

Managing Peer Conflict and Rejection for Young Adults with ASD: The UCLA PEERS[®] Program



PEERS[®] Clinic



www.semel.ucla.edu/peers

Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson

Associate Clinical Professor

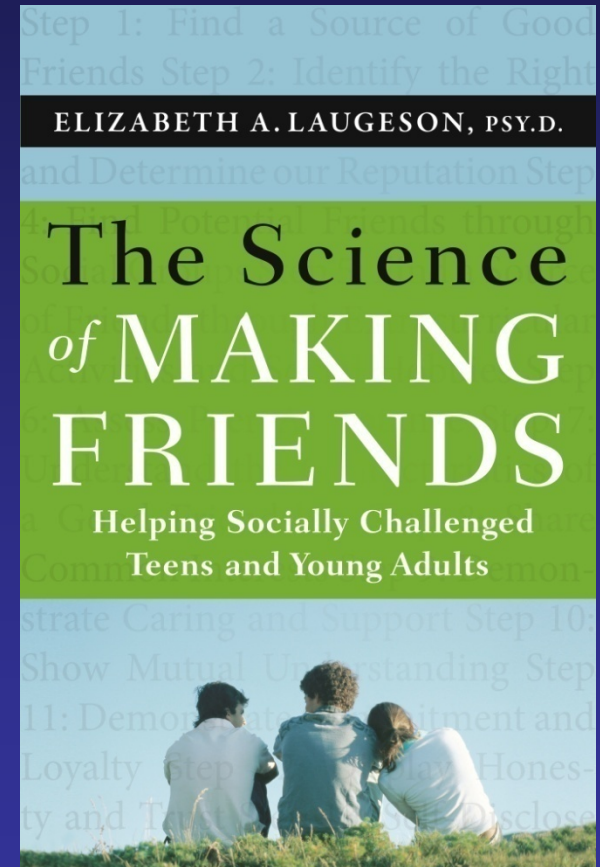
Founder and Director, UCLA PEERS Clinic

Training Director, UCLA Tarjan Center UCEDD

Program Director, UCLA Autism Center of Excellence, Core D

Overview of Lecture

- Social deficits among peer rejected and socially neglected youth with ASD
- Consequences of peer rejection
- Effective methods of social skills instruction
- PEERS intervention strategies
- Summary of research findings
- Research directions
- Resources



Social Deficits Among Young Adults with ASD

Photo of PEERS® courtesy of People Magazine

- Poor social communication
 - Problems with topic initiation
 - Use repetitive themes
 - One-sided conversations
- Poor social awareness
 - Difficulty understanding social cues
- Poor social motivation
 - Less social engagement
 - Less involvement in social activities
 - Lack of peer entry attempts
- Poor social cognition
 - Difficulty understanding the perspectives of others
- Few close reciprocal friendships



(Volkmar & Klin, 1998; Bauminger & Kasari, 2000; Orsmond, Krauss, & Seltzer, 2004; Koning & Magill-Evans, 2001; LeCouteur et al., 1989; Marks, Schrader, Longaker, & Levine, 2000; Ghaziuddin & Gerstein, 1996; Twatchman-Cullen, 1998; Hemphill & Siperstein, 1990; Church, Alisanki, Amanullah, 2000; Constantino, 2005)

Consequences of Social Deficits for Youth with ASD

- Social neglect and isolation
 - Withdrawn
 - Seen as shy by others
 - Go unnoticed
 - Not engaging others socially
 - Anxious, depressed
- Peer rejection
 - Teased and bullied
 - Unsuccessful attempts to socially engage others
 - Bad reputation
 - ADHD, impulse control disorders
- Peer conflict
 - Arguments may result in termination of friendship
- Higher incidence of bullying

Photo of PEERS® courtesy of Associated Press



(Volkmar & Klin, 1998; Bauminger & Kasari, 2000; Orsmond, Krauss, & Seltzer, 2004; Koning & Magill-Evans, 2001; LeCouteur et al., 1989; Marks, Schrader, Longaker, & Levine, 2000; Ghaziuddin & Gerstein, 1996; Twatchman-Cullen, 1998; Hemphill & Siperstein, 1990; Church, Alisanki, Amanullah, 2000)

Bullying and Peer Victimization Among Adolescents with ASD

- Teens with ASD are NINE times more likely to experience peer victimization than “non-disabled” peers
- 94% of teens with ASD report experiencing some form of peer victimization in the previous year
- Teens with ASD and comorbid ADHD are FOUR times more likely to engage in bullying behavior
 - Teens with ASD without ADHD do not differ from typically developing teens in rates of engaging in bullying behavior

(Olweus, 1973, 1993; Rose et al., 2009; Dinkes et al., 2006; Poteat & Espelage, 2007; Nansel et al., 2001; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Schwartz, 2010; Perry et al., 2001; Doren et al., 1996; Little, 2001, 2002; Montes & Halterman, 2007; van Roekel et al., 2010; Whitney et al., 1992; Martlew & Hodson, 1991; O'Moore & Hillery, 1989)

Consequences of Bullying and Peer Victimization Among Adolescents

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Low self-esteem
- Substance abuse
- Poor academic performance
- Suicidal ideation
- Suicide attempts

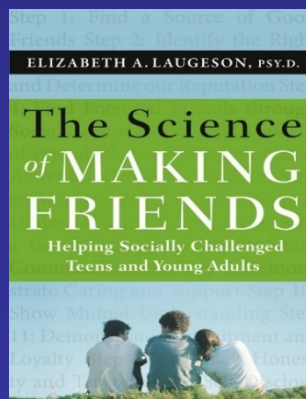
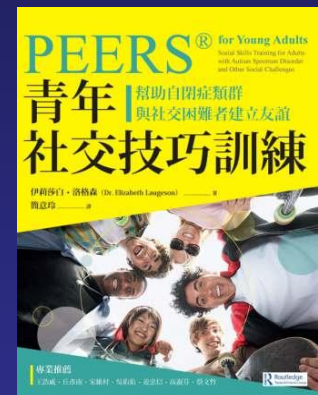
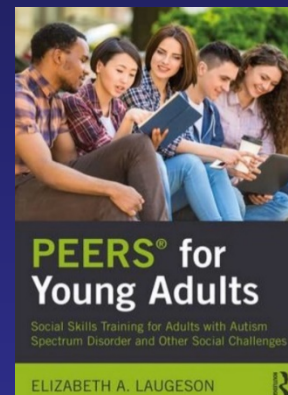
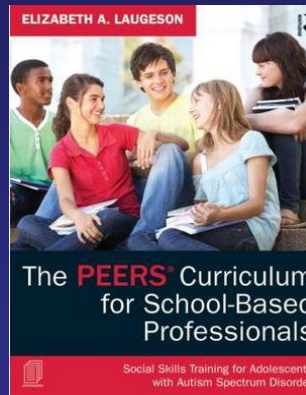
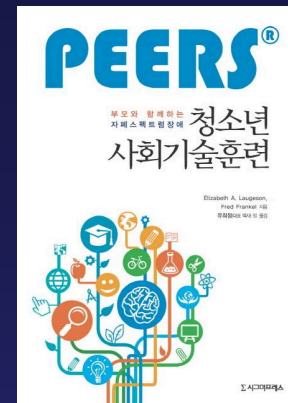
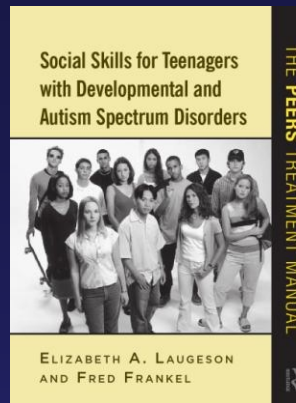
Photo of PEERS® courtesy of Associated Press



(Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Nansel et al., 2001; Buhrmeister, 1990; Matson, Smiroldo, & Bamburg, 1998; Miller & Ingham, 1976)

Background about PEERS®

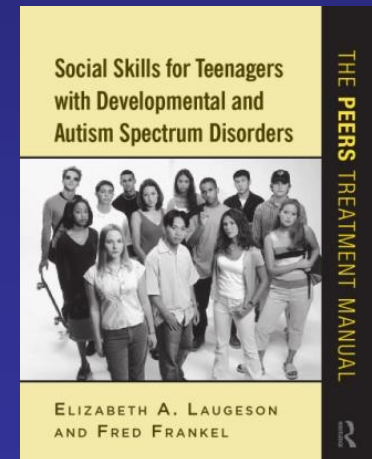
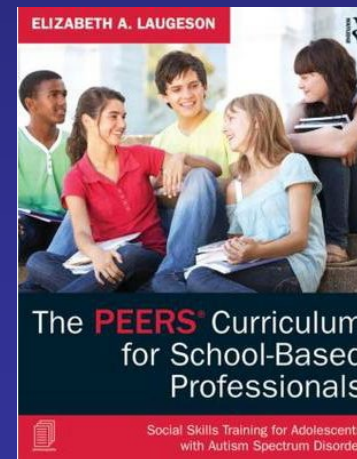
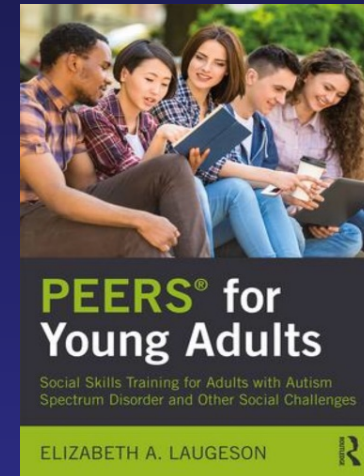
- International program
 - Developed at UCLA in 2004
 - Adolescent program has been translated into over a dozen languages
 - Used in over 70 countries
- Evidence-Based Social Skills Programs:
 - PEERS® for Preschoolers
 - PEERS® for Adolescents
 - PEERS® for Young Adults
- Research Programs:
 - PEERS® for Careers
 - PEERS® for Dating



PEERS® Targeted Social Skills

Friendship and Romantic Relationship Skills:

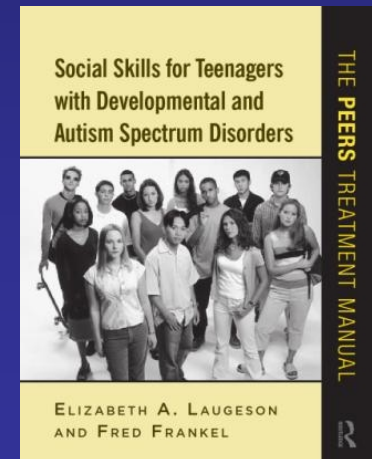
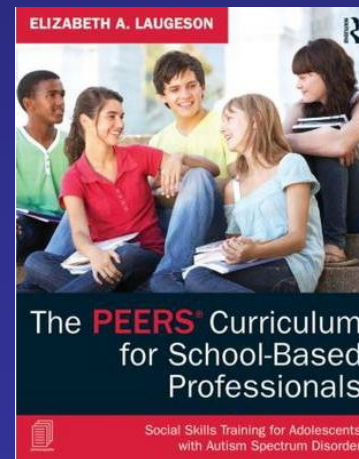
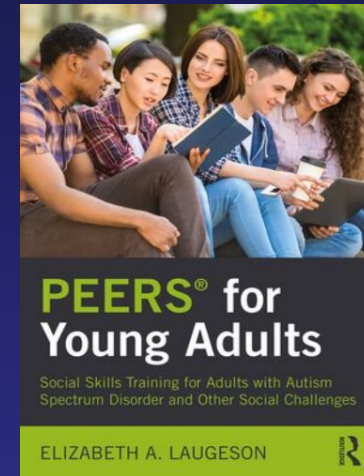
- Finding and choosing good friends and romantic partners
- Conversational skills
- Starting and entering conversations
- Exiting conversations
- Electronic communication
- Appropriate use of humor
- Get-togethers
- Good sportsmanship
- Dating etiquette
 - Letting someone know you like them
 - Asking someone on a date
 - Organizing and planning a date
 - General dating do's and don'ts



PEERS[®] Targeted Social Skills

Managing Conflict and Rejection Skills:

- Dating etiquette
 - Taking no for an answer
 - Politely turning someone down for a date
 - Handling unwanted sexual pressure
- Handling arguments
- Changing a bad reputation
- Handling direct bullying
 - Teasing and embarrassing feedback
 - Physical bullying
- Handling indirect bullying
 - Cyber bullying
 - Rumors and gossip



Strategies in white will be covered in the lecture

Handling Teasing

QUESTIONS:

What are most young people told to do in response to teasing?

What do most young people with ASD do in response to teasing?



PEERS® Rules for Handling Teasing

- Do not walk away, ignore the person, or tell an adult
- Don't show you're upset or tease back
- Act like what the person said did not bother you
- Provide a SHORT COMEBACK that shows what the person said was lame:
 - Whatever!
 - Anyway...
 - So what?
 - Big deal!
 - Who cares?
 - Yeah and?
 - And your point is?
 - Am I supposed to care?
 - Is that supposed to be funny?
 - (Shrug shoulders)
 - (Roll eyes)
- Then walk away or remove yourself

INSERT VIDEO

Physical Bullying

QUESTIONS:

What are most young people told to do in response to physical bullying?

What do most young people with ASD do in response to physical bullying?

PEERS® Rules for Avoiding Physical Bullying

- Avoid the bully
 - Stay out of reach of the bully
 - If the bully can't find you, he can't bully you
- Plan your route
- Lay low when the bully is around
 - Don't draw attention to yourself
 - If the bully doesn't notice you, he won't bully you
- Don't provoke the bully
 - Don't use the strategies for teasing with the bully
- Don't tease the bully
- Don't police the bully
 - Don't tell on the bully for minor offenses
- Don't try to make friends with the bully
- Hang out with other people
 - Bullies like to pick on people who are by themselves
- Stay near people in authority when the bully is around
- Report the bullying as a last resort

(Laugeson & Frankel 2010;
Laugeson 2013;
Laugeson 2014;
Laugeson 2017)

Cyber Bullying

QUESTIONS:

What are most young people told to do in response to cyber bullying?

What do cyber bullies want their victims to do?



