

# Comic Strip Conversations

## What is a Comic Strip Conversation?

A comic strip conversation uses simple drawings to visually outline a conversation between two or more people who may be reporting the past, describing the present or planning for the future. These drawings serve to illustrate ongoing communication and to provide additional support to individuals who struggle to understand the quick exchange of information that occurs in social situations. Comic strip conversations are based on the belief that visual supports may improve the understanding and comprehension of social situations (Gray, 1994).

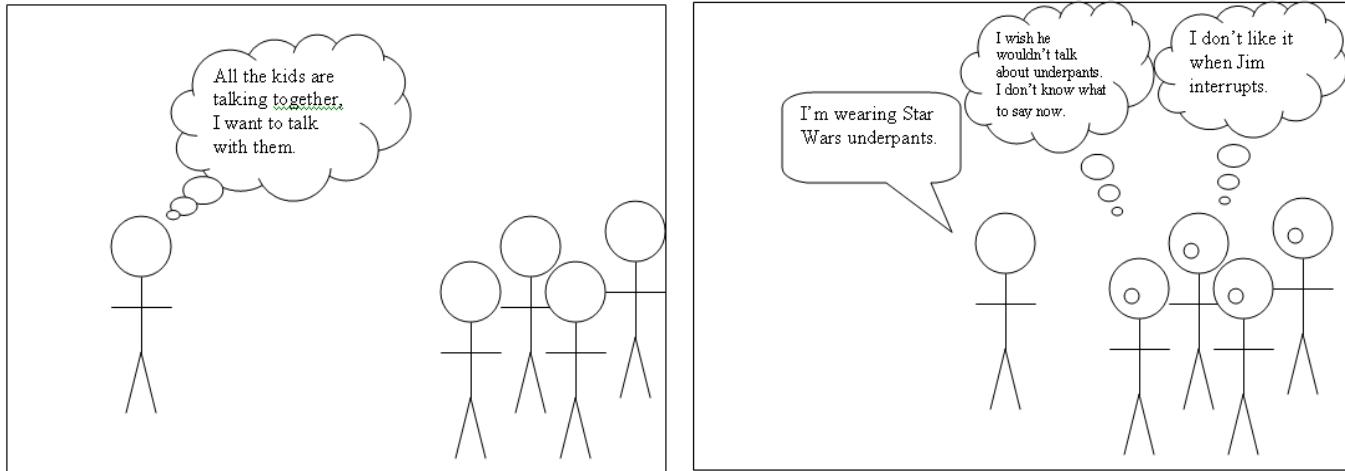
## Why use a Comic Strip Conversation?

- To visually work through a challenging situation and identify possible solutions/strategies
- To systematically identify what people say and do as well as emphasize what people may be thinking
- To better understand your child's perspective of a situation
- As a tool to help develop social skills

## When could your child use a Comic Strip Conversation?

Comic strip conversations can be used when your child encounters a challenging social situation and would benefit from some direction around how to approach the situation differently next time. Using comic strip conversations can also help your child identify possible solutions and strategies that can be used the next time he/she encounters this same situation.

### Sample:



*Interrupting is rude. A better way to join a conversation is to listen to what they are talking about then make a comment. Talking about underpants to friends at school makes them feel uncomfortable.*

\*Disclaimer: These materials have been prepared for information purposes only.

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## Things to consider when using Comic Strip Conversations

- Your child must be able to read and use a pen/pencil
- Your child needs to be able to understand and discriminate between visual symbols
- You may want to “pre-teach” using this technique so your child becomes familiar with it. For example, the first time you introduce comic strip conversations have your child describe an activity that he/she enjoys (such as going to McDonalds, visiting the zoo etc.) and introduce a few symbols at a time, starting with people (stick figures) and talking (speech bubbles)
- Once your child is familiar with the basic symbols and how the comic strip works you can assist them in understanding and expressing ideas in a social situation that may be difficult for him/her
- The initial stages may take on an “interview” format but the hope is to work towards a conversation-like format
- Here are some questions to help guide your child’s drawing;
  - Where are you? Who else is here?
  - What are you doing?
  - What happened?
  - What did others do?
  - What did you say? What did others say?
  - What did you think when you said that? What did others think when you said/did that?

## Before implementing any strategy, remember to:

1. Assess: What is my child currently able to do?
2. Goal: what is a specific goal for your child to work towards?
3. Strategies: How will you teach to reach the goal?
4. Monitor: How will you know if the teaching strategies are working?

