Innovative Social Skills Intervention

THE USE OF PEER TRAINING AND NETWORKING

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Overview

- What is Peer-Mediated Intervention & Instruction?
- Why PMII?
- Target Students
- PMII Across Age Groups
- Steps for Implementation
- Case Example
- Discussion
What is PMII?

- PMII: Peer Mediated Intervention & Instruction
- Peer-training program
- Prepares peers to provide social skill intervention
- Natural setting
- For students with disabilities that affect social interaction
- Has been for over 20 years

*Note*: There are other applications of PMII, such as in academic peer tutoring; this presentation focuses on peer-mediated social skills intervention.
Why PMII?

- Social intervention with largest body of empirical support for students with ASD
- Promotes generalization of skills because intervention takes place in natural setting
- Benefits for trained peers, as well as target students: increased social interaction, improved attitudes toward persons with behavioral challenges
- Cost-effective for meeting IEP goals of several students at a time
- Reduces amount of classroom time spent on addressing behavior problems and teaching social skills
Target Students

- **Target students**: those intended to receive social skill intervention
- Early childhood through adulthood
- **Disability status:**
  - Severe emotional disturbance
  - Behavioral disorders
  - Intellectual disability
  - Learning disabilities
  - Autism spectrum disorders (ASD)
- Could have just one or a group of target students
PMII Across Age Groups

- **Early Childhood**
  - Teacher-directed
  - Structured
  - Intensive training

- **Elementary School**
  - Teacher-directed → Student/peer-directed
  - Structured → Unstructured
  - Intensive training → Supportive training

- **Middle & High School**
  - Student/peer-directed
  - Unstructured
  - Supportive training
Steps for Implementation

SELECTING/RECRUITING PEERS

- Should possess following qualities:
  - Good social skills, language, well-liked by peers
  - Similar schedules as target student(s)
  - Willingness to participate
- Obtain parent permission
- Train small group (1-2 peers) for first 3-4 months to promote acquisition of skills; then add more peers to promote generalization of skills

Adapted from The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders (http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/content/peer-mediated-instruction-and-intervention)
Steps for Implementation

TRAINING PEERS

- Less interaction by staff; active participation of development of peer network interventions

- Peers provided with:
  - Goals of intervention & rationale for their involvement in intervention with peers
  - Overview of what is expected of them during interactions with target student
  - Information about how students with ASD (or other disabilities) communicate, interact with their environment, and learn
  - Specific information about the target student(s) (ex: likes & dislikes)

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Steps for Implementation

TRAINING PEERS

- Strategies taught & encouraged:
  - Providing frequent, positive feedback
  - Modeling contextually relevant communication skills
  - Facilitating interactions with other peers

- Methods of training:
  - Modeling strategies
  - Role-playing with one another to practice skills

- Documenting interactions

Adapted from The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders (http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/content/peer-mediated-instruction-and-intervention)
Steps for Implementation

SUPPORTING PEERS

- Weekly problem-solving meetings
- Include special education & regular education classroom teachers (if interventions occurring in their classes)

Standard format for meetings:
- Assess previous week’s interactions through an open discussion among peers and staff
- Modify interaction schedule as needed
- Identify target skills for target student(s) that will be addressed
- Discuss strategies that can be used by peers to facilitate social interactions between peers and target student(s)
- Assess satisfaction of peers regarding meetings & responsibilities
- Reinforce peer’s participation through verbal praise, letters home, occasional group social activities such as pizza for lunch

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Steps for Implementation

IMPLEMENTING IN CLASSROOM AND ACROSS SCHOOL DAY

• Creating a social environment that supports peer-to-peer contact
• Using learning opportunities in classroom that are conducive to supporting social interactions (ex: academic group work, special classes such as P.E., games)
• Using unstructured time as opportunities for social interaction
• Monitoring & assessing social interactions
• Use of prompts & reinforcement
• Structured interaction meetings with peers & target student(s) to address specific social skills

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Discussion: Implementing PMII in Your School!

Questions?
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