



Concept #10:
Shared Imagination



- Presented by: Michelle Garcia Winner, SLP, MA-CCC
- Moderated by: Pamela Crooke, SLP, PhD-CCC

Enjoy our *10 Concepts* webinar series:

- 10 webinars
- 10 months
- 10 Social Thinking concepts

View all our recorded webinars:

www.socialthinking.com/webinars



What we take for granted
10 things...

1st webinar topic



Thoughts and Feelings

<p>2nd webinar topic</p>	 <p>Thinking with Your Eyes</p>
-------------------------------------	---

<p>3rd webinar topic</p>	 <p>The Group Plan</p>
-------------------------------------	---

<p>4th webinar topic</p>	 <p>Body in the Group</p>
-------------------------------------	---

5th webinar topic



Whole Body Listening

The graphic for 'Whole Body Listening' features a central figure composed of various body parts and symbols such as eyes, hands, ears, and hearts, all rendered in a dark, stylized font. The title 'Whole Body Listening' is written in a bold, sans-serif font at the bottom of the graphic.

6th webinar topic



Hidden Rules and Expected-Unexpected

The graphic for 'Hidden Rules and Expected-Unexpected' shows three stylized characters: one wearing a graduation cap, one holding an open book, and another looking on. The title 'Hidden Rules and Expected-Unexpected' is written in a bold, sans-serif font at the bottom of the graphic.

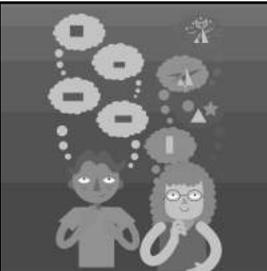
7th webinar topic



Smart Guess

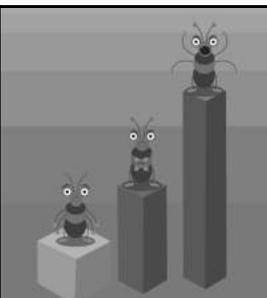
The graphic for 'Smart Guess' depicts two characters sitting at a table with a game board, with a thought bubble above them showing a stack of blocks. The title 'Smart Guess' is written in a bold, sans-serif font at the bottom of the graphic.

8th webinar topic



Flexible and Stuck Thinking

9th webinar topic



Size of the Problem

10th webinar topic



Sharing an Imagination

Shared Imagination vs
Singular Imagination

Shared Imagination

- We continuously share and imagine together during play, in the classroom, in conversation, at work, etc.
- Individuals imagine and then share their imagination with others, while also imagining what others imagine!
- We use language, actions and/or gestures to explain our thoughts and experiences.
- We each try to:
 - Imagine what others are doing or explaining
 - Ask questions or give comments to better imagine what others are saying or doing

Ultimately, we adjust our
experience through our shared
imagination.

What are they doing?....because it doesn't look like play!



When we can imagine someone else's experiences or feelings as different from our own, and understand they're no less important—we learn to sympathize and empathize.



“Empathy is about finding echoes of another person in yourself.”

www.india.afs.org

Singular Imagination

- The ability to imagine one’s own creative thoughts and plans and attempt to explain this imagined thinking to others without wanting or expecting feedback
- Those with singular imagination tend to:
 - Expect others to imagine only what he is imagining, or may be confused that others do not appreciate his imagined experience as *the* experience to imagine
 - Struggle to attend to and imagine others’ imagined experiences or plans

Having a singular imagination is not a behavior problem!

It is at the heart of an individual’s social cognition; therefore, it also impacts one’s development of social competencies.

Developmentally, young children 13-15 months old emerge into “We Collaboration.”

They are learning to identify and help others with accomplishing their goals.

As soon as we are *sharing goals* and I try to help you accomplish your goal...I am engaging in executive functioning.

Sharing a goal: two or more people read each other’s intentions and share an imagination of how they can collaborate together. This also involves future thinking!

Dr. Tomasello, in his book *Why We Cooperate*, summarizes research: Children 14-24 months old operate in “We-Mode” as they form joint goals with partners.

Tomasello, M.(2009) *Why We Cooperate*. MIT Press. Cambridge, MA.