PEERS[®] Rules for Minimizing Cyber Bullying

- Don't feed the trolls
- Don't react
- Have friends stick up for you
- Lay low online
- Block the bully
- Approve or block the tags
- Approve or block the comments
- Save the evidence
- Get help from supportive adults
- Report cyber bullying



(Laugeson & Frankel 2010; Laugeson 2013;
Laugeson 2014; Laugeson 2017)

Rumors and Gossip

QUESTIONS:

What are most young people told to do when they are the target of rumors and gossip?

What is the natural response to someone spreading a rumor about you?



PEERS[®] Rules for Handling Rumors & Gossip

- Every instinct we have is WRONG
- Don't try to disprove the gossip
- Don't show that you're upset
- Don't confront the source of the gossip
- Avoid the source of the gossip
- Act amazed anyone would BELIEVE or CARE about the gossip
 - “I can't believe anyone would believe that.”
 - “People are so gullible.”
 - “People will believe anything.”
 - “Can you believe anyone cares about that?”
 - “People need to get a life/hobby.”

(Laugeson & Frankel 2010;
Laugeson 2013;
Laugeson 2014;
Laugeson 2017)

PEERS® Steps for Handling Rumors & Gossip

Spread the rumor about yourself:

1. Find an audience
2. Find a supportive friend
3. Acknowledge the rumor
 - “Did you hear this rumor....”
4. Act amazed anyone would BELIEVE or CARE about the rumor
 - “I can’t believe anyone believes that.”
 - “People are so gullible.”
 - “People need to find something interesting to talk about.”
 - “People need to get a life.”
5. Repeat with other supportive friends

(Laugeson & Frankel 2010;
Laugeson 2013; Laugeson
2014; Laugeson 2017)

Bad Role-Play: Handling Rumors and Gossip

Good Role-Play: Handling Rumors and Gossip

Handling Arguments

QUESTIONS:

What are most young people told to do when in an argument?

What do many young people with social challenges do when in an argument?

Photo of PEERS® courtesy of LA Times



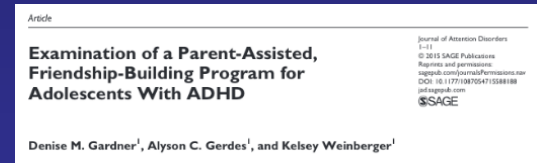
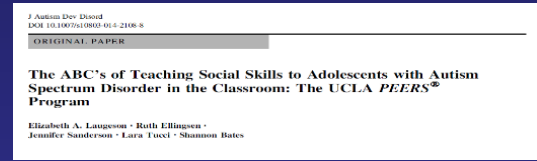
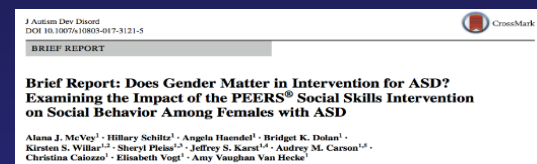
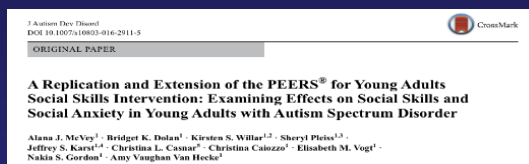
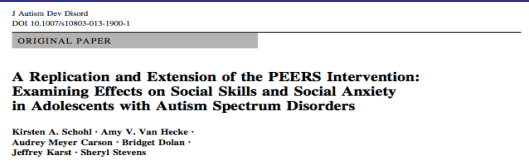
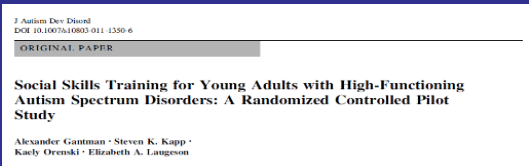
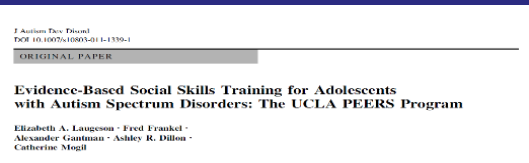
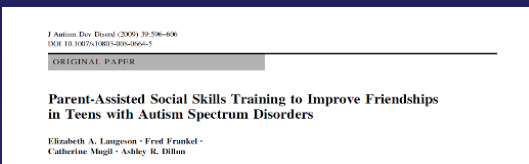
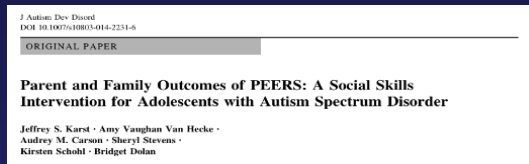
PEERS[®] Steps for Handling Arguments

1. Keep your cool
2. Listen
3. Repeat what they said
4. Explain your side
using “I” statements
5. Say you’re sorry
6. Try to solve the
problem

INSERT VIDEO

(Laugeson & Frankel 2010; Laugeson 2013;
Laugeson 2014; Laugeson 2017)

PEERS® Evidence-Base in the United States



PEERS® Evidence-Base Outside of the United States

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Randomized Controlled Trial of the Korean Version of the PEERS® Parent-Assisted Social Skills Training Program for Teens With ASD

Hee-Jeong Yoo, Geonho Bahn, In-Hee Cho, Eun-Kyung Kim, Joo-Hyun Kim, Jung-Won Min, Won-Hye Lee, Jun-Seong Seo, Sang-Shin Jun, Guiyoung Bong, Soochurl Cho, Min-Sup Shin, Bung-Nyun Kim, Jae-Won Kim, Subin Park, and Elizabeth A. Laugeson

Journal of Education & Social Policy

Vol. 3, No. 4; October 2016

Examining the Efficacy of an Adapted Version of the UCLA PEERS® Program with Canadian Adolescents


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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Randomized Controlled Trial evaluating the Hebrew Adaptation of the PEERS® Intervention: Behavioral and Questionnaire-Based Outcomes

Shai Joseph Rabin, Sandra Israel-Yaacov, Elizabeth A. Laugeson, Irit Mor-Snir, and Ofer Golan 

Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-018-3728-1>

ORIGINAL PAPER



Learning How to Make Friends for Chinese Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Randomized Controlled Trial of the Hong Kong Chinese Version of the PEERS® Intervention

Kathy Kar-Man Shum¹ · Wai Kwan Cho² · Lourdes Mei Oi Lam² · Elizabeth A. Laugeson³ · Wai Shan Wong² · Louisa S. K. Law²

EMPIRISCH ONDERZOEK

Nederlandse hertaling van de PEERS-training

GABRINE JAGERSMA, SAKINAH IDRIS, SOPHIE JACOBS, BJORN JAIME VAN PELT,
KIRSTIN GREAVES-LORD

Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-018-3859-4>

ORIGINAL PAPER



Age as a Moderator of Social Skills Intervention Response Among Korean Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Jung Kyung Hong¹ · Miae Oh² · Guiyoung Bong¹ · Ju-Hyun Kim¹ · Geonho Bahn³ · In-Hee Cho⁴ · Hee Jeong Yoo^{1,5}

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PEERS® Research Snapshot: Long-term Follow-up Study

(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel, 2013)

- Data was collected 1-5 years post-treatment
 - T1 – Pre-test
 - T2 – Post-test
 - T3 – 1-5 year follow-up
- 53 of 82 potential subjects
 - 64% response rate
- No significant differences between participants and non-participants at baseline
- Mean age at follow-up:
 - 17.5 years old
 - 11.4 grade level
- Mean time to follow-up:
 - 29 months

