology and Education. In graduate school she studied early childhood and Education K-12. She taught ESOL (English for Speakers of other Languages) for seven years in Miami, FL. Her interest in a child’s acquisition of language was reinforced through her work at the Reach School in S. Portland, ME. She is currently in her fourth year providing Developmental Therapy to preschoolers with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). Most recently she and Lucia were accepted into a week-long Mentorship Program in San Jose, CA, where they received intensive training at Michelle G. Winner’s Social Thinking Clinic. Jenna also has the pleasure and invaluable experience of being a parent of an incredible little guy on the Autism Spectrum. She has spent the last eight years studying and applying various ASD methodologies including: Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS), Relationship Development Intervention (RDI), and Social Thinking.



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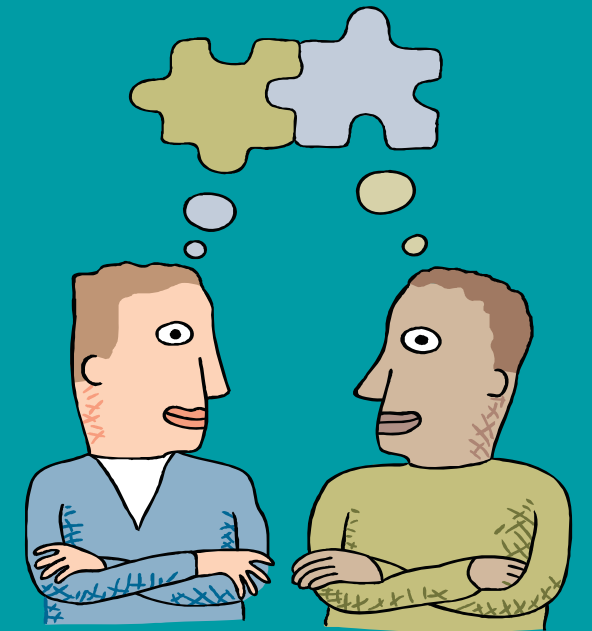
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Flexible Interactive Thinking

**Teaching Social
Thinking in and out
of the therapy room.**

F.I.T. groups explore and practice social concepts related to negotiating, compromising, planning and executing activities in order to further develop independent problem solving and personal relationship skills.



Why participate in “social thinking” therapy not a traditional social skills group?

In traditional social skill groups you are missing the social thought process taking place between the communicative partners (i.e. what kind of thought does a peer have about you when you hold the door open for them vs. when you do not). Teaching the thought process behind the social skill enhances carryover of the social skill into a novel context or new environment. Social Thinking therapy also offers specific vocabulary to assist families in incorporating Social Thinking concepts into their day to day lives (i.e. keeping your body/brain in the group, whole body listening, expected behavior vs. unexpected behavior, smart guess/wacky guess). Traditional social skill trainings are based on behavioral principles such as repetition and reinforcement. While this method of therapy has proven to be beneficial for young children and more cognitively challenged individuals, these skills are hard to generalize beyond the immediate therapeutic environment and does not provide the “why should I bother” explanation. Social Thinking provides the social interaction and benefits individuals through intrinsic motivation because they understand that their behavior impacts others. Providing “good” or “friendly” thoughts to someone else feels good and good things happen to them when others are thinking positively about them!

How do we group our students?

Students are grouped with peers of approximate age and similar social cognitive strengths and weaknesses. Cognition, perspective taking abilities, social language, language processing, and challenging behaviors are all considerations with group placement. When possible, we also group according to shared interests.



Image from MG Winner and P. Crooke's, *Explaining Social Thinking to Kids*, 2008

What do we teach?

Lessons are dependent on the needs of individual students. The following is a sample of the concepts that are explored and not meant to represent a comprehensive list.

Preschool and Primary School

- How feelings lead to thoughts and thoughts lead to action (*I can change your thought about me by changing my behavior*)
- Purposeful collaborative play
- Verbal and non-verbal self regulating strategies
- Familiarity of social expectations across environments and context
- Pragmatic language

Intermediate School (3rd grade and up)

- Adaptive self regulating strategies
- Conversational skills
- Visual organizational systems to help conceptualize both social interactions and academic work
- Learn to make smart guesses about the social motivation of adults, family, friends, and peers around them (*be a social detective*)
- Familiarity of social expectations across environments and context

Middle School

- Personal problem solving
- Organization
- Non-verbal language skills
- Expected behaviors for middle school
- Hidden Curriculum (“rules”) of middle school

High School and beyond

- All of the above concepts related to high school
- Self advocacy
- Social networking
- Acquaintances vs. friends
- The social fake (*learning how to “appear” interested in others*)
- How to use our brain filter to maintain a positive thought in another person’s mind
- How to “read” a situation by determining relevant information from irrelevant information
- Using contextual clues to figure out what people “mean” beyond what they say.
- Appropriate discourse including quantity, quality, relevance, and clarity

And much more depending on what the group wants to work on!

Who is best suited for FIT social thinking Group?

Social Thinking intervention meets the needs of students with near to above average verbal intelligence with varying degrees of Social Cognitive challenges:

- High Functioning Autism (HFA)
- Asperger Syndrome (AS)
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)
- Non-verbal Learning Disorder (NLD)
- Attention Deficit Disorder, with or without hyperactivity (ADD, ADHD)
- Persons without any diagnostic label who are experiencing difficulty with fluid social interaction and socially themed academic work.

What services do we offer?

F.I.T. (Flexible Interactive Thinking) group provides both individual and group therapy. Therapy is scheduled in 60 minute sessions with the last ten minutes reserved for parent talk time. This time is reserved to review the child’s progress in the session and to allow carryover of learned skills into the home. The needs of the client, the impact on social and educational performance and the families’ specific situation will all impact the schedule options.

