

Information sheet

Who is conducting the research? My name is Rasha Bawazir and I am a doctoral student at the University College London Institute of Education. I am inviting you to take part in my research project, "Using Social Stories with the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum: professionals' perspectives".

You do not need to have used Social Stories; I am interested in your opinions as someone working with individuals on the autistic spectrum.

I am hoping to explore professionals' perspectives on using Social Stories with the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum. The study will also investigate professionals' reflections and ideas about the practical use and effects of using Social Stories with the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum. In addition, the research will explore the ways in which professionals understand the nature of change for individuals on the autistic spectrum when they use Social Stories with the creative arts.

I very much hope that you will take part in the study. You can be involved in variety of ways: by filling in a questionnaire, participating in focus group and individual interviews, completing a short diary and participating in a diary-based individual interview. This information sheet will try to answer any questions you might have about the project, but please don't hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know.

Why are we doing this research? The use of Social Stories with the creative arts is an emerging area of knowledge. As such, it lends itself to the idea of exploring professionals' knowledge, attitude and practice on using Social Stories with the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum. The main research questions are as follows:

1. What are professionals' perspectives on the nature of using Social Stories for individuals on the autistic spectrum?
2. What are professionals' perspectives on the nature of using the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum?
3. What are professionals' perspectives on the impact of using Social Stories in conjunction with the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum?
4. How do professionals approach the use of Social Stories with the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum?

Why am I being invited to take part? I am asking you to take part in this research because you work with individuals on the autistic spectrum, and I believe you can provide important information that may add more value to the research. It may also provide an opportunity for you to reflect on your own practice. The information that you provide will contribute to the future development of professionals working with individuals on the autistic spectrum.

The questionnaire uses the following definitions of Social Stories and the creative arts:

A Social Story: "is a short story that adheres to a specific format and guidelines to objectively describe a person, skill, event, concept, or social situation (Gray, 1998, p.171)".

The creative arts: refers to visual art, drama, music and dance.

Social Stories with the creative arts: this refers to the use of Stories with a creative arts element in their delivery to stimulate cognition, social interaction, communication and psychological wellbeing for individuals on the autistic spectrum, for instance.

Gray, C. 1998. Social Stories and comic strip conversations with students with Asperger syndrome and high functioning autism. In: E. Schopler, G., Mesibov, & L. Kuncie. ed. *Asperger Syndrome or High Functioning Autism?*. New York: Plenum Press, pp.167-198.

What will happen if I choose to take part? If you are happy to participate in the research, you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire after reading this information sheet. You can also opt to take part in interviews (£10 voucher will be given) or to fill in a short diary (£10 voucher will be given). If you are interested in participating in these aspects of the research, please complete the follow up sessions section; you will find this in the questionnaire.

Questionnaire: the questionnaire consists of a series of questions for professionals who work with individuals on the autistic spectrum. Please answer all the questions that apply to you. Completing the questionnaire should take between 10 and 15 minutes.

Focus group interview and/or individual interview: you will be asked a number of questions to facilitate an active discussion. Questions will relate to your perspectives on the nature, the impact and the use of Social Stories with the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum. The focus group interview may be face to face or via Skype to facilitate arrangements for those who wish to take part. The individual interview will normally be by Skype. All the interviews will take around 20 minutes.

Diary: you will be asked to write a simple, easy-to-complete diary by responding to a short set of questions. The diary consists of around seven open-ended questions related to your experiences of using Social Stories or Social Stories with the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum and you will be asked to complete the diary over the course of a working week. A short follow-up interview will be required to discuss some questions that arise from your diary. The interview will be scheduled at a suitable time for you and will take around 15- 20 minutes.

Audio-recording: all the interviews will be audio-recorded, as this will help me to retain an accurate summary of the discussion. The recorded interviews will provide me with a precise transcription. If you would like to read your interview transcription please ask me for a copy.

Will anyone know I have been involved? All responses to my questions and information provided by you will be anonymised, and no personal details relating to you or your place of work will be recorded anywhere. Anonymity will be assured by using pseudonyms when the research project is written. All recorded and written information will remain under my protection and will be kept in my personal laptop, protected with a password.