Journal of Mental Health Research
in *Intellectual Disabilities*, 7:45–73, 2014
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ISSN: 1931-5864 print/1931-5872 online
DOI: 10.1080/19315864.2012.730600



Long-Term Treatment Outcomes for Parent-Assisted Social Skills Training for Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorders: The UCLA PEERS Program

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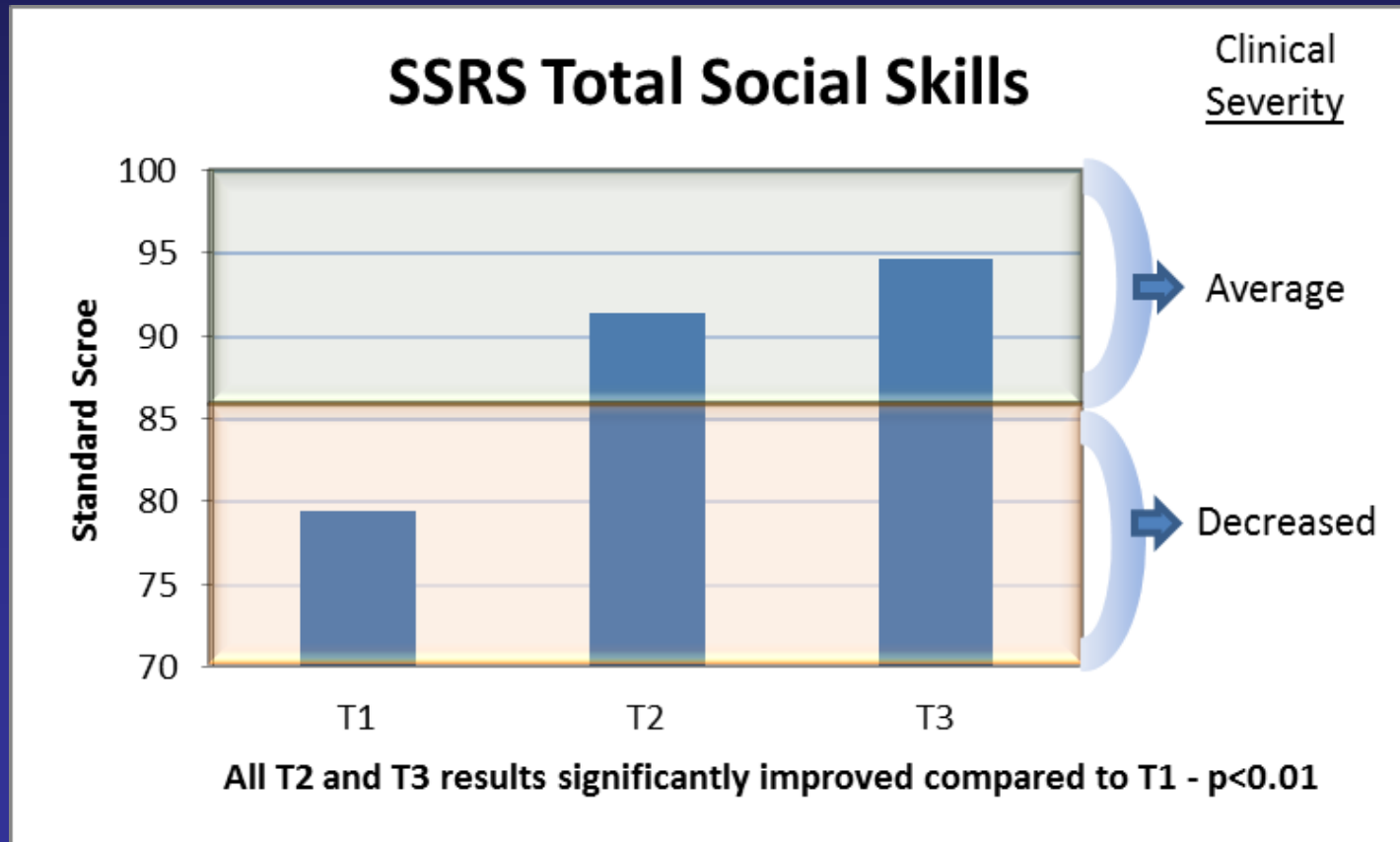
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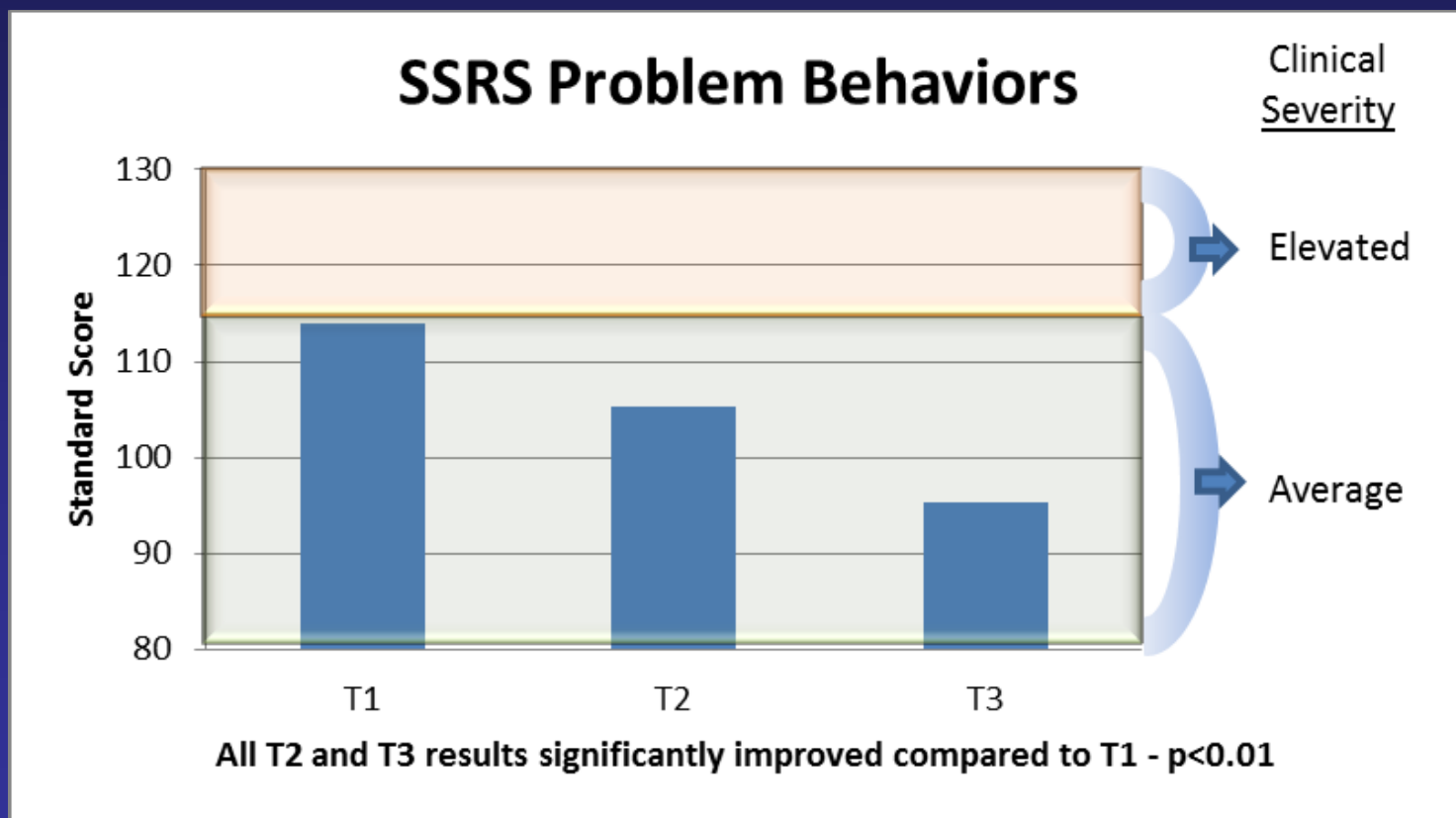
PEERS[®] Research Snapshot: Long-term Follow-up Study

