An Integrated Intervention Approach for the students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Tam Yuen Leung, Eric
Project Manager, School Supportive Services
Hong Kong Children & Youth Services
Tel: 2638 0777 Fax: 2650 7696 Email: erictam@hkcys.org.hk

Background

Difficulties in communication are commonly found in the students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Their distinct features may hinder their social relationship with others. One of the most challenges for them in communication is to understand other peoples’ perspectives. Their weird responses may sometimes originate from their misunderstanding of other peoples’ perspectives. In order to enhance their ability to understand other peoples’ perspectives and social interaction, we have put the ILAUGH model of Social Thinking and Experiential Learning Method into practice.

Objectives

To enhance their awareness of other peoples’ perspectives and improve their social response with others.

Method

From 2013 to 2015, two groups of students with ASD or communication deficit were invited to join a structured training group in which the ILAUGH model was applied. Ten training sessions of Social Thinking training were organized for each group. In order to consolidate their learning, the students also participated in two sessions of outdoor training involving Experiential Learning Method. Their peers were also invited to take part. Through some interactive activities, such as adventure games, hiking and city-hunt activity, the students could gain insights into understanding other peoples’ perspectives during group participation. The social worker could remind them of making use of what they have learnt in the Social Thinking training group to communicate with each other. Their peers could sometimes act as a role model of appropriate communication method during their interaction.

Outcome

The effect of the integration of Social Thinking and Experiential Learning Method is significant. According to the result of the evaluation form, 100% of the students were able to learn how to interpret the feelings and thoughts of others. In addition, their ability to cooperate with other people has improved. Here are some of their feedback after the training:

“%I need to consider the perspective of others when I communicate with them.”
“I understand how to maintain a conversation when I meet a new friend.”
“The training enables me to understand that to solve a problem, we need to communicate with each other very well.”

It is believed that the students with ASD can gain insights into their learning if they can practise how to interact with other people with proper guidance.

Reference