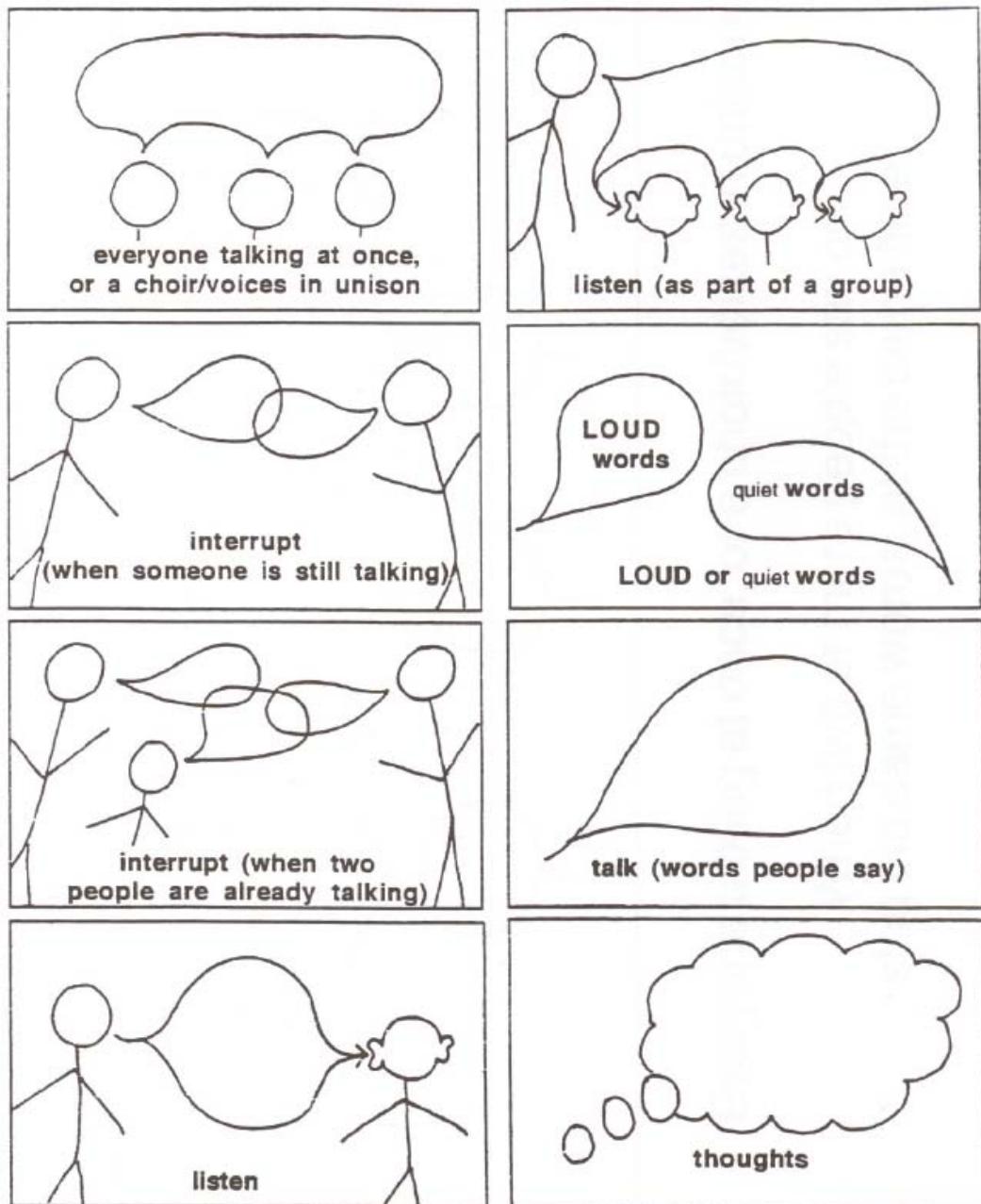
## References

- Gray, C. (1994). *Comic Strip Conversations*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.
- Corbett, B.A., & Abdullah, M. (2005). Video modeling: why does it work for children with autism *Journal of Experimental Intensive Behavioral Intervention*, 2(1), 2-8.
- Harris, S.L., & Weiss, M.J. (1998). *Right From the Start: Behavioral Intervention for Young Children with Autism*, Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

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## Appendix A: Conversation Symbols Dictionary



Gray, C. (1994). *Comic Strip Conversations*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

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