



Social
Thinking®

Social Learning for a Lifetime of Well-Being

    www.socialthinking.com

Social Thinking: Developing
Social Competencies to Help
Individuals Interpret &
Respond in the Social World



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In the moment of interaction:

How do you know what to say
and do?

How do you make sense of what
other people say and do?

How do you use your social
mind across academic
lessons, in your career, when
driving your car or when
simply sharing space with
others as you are doing right
now?

Social Thinking's Methodology
promotes social & emotional
learning about ourselves and
how we co-exist and interact
with others.

Our social mind does more than
produce social skills.

Our social mind should help us interpret the situation as well as our own and others thoughts, emotions, experiences, memories, beliefs, intentions of others and our personal goals.

Our Social Thinking Methodology explores two critical aspects of the social mind:

Input & Output

Input:

Interpretation of all social and situational information, experiences and world knowledge, etc.

Output:

1. Responses within "live" social interactions (face-to-face, digital messages, performances, etc.)
2. Social-academic-vocational responses (reading comprehension of literature, written expression, collaborating on a team, etc.)

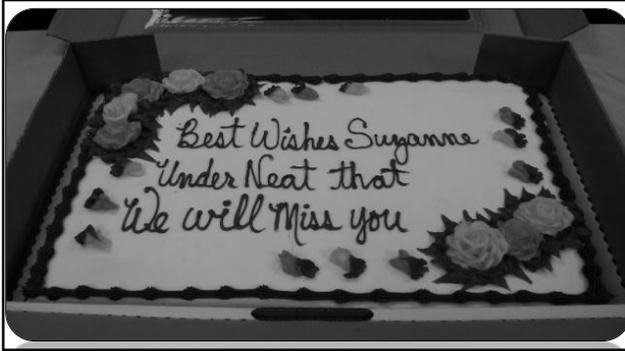
Input....

A coworker called in to have a cake made for an employee who was leaving the company.

They were told to write on the cake:
"Best wishes Suzanne, underneath that, we will miss you"

<http://www.snopes.com/food/prepare/caketalk.asp>

Output...



How does one interpret the *input* to produce the expected *output*?

Why was it wrong or considered funny to write exactly what one was told to write?

We make meaning out of social input, outside of social interactions.

- Social media exchanges
- You tube clips
- Newspaper articles
- Literature
- Movies, TV shows, sports, etc..

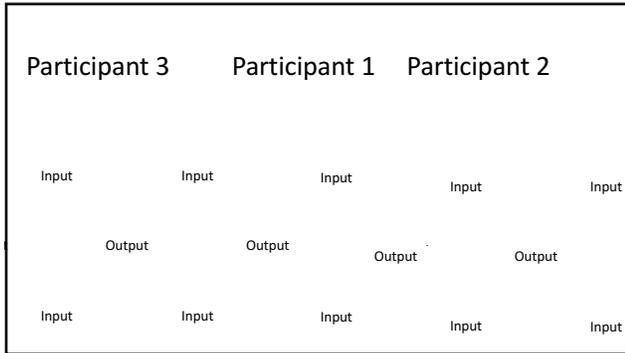
Social input creates meaning in the absence of social interaction.

Output may also be created to express our comprehension through written expression, journal writing, narrative descriptions, etc.

Notice how you input the following information:

Social Input & Output is multi-layered and multi-dimensional, especially in real-time social communication as it involves those you share space and possibly interact with.

Each person is expected to read the intentions of others while also aware people are reading our intentions.



In neurotypical individuals, social input and output (social emotional learning) is largely intuitively learned and evolves across our lives.

This is called **maturity**.

Individuals with ASD exhibit an array of social emotional learning challenges and the treatment should fit the social learning needs of the individual.

Some individuals with ASD benefit from very basic instruction to learn and produce specific, basic social skills. Others need far more sophisticated treatments as they are expected to function in far more complex social contexts.

Social Thinking's Methodology is designed for use with individuals who have solid to high level expressive and receptive language skills as well as solid to advanced verbal IQ.

By the time children attend school they are expected to navigate sophisticated social environments such as classrooms and playgrounds.

As we age, social expectations keep evolving.

By school age, everything we
are expected to do socially
involves problem solving!

How can we teach this?

Social Thinking's Methodology
teaches social competencies and
not only social skills.

