

Comic Strip Conversations



What are Comic Strip Conversations?

One of the primary deficits in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is understanding social interactions. Therefore, individuals with ASD may benefit from Comic Strip Conversations—a visual way to teach socially appropriate behaviors. In a Comic Strip Conversation, conversation participants are illustrated as simple characters in a comic strip format. Then, each character's thoughts and feelings are illustrated, along with their speech. By using preferred cartoon characters (e.g., Sponge Bob, Dora the Explorer), it is often possible to increase the individual's interest in the material.

Implementing Comic Strip Conversations

When implementing comic strip conversations, remember to involve the learner in the process to get their “buy-in” into the strategy.

Remember that the key goal of the comic strip is to teach the information, not to be perfect artistic renditions of the characters. Don't let your artistic skills keep you from using comic strips!

Keep in mind that comic strip conversations can be used to teach a wide range of topics, including social skills and behavioral expectations. Some examples are below, but the options are limitless:

- Social skills
 - conversation skills
 - perspective taking
 - emotion understanding
 - conflict resolution
- Behavioral expectations
 - simple rules
 - reasons for following rules

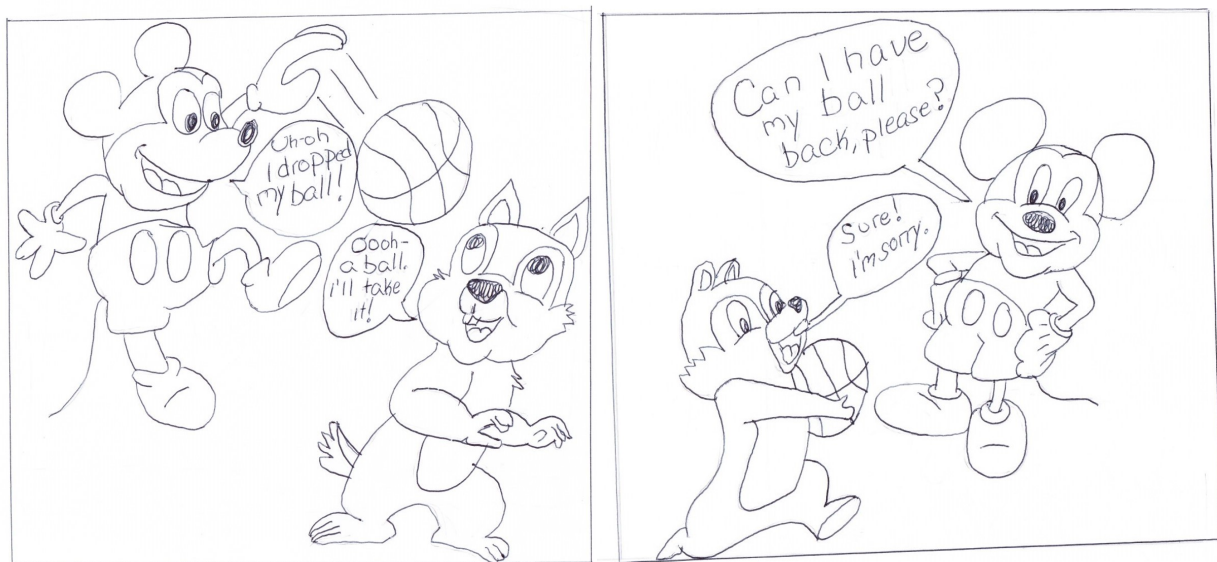
Comic Strip Conversation Components

Comic strip conversations can vary widely in their final appearance based on the needs of the learner. However, most comic strip conversations generally have the following six components:

1. Setting—Visually or verbally describe the type of events that cause the issue.
2. Images/symbols—Use stick figures, thought bubbles, and speech bubbles .
3. Characters—Ensure there are drawings of each person involved in the situation, as well as their thoughts and feelings.
4. Feelings colors—Consider using colors to represent feelings (yellow-happy, blue-sad, red-angry, green-jealous) .
5. Potential solutions—Show specific ways to fix the problem at this point as well as ideas on how to prevent it from recurring.
6. Reinforcement—It can help to include reasons the solutions are important and how they benefit the learner.

Sample Comic Strip Conversation

Jayden often makes inappropriate choices when someone takes his toys, such as hitting or biting. Jayden loves Disney and Mickey Mouse, so a comic strip was made that modeled the use of an appropriate requesting phrase to help Jayden learn to make better choices when his toys were taken.



How Can I Learn More?

Books and Articles

- Bock, M. Rogers, M.F., Myles, B.S. (2001). Using Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations to Interpret Social Situations for an Adolescent with Asperger Syndrome. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 36 (5), 310-313.
- Gray, C. (1994) *Comic Strip Conversations*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.
- Glaeser, B.C., Pierson, M.R., & Fritschmann, N. (2003). Comic strip conversations: A positive behavioral support strategy. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 36(2), 14-19.
- Pierson, M.R. & Glaeser, B.C. (2007). Using Comic Strip Conversations to Increase Social Satisfaction and Decrease Loneliness in Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 42 (4), 460 – 466.

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