Summarized study with 3-year-old children about joint goal completion:

- Two children worked together, with each needing to complete one part of a complex task.
- An edible reward was made available for each child immediately upon their own completion of their task.
- The first child to complete the task did not seek the reward, but instead went to help the other child.
- The reward was enjoyed only after both completed the task.
- This was demonstrated repeatedly with different children.

More things we take for granted in our preschools, schools, universities and work settings in different industries...

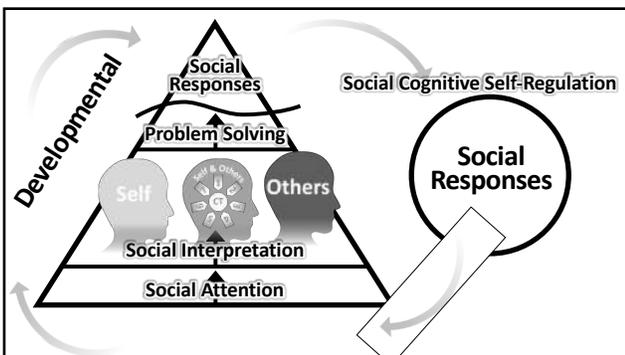
How executive functions are part of play, friendship, conversations, etc.

Flexible Thinking

- Imagining ourselves as someone we are not
- Emerging into self-otherness
- Imagining how someone feels when we have not experienced the exact same problem
- Relating to how others feel based on what we imagine (emergence into empathy)

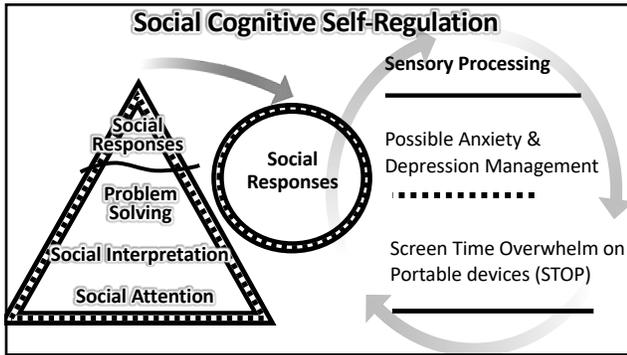
**Social Thinking's
Social Competency Model**

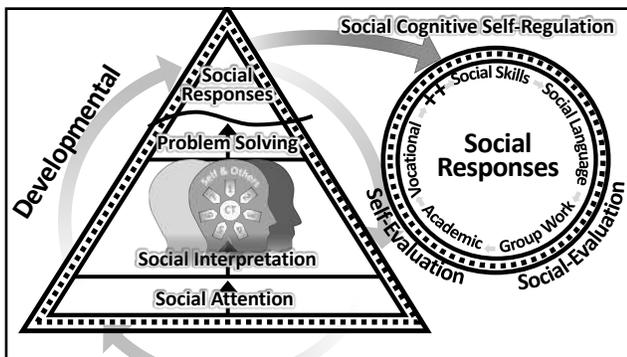
What's the role of *sharing an imagination*
in developing social competencies?



Self-Otherness:

Essential to group work, collaboration,
shared understanding, etc.





How this basic concept is involved in:

- Reading comprehension
- Social studies
- History
- Science lab
- Taking a test in the classroom
- Group work
- Homework
- Family event
- Sharing space in a house

Written expression requires students to learn to “write to an audience.”

Each time we ask students to write to an audience, we are suggesting that they engage in an act of sharing an imagination. They must imagine how their writing impacts the audience’s imagination—and if it makes sense to the audience.

Sharing an Imagination

Understanding its role across our lives!









How can we help students, who can't learn on their own, to imagine what others are imagining?

We need to teach it directly.



I Know You Know (Imagination)

Words and music by Tom Chapin & Phil Galdston



I know, I know that you know
I imagine, you imagine
I know, I know that you know
If you pretend and I pretend it's one, fun
Imagination.

