

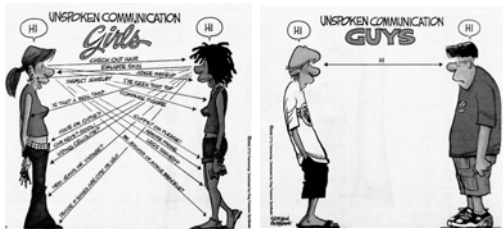
**Program for the Education and Enrichment of
Relational Skills (PEERS)
for Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders**

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Unspoken Communication



PEERS for Young Adults

- ❖ Similar format to PEERS for Adolescents: 14-week long caregiver-assisted intervention for adults ages 18-24*
- ❖ Focus of the Intervention: (adapted for young adults)
 - ❖ Conversational skills: trading information, rules for having a two-way conversation; phone conversations
 - ❖ Appropriate use of humor and humor feedback
 - ❖ Choosing the right friends
 - ❖ Entering and leaving a conversation
 - ❖ Successful get-togethers and good sportsmanship
 - ❖ Handling teasing, bullying, and bad reputations
 - ❖ Handling arguments
- ❖ New Developments: Dating Etiquette and Peer Resistance Strategies Modules
- ❖ Caregiver role transition into a collaborative consultants

Preliminary Data

- Demographics
- Empathy
- Emotion Dysregulation
- Social Anxiety
- Loneliness

Demographics

Mean Demographic and Baseline Variables for Treatment and Delayed Treatment Group (Standard Deviations are in Parentheses).

Variable	Group		p
	Treatment n = 9	Delayed Treatment n = 9	
<i>Demographics</i>			
Age (years)	19.9 (1.2)	20.6 (2.1)	ns
Percent Male	55.6	78.0	ns
Percent Caucasian	55.6	78.0	ns
KBIT Composite	96.7 (11.8)	109.22 (16.4)	ns
Vinland Composite	69.6 (7.5)	65.9 (7.7)	ns
<i>Emotion-Related measures</i>			
TYASSK	14.0 (2.7)	12.7 (3.1)	ns
QSQ Hosted	1.00 (1.3)	0.78 (1.3)	ns
QSQ Invited	2.22 (4.9)	1.00 (1.7)	ns
SSI Total Score	237.4 (31.2)	244.2 (38.4)	ns
SELISA	132.56 (33.7)	131.0 (29.1)	ns
DEBS Emotional Awareness	17.3 (3.2)	16.3 (3.5)	ns
<i>Caregiver measures</i>			
QSQ Hosted	0.78 (1.1)	0.67 (1.1)	ns
QSQ Invited	2.22 (5.2)	2.8 (6.9)	ns
SRS Social Skills Total Score	78.7 (11.4)	84.3 (10.3)	ns
SRS Total Score	110.8 (22.6)	89.6 (21.0)	ns
AQ	35.9 (5.2)	30.8 (7.5)	ns
EQ	17.0 (8.4)	19.0 (9.1)	ns

Empathy

- Using Empathy Quotient (*Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004*) caregiver and self-report measures

	Male (n=25)	Female (n=12)
Neurotypical Adults (in previous studies)	38.8 (12.4)	47.7 (11.0)
EQ-Young Adult Report	26.2 (10.0)	34.8 (12.5)
EQ-Caregiver Report	15.8 (8.8)	21.1(7.5)
Overall EQ - Young Adult Report	89% below norm	100% below norm
Overall EQ - Caregiver Report	96% below norm	100% below norm*

*Highest score for Female participant from their Caregivers was 32 vs. 43 from Young Adults.

90% of Participants scored in PTSD, BPD Range
 94% of Participants scored above normed sample

Emotion Dysregulation

- Using Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (Grazt & Roemer, 2004)

	Average Scores	Number of Study Participants
College Neurotypical	75-80	10
College Self-harm/Panic Attacks	85-89	6
Generalized Anxiety Disorder	90-94	2
PTSD	95-104	9
Borderline Personality Disorder	105-120	12

Statistics analyzed for n=38.