It's a sophisticated, developmental
approach to social-emotional learning.

What's the research tell us?

Social Information Processing (SIP) is
critical for the development of social
competencies.

A seminal reference:

Crick, N., & Dodge K. (1994). A Review
and Reformulation of Social Information
Processing Mechanisms in Children's
Social Adjustment. *Psychological
Bulletin*. 115, 74-101.

More recently:

Beauchamp, M., & Anderson, V. (2010).
SOCIAL: An Integrative Framework for
the Development of Social Skills.
Psychological Bulletin. 136(1), 39-64.

Considering this and other
research we developed

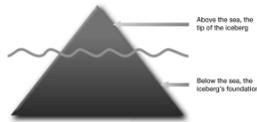
Social Thinking's
Social Competency Model

The Social Competency Model is an imperfect, evolving conceptual framework to guide interventionists through assessment and treatment of social competencies.

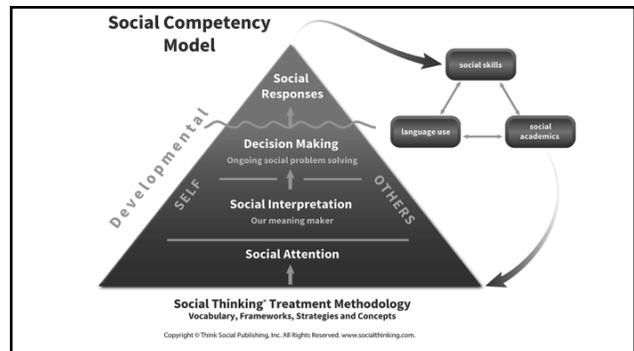
In our Social Competency Model has four main components when considering ourselves and others:

1. Social attention
2. Social interpretation (meaning making) of self and others
3. Problem solving to make decisions as to how to proceed
4. Production of social response(s)

In the social world we tend to only see social behaviors but there is so much more going on below the surface.



Introducing our iceberg model.....



First we have to attend to social information in order to interpret.

Social attention is usually weak or inefficient in people with ASD and related conditions.

Our interpretation involves our understanding of SELF and OTHERS as well as differing points of view, beliefs, emotions, anxieties, memories, experiences, etc..

When sharing space or interacting with others in real time, we are expected to compare ourselves to others to figure out if we are adapting our behavior in the manner expected based on our role in that situation.

As we interpret and problem solve what people are doing or saying, we may also judge them.

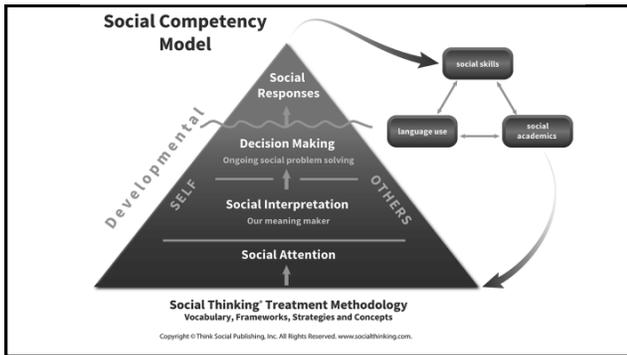
As people interpret what each of us is doing or saying, they may also judge us!

All these rapid and possibly imprecise interpretations and judgements can cause anxiety, frustration and sadness.

As we sort this all out, we form social responses that may include but are not limited to:

- Social skill adaptations
- Spoken language
- Written expression
- Digital streams
- Reading comprehension of literature through summarizing statements, etc.

Treatment to foster the development of social competencies starts with anchoring social attention and then engaging social interpretation, problem solving to make decisions about a social response.



Treatment begins by having our students observe people in context without assuming our students are doing this accurately or at all.

Don't assume our students know what it means to socially observe.

Should I pay my secretary?

A 43-year-old engineer sold his company to Google. He wanted to figure out how to converse with people at philanthropy parties to which he was now invited.

To help him figure out ways to better socially interact (social response) we began by having him socially observe. He was not keen to do this, but a few months later he explained what he learned from this process....

"Observing the social interactions of others is very helpful to me as I formulate how to interact myself. As I learn not everyone walks with their head down avoiding eye contact all of the time. As I learn when and how to smile. As I study what makes a stranger seem approachable. In short, you have to know the rules of the game in order to play the game."

