



Workshop Descriptions

- **Using role play, modelling and puppets to teach social skills for primary school ELSA's - Alex Kelly and Naomi Pearson**

Introduction to the fascinating subject of the creative arts to teach skills to children. Using role play, modelling and puppets (where appropriate) is one of the most useful ways to help children develop confidence in using new skills and to then generalize these skills outside of your classroom. Alex will explain why this is, but more importantly how to do it. Because this will affect how successful you are. So Alex will demonstrate these with the help of a few of you (hopefully!) and she will also bring her puppets with her so you can play with one of these... if you want to]

- **Developing friendship skills for secondary school and college ELSA's - Alex Kelly and Naomi Pearson**

How to develop friendship skills within the context of the child's social skills and self-esteem. The connection between self-esteem, social skills & relationships is well documented: if a child feels valued & accepted by others, they will have a higher self-esteem than the child who struggles with friendships, & children with low self-esteem often lack the social skills to make & maintain friendships. Alex and Naomi will briefly consider the underpinning theory and then will give you some practical ideas for setting up friendship interventions in your school.

Bios



Alex Kelly is the author of the Talkabout publications. She is a speech & language therapist (SLT) with 35 years' experience of working with people with social skills difficulties. She spent 23 years working in the NHS but now runs her own business & spends most of her time writing & lecturing around the UK & abroad.



Naomi Pearson is also a SLT & has worked with Alex for 21 years. She is the co-author of the TASS – the Talkabout Assessment of Social Skills (pub 2022) & is due to complete a PhD in social skills in 2023. She is the MD of Speaking Space Ltd – a SLT company set up by Alex in 2009 – & she manages a team of 20 staff.

- **Autistic young people and social skills** - *Hannah Edwards, Educational Psychologist*

Supporting children and young people who see and experience the world a little differently can be difficult, especially when it comes to social skills. This workshop will explore taking a neurodiversity-affirmative approach to supporting autistic children and young people, and their non-autistic peers, when navigating the sometimes tricky social world. The workshop will cover topics such as the Double Empathy Problem and consider how to support autistic young people without promoting social masking. There will also be discussions as to how to help non-autistic individuals learn how best to communicate with their autistic peers. After all, communication and socialising is a two-way street!

- **School belonging: how can we nurture it?** - *Charlotte Finnegan, Educational Psychologist*

School belonging is linked to multiple academic, psychological well-being and behavioral outcomes and has a huge impact on a child's overall school experience. This workshop will explore the concept of school belonging and why it is so important for all children and young people. We will look at some key theories and consider how we can help boost the sense of belonging of the children with whom we work.

- **Blank Level Questioning & Comic Strip Conversations** – *Nicola Kelly (Specialist Speech and Language Therapist- Communication and Interaction Team).*

This workshop will look at two practical strategies to support pupils to understand and talk about different social situations:

- ✚ **Comic Strip Conversations**- an excellent visual tool to help pupils to understand and talk about what happened, their thoughts, feelings and actions and the thoughts, feelings and actions of others and to think of possible ways to resolve and learn outcomes for next time.
- ✚ **Blank Level Questioning** – This is based on the Language of Learning model by Blank, Rose and Berlin (1978) and is more commonly known as The Blank Language Scheme or Blank Levels of Questioning. This model helps us to be more aware of the questions we are asking pupils, the language levels required to answer the question and how we can support pupils when they can't answer our questions.

We will look at how we combine these two strategies to support pupils' to understand as well as express their ideas. We will discuss how this can be applied to social situations with peers, behaviour support, to prepare for future events, and problem-solving situations they find difficult. This workshop is appropriate for learners who are new to these strategies. This workshop is also appropriate for learners who have some experience with one or both of these strategies and would like to learn more about how to combine them effectively to support pupils' language needs.