(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel, 2013)



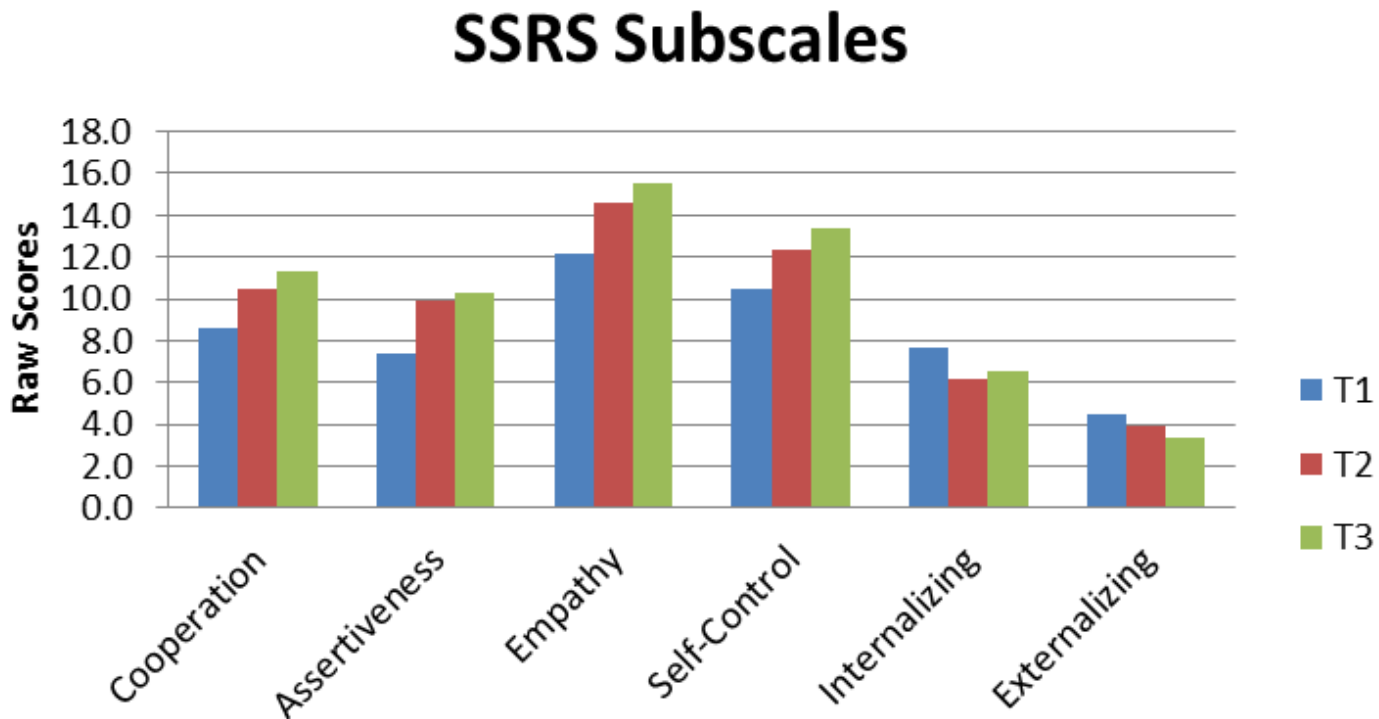
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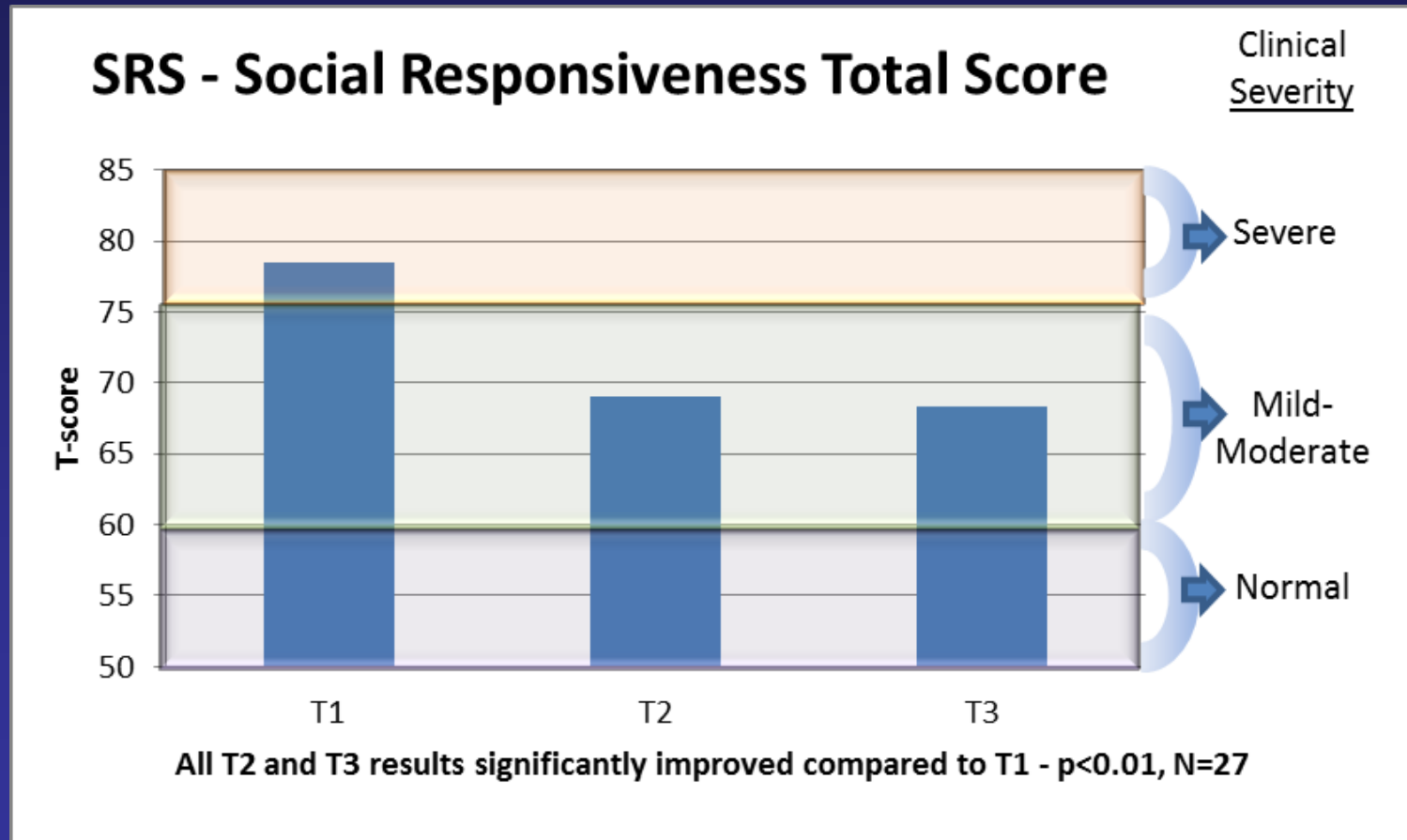
(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel, 2013)



