




Exploring the Effects of Social Stories Intervention on Communication Skills and Anxiety Reduction in Children with Autism

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E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence “Deficits in initiating, maintaining, and responding appropriately...” would be strengthened by clarifying whether these refer to verbal, non-verbal, or both types of communication and citing developmental communication models in ASD.

The SCAS is validated for ages 8 to 15. If participants were indeed aged 6–10, this should be addressed to avoid issues with scale validity for the younger subgroup.

The session description says, “Children were guided to identify emotions... relate them to their own experiences.” Please clarify how these identifications were recorded or assessed. Were checklists or observational ratings used?

The phrase “Techniques such as deep breathing and using calming words...” introduces intervention elements outside Social Stories. Please clarify whether this was a hybrid approach and whether those strategies are supported by prior literature.

Again, there is an age discrepancy—this section states “adolescents aged between 13 and 17 years,” which contradicts the methods and abstract. This is a major inconsistency that must be corrected for demographic accuracy.

While useful, Table 1 does not include sample sizes for each stage, nor does it specify whether these were intention-to-treat analyses. Please clarify whether attrition occurred.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The reference to “neurocognitive models of anxiety in autism” should be elaborated. Which model(s)? Including at least one citation (e.g., intolerance of uncertainty models) would increase theoretical depth.

The claim that “relatively few randomized controlled trials have examined...” lacks a reference. A systematic review or meta-analysis could support this claim and show the study’s originality.

The ANOVA assumption testing is misaligned with the measures used. The variables listed—“attention regulation” and “emotional maturity”—do not correspond to the actual dependent variables of communication and anxiety. Please correct these labels.

The sentence “...confirmed significant interaction effects between time and group...” should be accompanied by a discussion of practical significance or clinical implications of the observed changes (e.g., improvements exceeding minimal clinically important differences).

While stating that “the intervention’s impact on anxiety is congruent...” with prior literature, it would strengthen the discussion to include theoretical mechanisms—e.g., does story-based intervention function through exposure, modeling, or emotion regulation?

The authors mention “culturally tailored” interventions. Please include specific examples or excerpts from stories used in the study that were culturally adapted for Kenyan children, to support this claim.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.