Could there be problems for me if I take part? There are no risks involved in participating in the research. However, for some participants talking at an interview can be stressful. In this case, if you feel uncomfortable during the interview please let me know. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time; if necessary, I can reschedule the interview for you. All the research raw data as well as the recorded interviews and transcriptions will be destroyed upon completion of my PhD studies.

What will happen to the results of the research? The main use of the research results will be to underpin my PhD studies and form part of my dissertation. The results of the research will help to develop work in the field to benefit individuals on the autistic spectrum. It may also be used for other research purposes such as journal publications and presentation at conferences.

Do I have to take part? It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. I hope that if you do choose to be involved you will find it a valuable experience. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without providing any reasons and this will not affect you negatively in any way.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can reach me at: rasha.bawazir.13@ucl.ac.uk

Supervisor details:

Prof. Phil Jones.

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This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee.

Questionnaire

Section (A) Background information:

1) Country:

.....

2) Setting: (Please tick)

- School. University. Home. Health.
 Social care. An arts setting. Other.

If you selected other, please specify:

.....

3) Job title: (Please tick)

- Arts Teacher. Non-arts Teacher. Special Education Teacher.
 Therapist. ABA Specialist. Teaching Assistant.
 Special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). Researcher.
 Student. Other.

If you selected other, please specify:

.....

4) What age group are you working with? (Please tick)

- Children on the autistic spectrum. Adults on the autistic spectrum. Both age group.

5) Please indicate which best applies to you: (please tick)

- I use Social Stories without the creative arts. I use Social Stories with the creative arts.
 I have observed Social Stories being used. I have some knowledge of Social Stories.
 Other.

If you selected other, please specify:

.....

- a) For how long? 1-5 years. 6-10 years. More than 10 years.

Follow up sessions:

I only wish to complete this questionnaire.

Interviews: If you use Social Stories, would you be interested in taking part in the following? (Please tick)
£10 voucher will be given when taking part in the interviews.

Focus group interview. Individual interview. Both types of interviews.

Diary and diary-based individual interview.

Short Diary: if you use Social Stories with the creative arts would you be interested in completing a short diary and taking part in a brief follow up interview? (Please tick) ***(A diary consists of around seven open-ended questions related to your experiences of using Social Stories with the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum).***

£10 voucher will be given when taking part in the diary and diary-based individual interview.

Diary and diary-based individual interview.

Please give details of how I can contact you:

Phone:.....

Email:.....

Section (B) Professionals' perspectives:

You do not need to have used Social Stories; I am interested in your opinions as someone working with individuals on the on the autistic spectrum.

The following statements all refer to individuals on the autistic spectrum.

Part One: The nature of using Social Stories for individuals on the autistic spectrum:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1)	It is important for individuals to concentrate when learning Social Stories.					
2)	When engaging with Social Stories individuals need to concentrate in order to understand the Story.					
3)	When learning Social Stories any disturbance can reduce individuals' ability to understand the Story.					
4)	It is essential that individuals understand the content within Social Stories.					
5)	Engaging with Social Stories can help individuals to create change in their own lives.					
6)	Remembering the content of Social Stories can help individuals to relate the Story to changes in their own lives.					
7)	Motivation is important for individuals to be engaged with Social Stories.					
8)	In my experience, Social Stories are more effective for individuals when used alongside other intervention strategies.					

Part Two: The nature of using the creative arts (e.g. visual art, drama, music and dance) for individuals on the autistic spectrum.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1)	Participating in the creative arts in general can encourage individuals to develop imaginative thinking.					
2)	Participating in the creative arts in general can enhance individuals' ability to remember information.					
3)	Participating in the creative arts in general can help individuals to communicate their understanding of any experience.					
4)	Participating in the creative arts in general can help individuals to represent social experience and make them more comprehensible.					

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
5)	Participating in the creative arts in general can increase individuals' motivation to learn.					
6)	Participating in the creative arts in general can enable individuals to communicate because they stimulate verbal communication.					
7)	Participating in the creative arts in general can enable individuals to communicate without using words.					
8)	Participating in the creative arts in general can help individuals to express their feelings.					
9)	Participating in the creative arts in general can help reduce individuals' levels of stress.					
10)	Participating in the creative arts in general can help reduce individuals' levels of anxiety.					