All T3 results significantly improved compared to T1 - $p < 0.01$

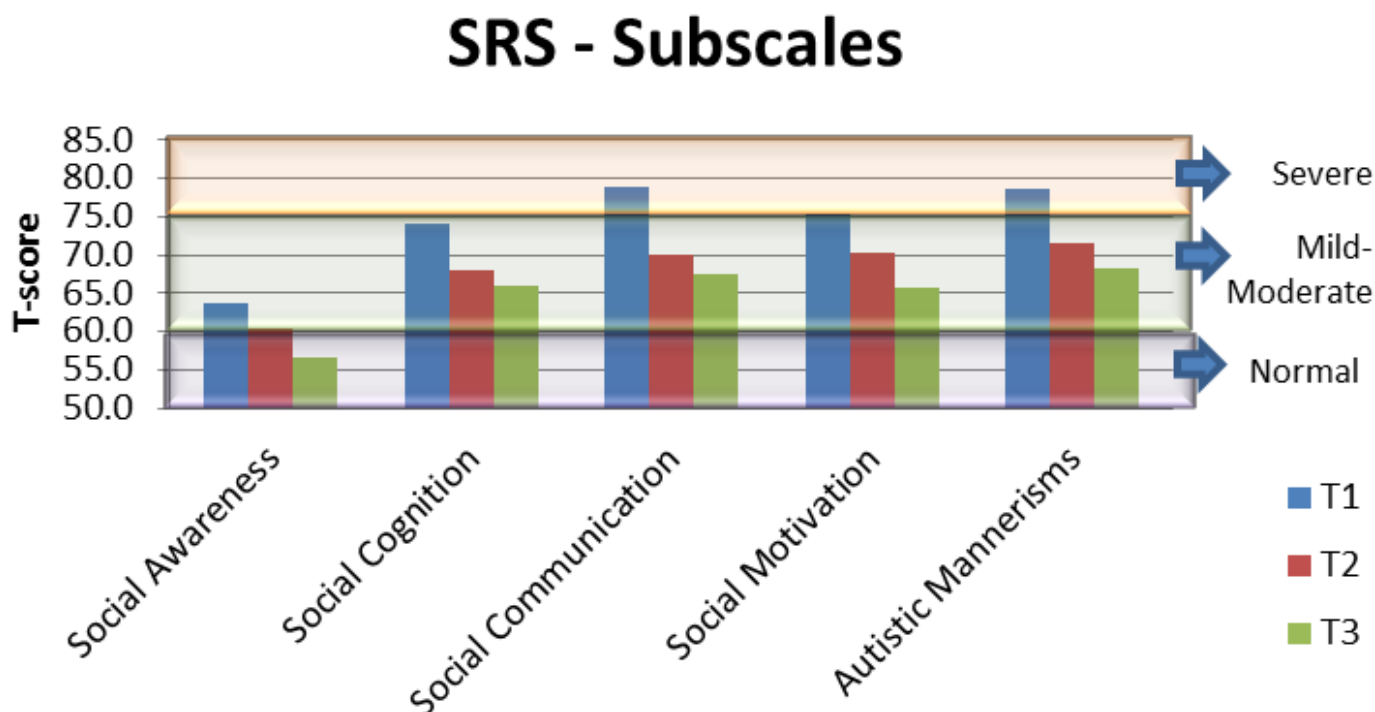
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PEERS[®] Research Snapshot: Long-term Follow-up Study

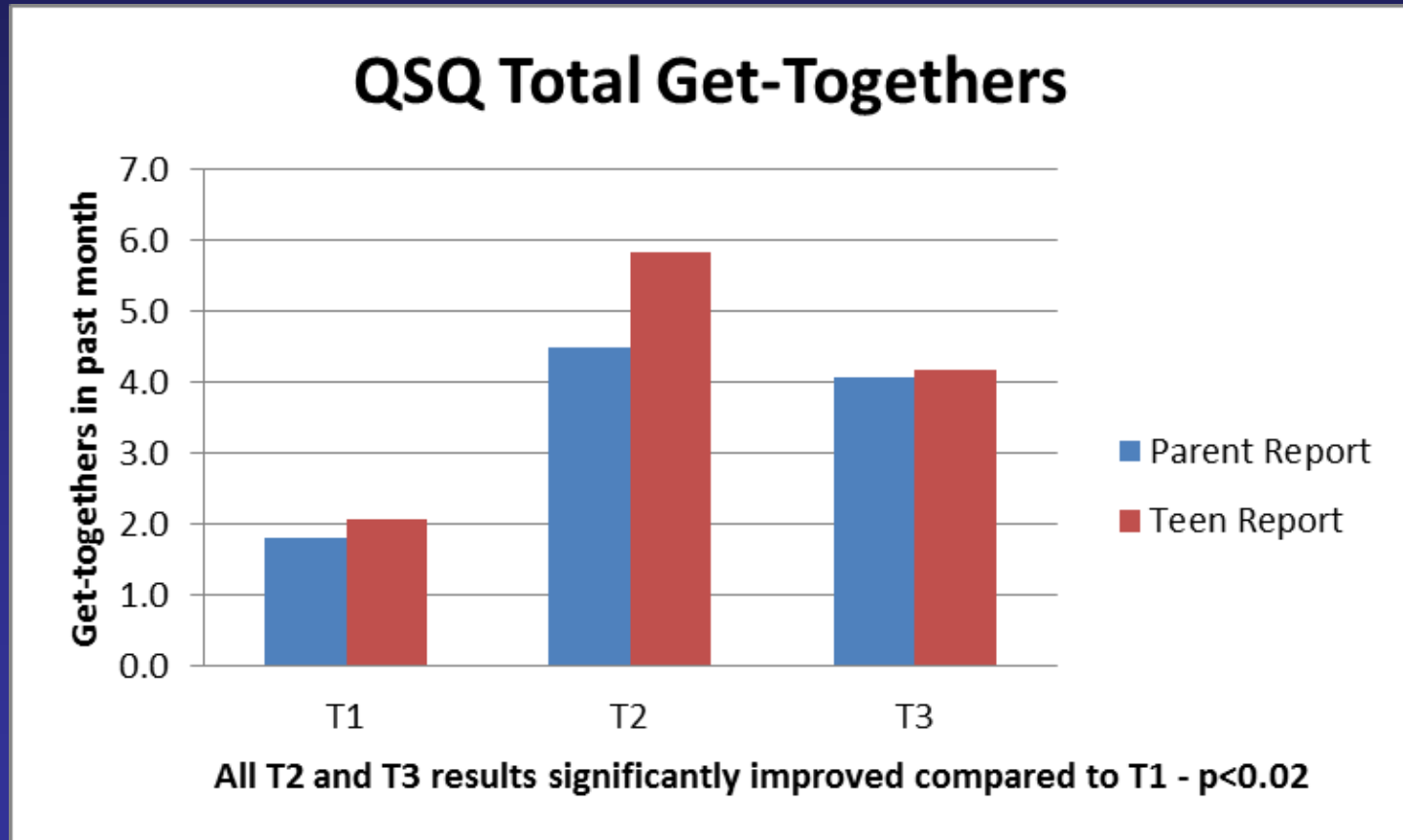
(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel, 2013)