You be a shark, I'll be a whale
Under the sea together.
We can be clowns, clowning around
Every night in the circus together
All we've got to do is know that

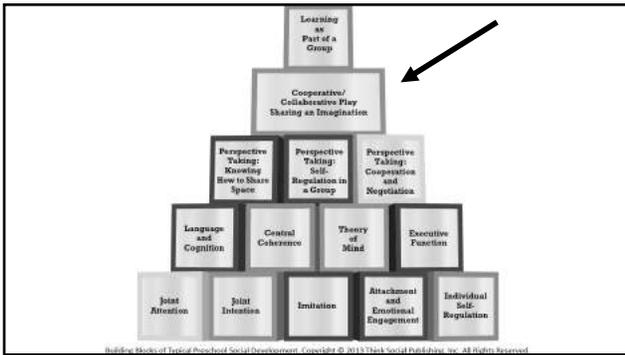
I know, I know that you know
I imagine, you imagine
I know, I know that you know
If you pretend and I pretend it's one, fun
Imagination.

We're fighting a fire, aiming the hose
Up on a ladder together
Or two astronauts, way out in space
Exploring the planets together
All we've got to do is know that

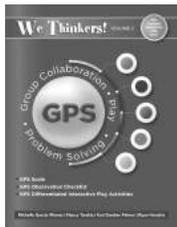
I think some things, you think some things
Some things we think together
I play a game, you play a game
But it's best when we're playing together
All we've got to do is know that

I know, I know that you know
I imagine, you imagine
I know, I know that you know
If you pretend and I pretend it's one, fun
Imagination.



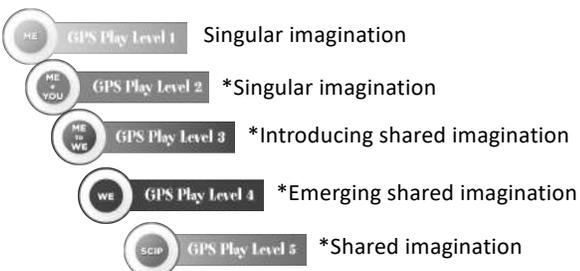


The Group Collaboration, Play and Problem Solving Scale (GPS)



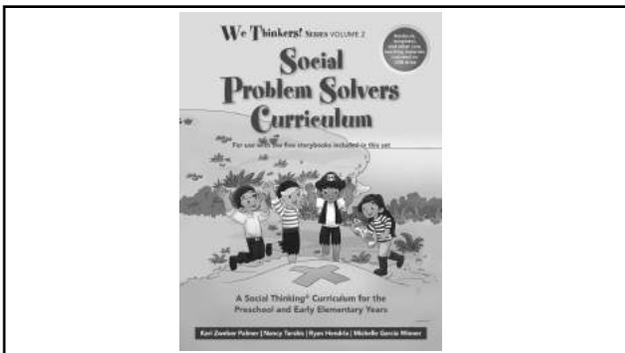
- Research base for the GPS
- How to observe students' GPS abilities
- GPS observation checklist: Six core questions
- GPS Differentiated Play Activities

Five levels of GPS scale and four* levels of differentiated play-based activities:



