

Group Therapy for Students with Autism

Presented by
Rosemarie Donatelli, M.A. CCC/SLP
Speech Language Pathologist
Geauga County ESC

Guiding Principles

- The socialization group should take place in the student's classroom setting.
 - Research shows that this will lead to an:
 - Increase in maintenance of skills
 - Increase in generalization of skills
 - Crucial for our students because of their difficulty to transfer skills from one setting to another

(Bellini, Peters, Benner, Hopf, 2007)

Group Therapy in the Classroom

- The teacher and paraprofessionals may act as prompters during the group lesson
- Will allow the speech therapist to model effective ways of facilitating communication among students
- These strategies should be implemented throughout the student's school day in a variety of contexts (cafeteria, inclusion, community based outings)

Guiding Principles Continued

- The social skills should be addressed in individual therapy as well as group therapy
 - The skill is mastered with the therapist
 - The skill is generalized to a peer
 - The skill is generalized to a group setting
 - Example: Greetings
 - Master saying hi in response to a greeting from a therapist
 - Master saying hi in response to a greeting from a peer
 - Master saying hi in response to a greeting from a peer during a group setting

Things to think about when planning a speech group

- Who will be in the group?
- How will each student participate in the group?
- What specific skills am I targeting for each student?
- Is my activity level and age appropriate?
- How will I take data on these skills during the group?

Social Skills to Address During Group

- Greetings
- Commenting
- Reciprocal Questions
- Conversation
 - Initiation
 - Maintenance

Ideas for group therapy

- Elementary Students
- Middle School Students
- High School Students

Thanks for listening!

- Any questions?
- Feel free to contact me at gc_donatelli@lgca.org