All T3 results significantly improved compared to T1 - $p < 0.02$, $N = 27$

PEERS[®] Research Snapshot: Long-term Follow-up Study

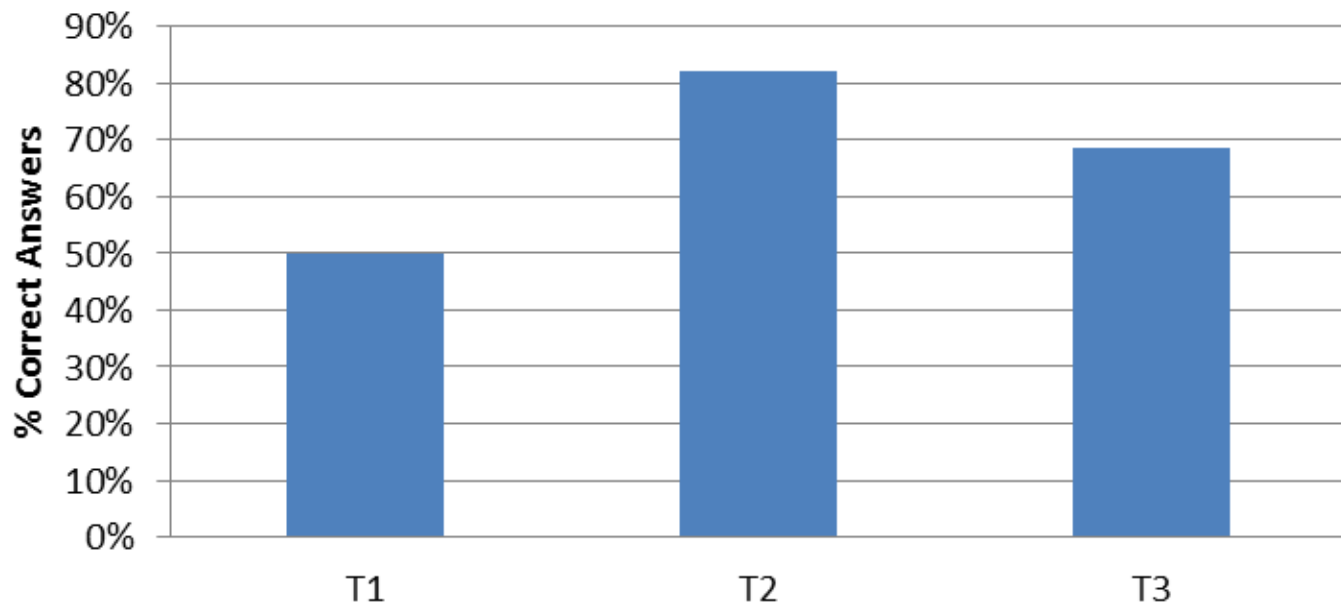
(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel, 2013)



PEERS[®] Research Snapshot: Long-term Follow-up Study

(Mandelberg, Laugeson, Cunningham, Ellingsen, Bates, & Frankel, 2013)

TASSK Social Skills Knowledge



All T2 and T3 results significantly improved compared to T1 - $p < 0.01$

Current Research Program: College to Career Transition Program

- Career Coach Training
 - 10 week course
 - Weekly two hour classes
- Speed Coaching Session
 - Career coaches and young adults meet for five minutes each
- PEERS for Careers
 - 10 week course
 - Two 90-minute weekly classes
 - Concurrent young adult and career coaching groups
- Paid Internship
 - Paid employment opportunities
 - Individualized support and treatment planning
 - Ongoing career coaching from undergraduate students

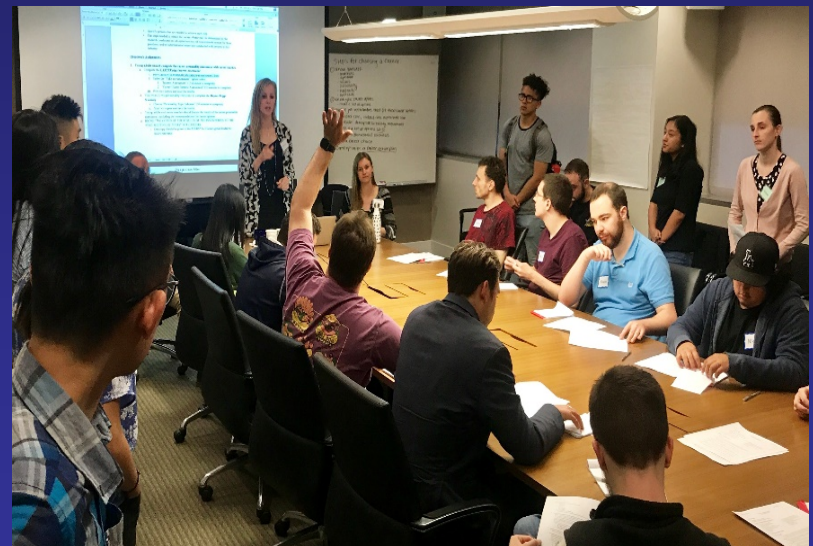


Current Research Program: PEERS[®] for Dating

- 16-week group-based social skills intervention focused on developing and maintaining romantic relationships for adults with ASD
- Concurrent dating coach sessions
- Recruitment begins Summer 2019

Targeted Skills:

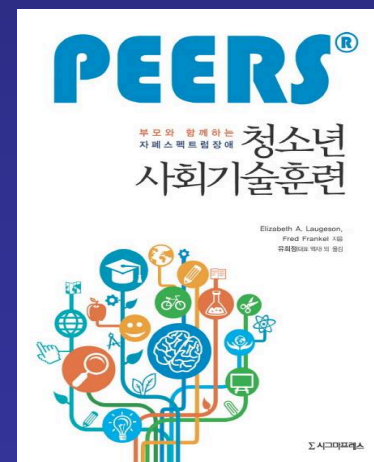
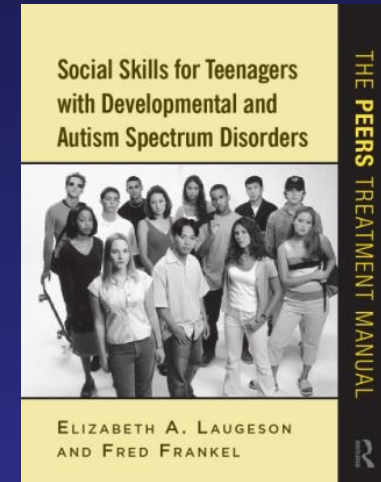
1. Choosing and finding appropriate people to date
2. Starting conversations
3. Maintaining conversations
4. Entering and exiting conversations
5. Electronic communication
6. Online dating
7. Letting someone know you like them
8. Asking someone on a date
9. Handling rejection
10. Going on dates
11. Dating do's and don'ts
12. Handling sexual pressure
13. Relationship boundaries
14. Physical contact and sexual activity
15. Conflict resolution