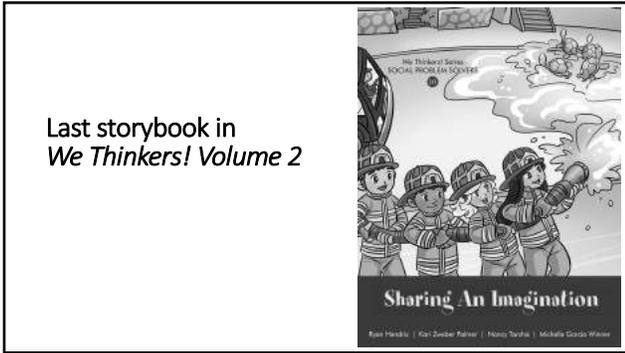
CORE SUMMARY OF THE GPS PLAY SCALE

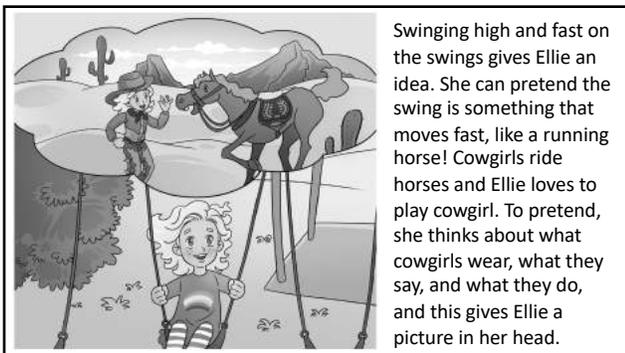
ME	ME + YOU	ME + WE	WE	SCIP
GPS Play Level 1	GPS Play Level 2	GPS Play Level 3	GPS Play Level 4	GPS Play Level 5
Play is very singular and is object or action focused. Children at this level tend to play alone. They will attend to an adult if the adult is actively seeking their attention.	Play is still quite singular but children will attempt to engage the adult to play their way. With a lot of work on the part of the adult, the child will briefly attend to a peer during play.	Adult directs the play, providing the structure, ideas, and context. Peers take a role and enact the play within that structure.	With minimal adult facilitation (providing props, materials, and initial ideas), peers can begin to create structured play together. Adults may step in to resolve conflicts and keep play moving along.	Shared Collaborative Imaginative Play (SCIP). Peers provide ideas, decide on a theme and choose roles, negotiate, and problem solve on their own. Low adult facilitation, if any.

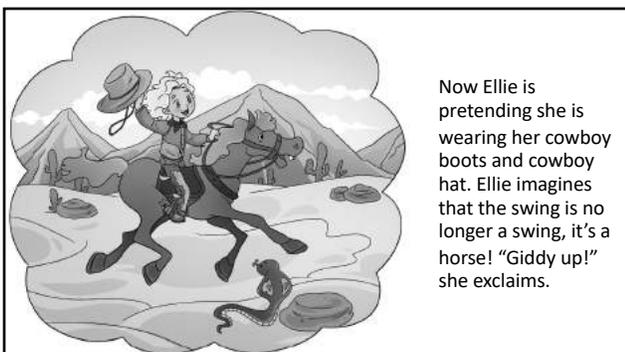


Unit 10. Sharing an Imagination

The final Social Thinking concept we teach students about in Volume 2 is “sharing an imagination.” Sharing an imagination is the ability to imagine what another person(s) is thinking, feeling, and/or pretending or doing. Often our students have a strong singular imagination but they struggle when the situation requires them to share an imagination with others. As we know, sharing an imagination is at the heart of play but it’s also the foundation of conversation, group learning, and collaborating with others. When we fully engage in creative and interactive play, we need to be able to imagine what others may be thinking as well as let them in on our own thoughts. To share an imagination, we have to coordinate our own ideas, goals, and interests with those of another person to pursue a common plan.









Molly and Evan join Ellie on the swings. "Howdy y'all!" yells Ellie. "Get on your horses! Let's ride!"

"Ellie is pretending to ride a horse!" thinks Evan.

"Ah, Ellie must be pretending she is a cowgirl!" thinks Molly.

Evan and Molly think about cowboys and cowgirls. Evan imagines he has a cowboy hat. Molly thinks about a horse.



"Ye-haw!" they all shout. They are sharing their imaginations and pretending to ride horses together.



Jesse finally gets to the park and sees his friends on the swings. He thinks about how they pretended to be firefighters yesterday. They all had fun imagining together. He wants to do that again!



“Hey Jesse!” yells Evan.
“We are pretending to ride horses!”

“Yee-haw!” adds Molly.
“We are cowgirls and cowboys!”

“That sounds fun, but there aren’t enough swings,” Jesse says.





“Wanna play firefighters instead?” Jesse asks.

Molly and Evan think that sounds fun too.
The kids are flexible thinkers. They can change what they are playing to imagine new things!

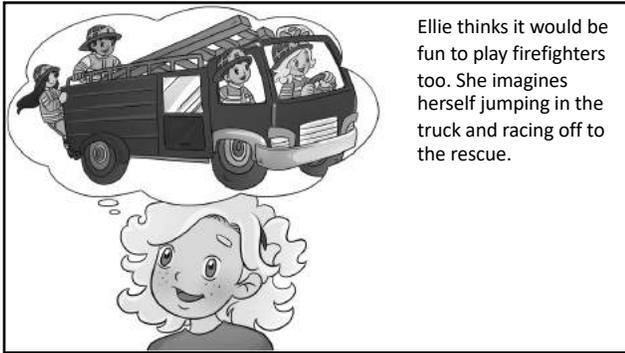
“Yeah!” Molly says. “I’ll be the firefighter and Jesse, you can be the cat I rescue from the tree.”