As you walk around the conference,
airport, home and workplace
notice:

Attend-Interpret-Problem
Solve-Respond

Social Thinking's Social Competency Model

SELF and OTHERS
↓

Social Attention

Social Interpretation Making meaning

Social Problem solving to decide

Social Response(s)

My next session will introduce
how Social Thinking *Treatment
Frameworks & Vocabulary* help
teach social competencies.

We have many free articles on our
website. We will soon launch a new
eLearning training program for
learners around the globe.

Join our newsletter
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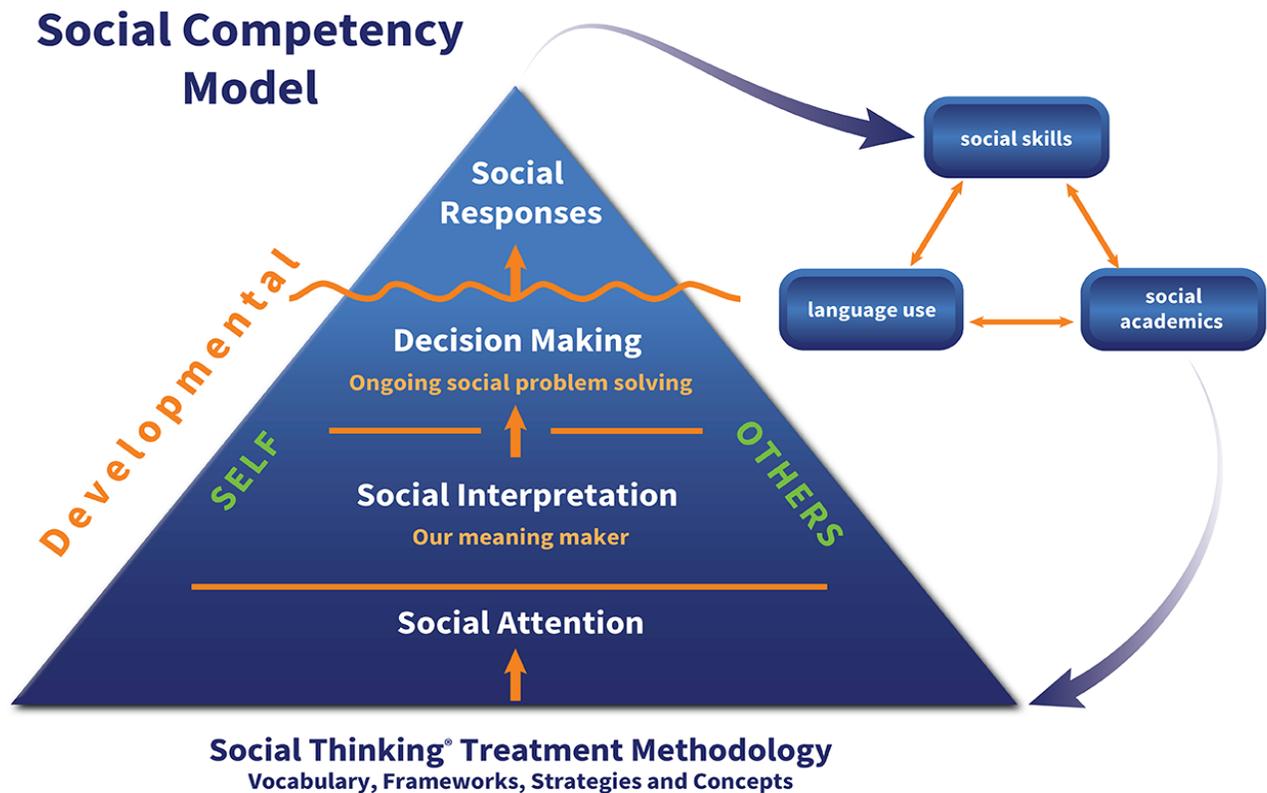
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Social Thinking's Social Competency Model

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Using Social Thinking's Methodology (Treatment Frameworks and Strategies), teach a four part process towards to help individuals improve or sharpen social competencies:

1. Socially Attend
2. Interpret to make meaning of self and others
3. Problem solve to make decisions with regards to how to respond
4. Produce Social Response

In short teach:

1. Socially Attend
2. Interpret
3. Problem Solve
4. Respond