Social Anxiety

- Using Social Anxiety Scale (La Greca & Lopez, 1998) caregiver and self-report measures

	SAS-Self Report		SAS-Caregiver Report	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Fear of Negative Evaluations	23.4(7.6)*	20.6 (8.5)*	24.5(7.3)*	21.0 (6.0)*
Social Avoidance and Distress - General	11.6(3.3)*	10.2 (4.3)*	13.3(2.8)*	10.3 (3.6)*
Social Avoidance and Distress - New	19.6(5.4)*	18.0 (4.9)*	22.0(5.5)*	19.1 (7.0)*
SAS Total Score	54.6(13.6)*	48.8 (15.7)*	59.8(12.4)*	50.3 (12.2)*

*For the participant group n=38, Total Score including all subscales showed to be significant at $p < .0001$ level in comparison to the normed data

Loneliness

- Using Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale for Adults (DiTomasso & Spinner, 1993) young adult self-report

	Romantic Loneliness	Social Loneliness	Family Loneliness
Current Study	22.2 (7.9)	15.7(7.5)	10.4(5.9)
College Neurotypical Sample	16.4 (9.1)	12.1 (6.0)	12.1 (7.5)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.0001**	.006**	.085

- Romantic and Social Loneliness is significantly higher in comparison to college neurotypical sample. Family Loneliness failed to reach significance.

Treatment Outcomes

Mean Difference Scores, Standard Deviations and Significance for Outcome Variables for Treatment and Delayed Treatment Control Groups (Standard Deviations are in Parentheses).

Variable	Group		p
	Treatment n = 9	Delayed Treatment n = 9	
<i>Interpersonal matters</i>			
TYASSK	6.11 (3.26)	0.30 (2.11)	<.0001
SLSA Total Score	-12.67 (17.39)	4.11 (13.67)	<.038
DERS Emotional Awareness	-0.22 (2.22)	2.11 (2.21)	<.040
<i>Caregiver matters</i>			
SSRS Social Skills Total*	6.33 (9.01)	-6.22 (5.45)	<.003
SSRS Cooperation	2.56 (3.05)	-1.22 (2.22)	<.008
SSRS Assertiveness	2.00 (2.50)	-0.22 (1.39)	<.033
SSRS Self-Control	1.22 (3.99)	-2.44 (2.40)	<.031
SRS Total Score*	-18.7 (23.7)	5.22 (20.0)	<.023
SRS Social Awareness	-1.33 (2.35)	1.22 (2.77)	<.051*
SRS Social Communication	-6.11 (7.75)	2.44 (7.13)	<.027
SRS Autistic Mannerisms	-3.22 (4.32)	2.44 (3.50)	<.008
EQ	7.00 (8.75)	-0.89 (3.44)	<.036
QSQ Invited Get-Togethers*	0.89 (8.93)	-0.22 (6.67)	<.015
QSQ Hosted Get-Togethers*	1.00 (1.41)	0.00 (8.71)	<.035

* Standard Scores
* Mann-Whitney U Test of Significance (2-tailed)
* Approached Statistical Significance.

Summary

- PEERS for Young Adults intervention was shown to be an effective method of improving social skills and development of relationships for young adults with ASD.
- Significant Improvements in the Areas:
 - Social Skills Knowledge
 - Social Skills Use
 - Social Responsiveness
 - Empathy
 - Emotional Awareness
 - Loneliness
 - Frequency of social experiences with peers

Research Directions

Funding Pending

- THG-UCLA Autism Research Alliance
- Further develop and test an adapted PEERS curriculum for transitional youth
- Compare to delayed treatment control group
- Test for efficacy of the Caregiver involvement
 - 40 participants
 - 18-24 years of age
 - 16 weeks
 - HFA / Asperger's Disorder
 - Pilot study
 - Caregiver-assisted vs. Young Adult only
 - New didactics:
 - Self Advocacy

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