

Skill Area(s): Conversation Skills Perspective Taking
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Eye Contact Facts

Level: beginner, intermediate, advanced

Goal: to learn about appropriate conversational skills (eye contact)

Materials needed: Eye Contact Fact handout

Activity:

- The activity is used to introduce one skill associated with conversations with friends, in the classroom, etc.
- Have an adult or peer model in the group talk about their weekend or other topic. This person should avoid looking at anyone in the group- turn back on group, etc. Continue this and see if anyone in the group tries to address the issue.
- If no one addresses the issue then stop the activity and ask if anyone noticed a problem. If not then point it out!
- Use the handout as a guide to discuss this concept. Talk about what you could say to someone that might do with when they are talking to you.
- Role-play this concept during a conversation.

Follow up suggestions:

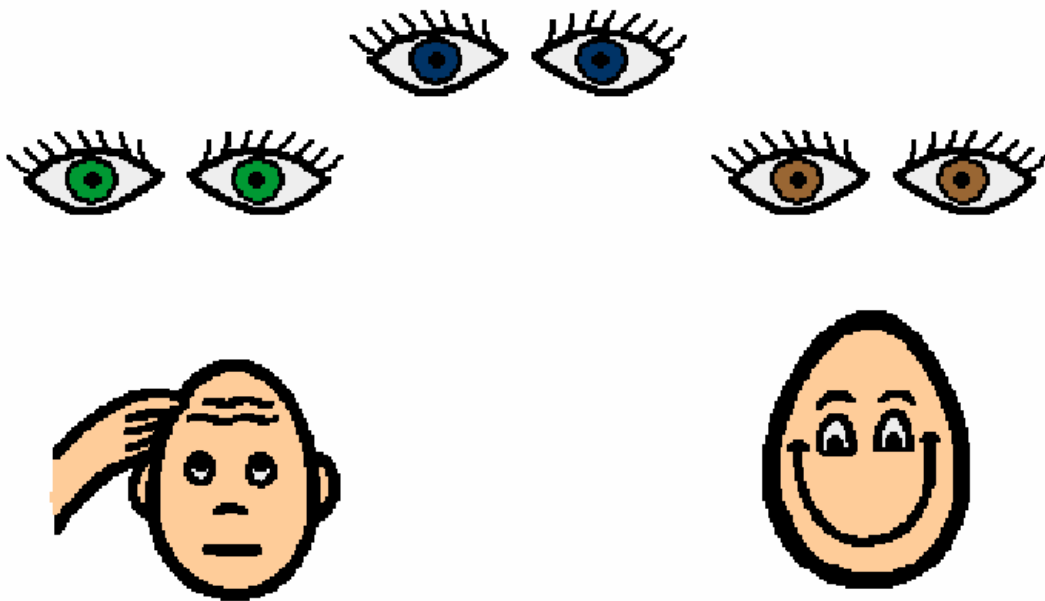
- Talk about knees to the speaker. This can keep your body turned to the speaker better than eyes to the speaker.
- Eye contact does not need to be a huge focus for students with ASD. It is often very difficult and sometimes painful for them to look someone in the eyes. They often do better by not focusing on another face. Talk about how teachers might view eye contact and why others might think they are not listening at times.

Eye Contact

Just the Facts.....

Eye contact is something that good communicators use all the time.

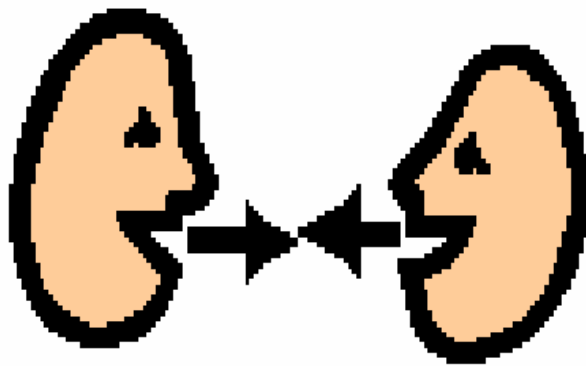
Your eyes show how you feel more than your words or body language. The way you look into people's eyes tells people what you think about them and how comfortable you are with them.



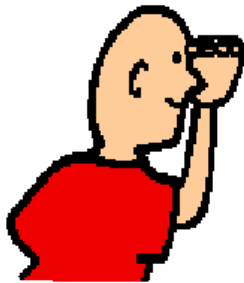
Eye contact is powerful, so use it carefully. Staring at someone is threatening. It makes people uncomfortable.



Get eye contact with someone before you start talking to the person. That way, you know that person is paying attention to you.



Eye contact is NOT staring. People glance at each other from one to seven seconds, then look away. The listener looks at the speaker more than the speaker looks at the listener.



If you are wearing sunglasses, take them off so that you can make eye contact. Sunglasses hide the communication signals.



If you're talking to someone and you want to keep talking, you can avoid making eye contact. That's a signal that you're still taking your conversation turn. Don't do this often, or people will think you're too bossy or controlling.

