

Comic Strip Conversations

Comic strip conversations were created by Carol Gray and are simple visual representations of conversation. They can show:

- The things that are actually said in a conversation.
- How people might be feeling.
- What people's intentions might be.

Comic strip conversations use stick figures and symbols to represent social interactions and abstract aspects of conversation, and colour to represent the emotional content of a statement or message. Comic strip conversations help to make the more abstract aspects of social communication more 'concrete' and therefore easier to understand.

How to use comic strip conversations?

Comic strip conversations can help people with autism to understand concepts that they find particularly difficult. People draw as they talk and use these drawings to learn about different social situations. In a comic strip conversation, the person with autism takes the lead role with parents, carers or teachers offering support and guidance following the guide below.

- Start with small talk (for example, talking about the weather) to get people familiar with drawing whilst talking and to mimic ordinary social interactions.
- Ask a range of questions about a specific situation or type of social interaction. The person with autism answers by speaking and drawing their response.
- Summarise the event or situation you've discussed using the drawings as a guide.
- Think about how you can address any problems or concerns that have been identified.
- Develop an action plan for similar situations in the future. This will be a helpful guide for the person with autism.

For complex situations, or for people who have difficulty reporting events in sequence, comic strip boxes may be used, or drawings can be numbered in the sequence in which they occur.

Comic strip conversations can be used to plan for a situation in the future that may be causing anxiety or concern, for example an exam or a social event. However, remember that plans can sometimes change. It's important to present the information in a way which allows for unexpected changes to a situation.

Useful link for further information

National Autistic Society-

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>