Part Three: The impact of using Social Stories with the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum. (*Social Stories with the creative arts*: this refers to the use of Stories with a creative arts element in their delivery to stimulate cognition, social interaction, communication and psychological wellbeing for individuals on the autistic spectrum, for instance).

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1)	Using Social Stories with the creative arts can help individuals to concentrate.					
2)	Using Social Stories with the creative arts can improve individuals' ability to understand the Story.					
3)	Using Social Stories with the creative arts can increase an individual's ability to remember the Story content.					
4)	Using Social Stories with the creative arts can enable individuals to communicate their understanding of the Story.					
5)	Using Social Stories with the creative arts can increase individuals' ability to perform the content of the Story.					
6)	Using Social Stories with the creative arts can encourage effective communication between professionals and individuals.					
7)	Using Social Stories with the creative arts can motivate individuals to engage with the Story.					

Section (C) The way professionals use Social Stories with the creative arts for individuals on the autistic spectrum: (***Social Stories with the creative arts***: this refers to the use of Stories with a creative arts element in their delivery to stimulate cognition, social interaction, communication and psychological wellbeing for individuals on the autistic spectrum, for instance).

If you use Social Stories with the creative arts, please indicate 'Yes' so that I can find out more. If you don't use them, please indicate 'No' to go to the end of the questionnaire.

- Yes. No.

1) What type of the creative arts do you use with Social Stories? (Please tick as many as appropriate)

- Visual art. Drama. Music. Dance. Other.

If you selected other, please specify:

.....

2) What is the Intended impact of using Social Stories with the creative arts? (Please tick as many as appropriate)

- Teach social skills. Introduce changes/new routines.
 Increase appropriate behaviour. Reduce inappropriate behaviour.
 Teach academic skills. Increase creativity.
 To teach personal hygiene. To teach how to deal with emotions. Other.

If you selected other, please specify:

.....

3) When do you use the creative arts with Social Stories? (Please tick as many as appropriate)

- Before using Social Stories. During the use of Social Stories.
 After using Social Stories. Other.

If you selected other, please specify:

.....

4) How do you use the creative arts with Social Stories? (Please tick as many as appropriate)

- To draw entire Social Stories. To draw some scenes from Social Stories.
 To role-play the whole Social Stories. To role-play some scenes from Social Stories.
 To produce games and improvisation. To sing the Social Stories.

- To improvise elements from Social Stories. Background music.
- By changing the lyrics of a well-known song to reflect some parts of the Social Stories content.
- To use dance movement to depict entire Social Stories.
- To use dance movement to depict some scenes from Social Stories.
- Other.

If you selected other, please specify:

.....

5) What are the purposes of using the creative arts with Social Stories? (Please tick as many as appropriate)

- Because individuals on the autistic spectrum enjoy and prefer using the creative arts compared with other strategies.
- To increase individuals on the autistic spectrum ownership of a Social Story.
- To explain a scene from a Social Story that is not understood.
- To encourage the repetition of a Social Story.
- To help individuals on the autistic spectrum to remember a Social Story content.
- To encourage individuals on the autistic spectrum self-awareness of their own behaviour.
- To practice social interaction in a safe and less socially challenging environment.
- Other.

If you selected other, please specify:

.....

6) Social Stories with the creative arts are delivered / produced / modelled by: (Please tick as many as appropriate)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher. | <input type="checkbox"/> An individual on the autistic spectrum. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-autistic individual. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other. |

If you selected other, please specify:

.....

7) Social Stories with the creative arts are delivered by: (Please tick as many as appropriate)

- Puppets. Audio. Video. Other.

If you selected other, please specify:

.....

8) Did you notice any effects or changes for individuals on the autistic spectrum when using Social Stories with the creative arts?

- Yes. No.

If yes, please give an example:

.....

a) Were the changes:

- Positive. Negative.

b) Were the changes maintained?

- Yes. No. I don't know.

If yes, please give an example:

.....

c) If yes, for how long the changes were maintained?

- 1-3 months. 4-6 months. 7-9 months. More than 9 months.

d) Were the changes generalised?

- Yes. No. I don't know.

If yes, please give an example:

.....

9) Did you experience any difficulties when using Social Stories with the creative arts?

- Yes. No.

If yes, please give an example:

.....

10) How do you view the effect of using Social Stories with the creative arts?

- Ineffective. Somewhat effective. Very effective.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.