
Preface

Deficits in social behavior are a hallmark characteristic of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). There are currently numerous studies that have evaluated social behavior, various social assessments, and multiple procedures to improve the social behaviors of individuals diagnosed with ASD. Today, many individuals diagnosed with ASD receive intervention to help improve their social behavior. It was important to compose a book that brought well-respected professionals together to write chapters on the social lives of individuals diagnosed with ASD, including assessments that can be used to identify strengths, weaknesses, and potential social behavior targets, and chapters on various interventions to improve social behavior. It is my hope that bringing these experts together resulted in a useful handbook for any professional who works with individuals diagnosed with ASD and for any family member who lives with an individual diagnosed with ASD.

The handbook is separated into four distinct sections. The first section includes chapters that review social deficits that are commonly observed with individuals diagnosed with ASD. The second section is composed of chapters that review various behavioral and curriculum assessments used to identify social strengths and deficits of individuals diagnosed with ASD. The third section includes numerous chapters, each dedicated to evaluating interventions which have been empirically evaluated and/or implemented to improve the social behavior of individuals diagnosed with ASD. The fourth and final section includes two chapters that provide suggestions for future research on social behavior and future clinical directions for teaching social behavior.

This book is the result of many top professionals who were willing to write chapters for this handbook. I would like to personally and publicly thank each of the contributing authors for their dedication to this handbook, but, more importantly, for their dedication to improving the lives of individuals diagnosed with ASD. I also want to thank my loving, brilliant, and supportive wife, Misty, who helped me through the entire process. Finally, this book would not have happened without the tireless work of two future stars in the field of ASD and behavior analysis. Thank you Julia L. Ferguson and Joseph H. Cihon for all of your tireless and hard work on this project and for making this handbook a reality.

Seal Beach, CA, USA
May 2017

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Handbook of Social Skills and Autism Spectrum
Disorder

Assessment, Curricula, and Intervention

Leaf, J.B. (Ed.)

2017, XVII, 445 p. 7 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-62994-0