PEERS[®] for Adolescents

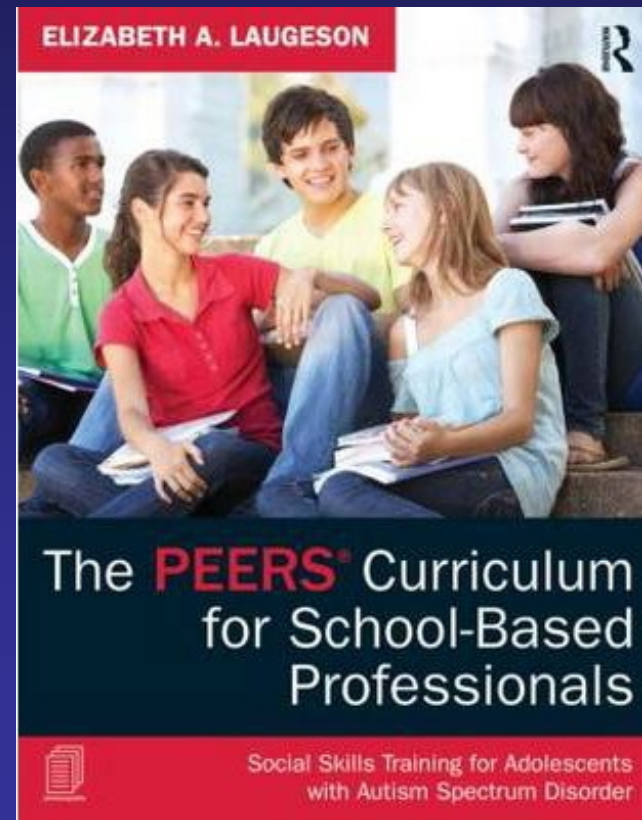
Parent-Assisted Treatment

- Certified Trainings at UCLA:
 - September 18-20, 2019
 - January 15-17, 2020
- 14-week curriculum
- Weekly 90-minute teen sessions and parent sessions
- Parent handouts
- Addresses core deficits for ASD
- Focuses on friendship skills and handling peer rejection and conflict
- Teaches ecologically valid social skills



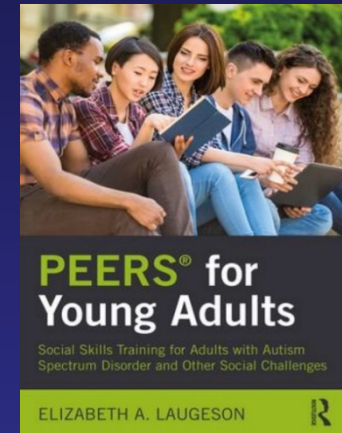
PEERS[®] for Adolescents School-Based Curriculum

- Certified Trainings at UCLA
 - June 19-21, 2019
- Teacher-facilitated curriculum
- 16-week program
- Daily lesson plans
- Focuses on friendship skills and strategies for handling peer rejection and conflict
- Includes weekly comprehensive parent handouts



PEERS® for Young Adults Caregiver-Assisted Treatment

- Certified Trainings at UCLA:
 - July 29-31, 2019
 - October 21-23, 2019
 - February 10-12, 2020
- 16-week curriculum
- Weekly 90-minute young adult sessions and caregiver sessions
- Social coaching handouts
- Addresses core deficits for ASD
- Focuses on friendship and relationships skills and handling peer rejection and conflict
- Teaches ecologically valid social skills

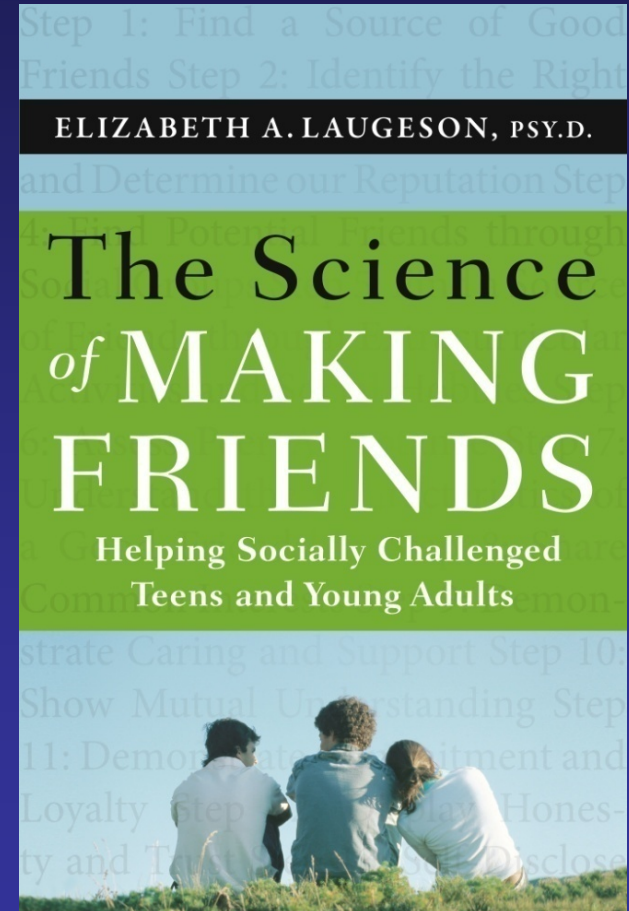
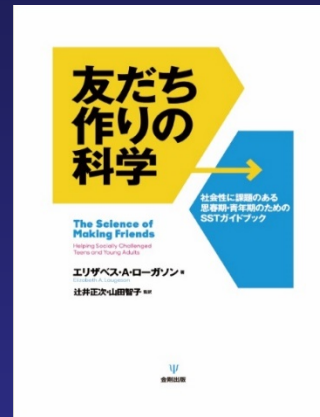


The Science of Making Friends:

Helping Socially Challenged Teens and Young Adults

(Laugeson, 2013)

- Parent book
- Friendship skills
- Handling peer rejection and conflict
- Parent section
 - Narrative lessons
 - Social coaching tips
- Chapter summaries for teens and young adults
- Chapter exercises / homework
- Companion DVD
 - Role-play videos
- Mobile App: *FriendMaker*
 - Virtual social coach



UCLA PEERS[®] Clinical Programs

- **Preschool Groups**
 - Tuesdays 3:30 – 5:00 PM
 - Children 4-6 years of age
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
- **Adolescent Groups**
 - Middle and high school
 - Wednesdays 4:30 – 6:00 PM
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Wednesdays 6:30 – 8:00 PM
 - ADHD, depression, anxiety, etc.
- **Young Adult Groups**
 - Mondays 4:30 – 6:00 PM
 - Mondays 6:30 – 8:00 PM
 - 18-35 years of age
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder and other social challenges



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Acknowledgements

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Shannon Bates, Psy.D.
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