

Using Social Skills

Use this with the
planning a
response and
REACHOUT
worksheets



When we communicate with other people, we use lots of different **social skills**. Social skills don't just relate to how good we are at talking to other people. They also include our facial expressions, body language, posture, and how we show people we are listening to them.

We don't always realise it, but our social skills can have a big impact on our interactions with other people and how they respond to us. For example...



If we have our arms crossed, head down, and are avoiding looking at someone, they might think that we don't want to speak to them or that we aren't very friendly.

If we have our arms apart, our heads up, and are smiling and giving eye-contact, it will put the other person at ease and tell them that we are friendly and approachable and that it's okay to speak to us.



We can use social skills can help to keep control of a conversation and let people know what to expect from us. For example, we can use them to show someone that we are friendly, what we do or don't want to talk about, and that we are listening to them.

We don't always automatically have good social skills, especially when we are feeling anxious or uncertain when meeting new people. But, if we practice them, they become much easier to use and can help us feel much more confident in social situations.



Using Social Skills

Practice these social skills with someone you trust

Here are some examples of different types of social skills that can help you communicate better with other people and feel more confident.

Speaking Clearly



When we are anxious, we tend to talk fast and blur our words together. This can make it difficult for other people to understand us. Take a deep breath, think about what you want to say, and focus on saying each word slowly.

Tone of Voice



The way we speak can tell other people how we are feeling and if we are interested in speaking to them. Using a flat tone of voice can make it seem like we are not interested. Try using 'upward inflection', where your voice rises at the end of the sentence.

Making Eye Contact



Giving someone eye-contact shows you are approachable and can help them understand what you are thinking and feeling. You don't need to give eye-contact the whole time you are talking to someone, but it can be especially useful to show when you are listening.

Facial Expression



If we are feeling nervous, we might naturally frown or look down. But this can make people think that we don't want to speak to them and they might avoid you. Smiling and giving someone eye-contact will show them that you are friendly, open, and approachable.

Posture and Body Language



The way we hold our body tells other people how confident we are. Stooping over, looking down, fidgeting, or biting our nails can tell other people we are nervous or not approachable. Standing tall with our arms apart and our head up shows we are approachable, confident, and in control of the situation.

Active Listening



You can show someone you are listening to them by giving them eye contact, nodding and saying 'mmm' and repeating back what they have said. This can help put someone at ease and that you agree with what they are saying.

Now that you have learnt some new social skills, practice them with someone you trust, like a parent or friend.