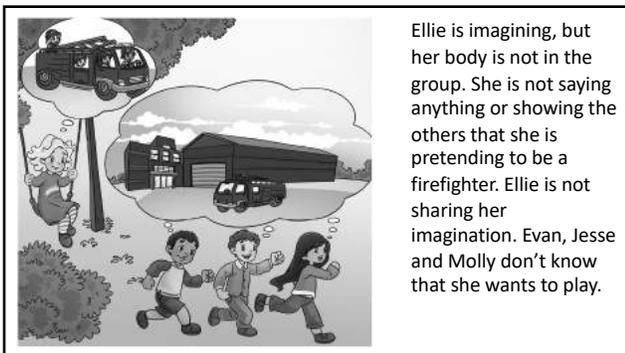
“I don’t really want to be a cat,” Jesse tells her. “I want to be a firefighter too!”
“I know!” Evan shouts. “We can all be firefighters.”
“Yeah!” says Molly.

Evan, Jesse and Molly share their ideas and start to make a group plan.

“Let’s pretend the playground is the fire station,” Evan says.
“Yeah,” Jesse agrees, “and over there is where we park our fire truck!”



Ellie thinks it would be fun to play firefighters too. She imagines herself jumping in the truck and racing off to the rescue.



Ellie is imagining, but her body is not in the group. She is not saying anything or showing the others that she is pretending to be a firefighter. Ellie is not sharing her imagination. Evan, Jesse and Molly don't know that she wants to play.

Lesson 29: Building a SHARED Imagination Through Shared Structured Imaginary Sequences

Critical Vocabulary
Building Imagination, Sharing Imagination:
 Would it be fun? Would it be fun? Would it be fun?

Many students with social cognitive deficits have a good imagination. In fact, they find it interesting, creative, the source of fun, and they are quick at sharing other people's imagination in a playful manner. The impact of having the teacher's imagination with others is huge...

When we engage in creative and interactive play, we often imagine what others may be thinking. This process allows us to share on the edge of the play. For example, when children and adults play with construction and other toys, they often pretend. For example, when children play "house," they often set up a pretend house, a social order and imagined tasks that they are creating through their play. The teacher's imagination and their ability to share their imagination with each other leads through action and language. The teacher should play within children's imagination and provide structure through their play. Imagination through play is a social skill that can be used to create and maintain social interactions and connections in their age. When it is not used to its potential...

When communication partners are not willing or able to share and explore imagination with others, it is often a social skill deficit. For example, some of our four-year-old students have a very clear, very well-established and well-organized set of play skills. Even because of their social cognitive deficits, however, these students may have found that the play partners play the game exactly the way they want to play. They may get very angry or frustrated if their partner tries to explore their own imagination or to play through the action. Our students are presented as rigid players who are, in reality, they are not able to incorporate others' ideas into their play.

Use shared imagination not only as a tool for use in play and conversation. It also is used to share with the teacher's observations and assignments. It is crucial for understanding someone else's perspective or opinion. It is crucial for understanding what the teacher says. The teacher says, for most, imagine what the teacher is trying to convey. They consider the teacher's intentions, their language, what the teacher really wants them to do in a given moment.

Making guacamole together!

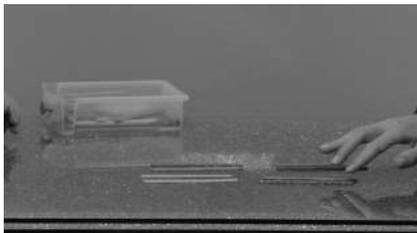
Sequenced imagination task leading to shared imagination play with 10-year-old boys



Problem solving together

Use popsicle sticks to better share imaginations—words can fall short but imagination looms large. These manipulatives can visually represent complicated ideas and help us connect to each other's experiences and creative thinking.

Narrative language and manipulatives help us imagine another's experience



Social Conversation

Basic language structures for relating to others:

Comments

- **Add-A-Thought**
- **Supporting Comments**

Questions

- **Ask-A-Question:** but not just any question!

Add-A-Thought:
I add my own thoughts and experiences to show how they connect to your thoughts and experiences.

Explore add-a-thought in real time.

**Taught in my 2nd book,
 Thinking About YOU Thinking
 About ME**

The Add-a-Thought Game

A fun way to easily and quickly introduce the idea of add-a-thought exercises. Prepare one index card for each student in the group by writing "Add-a-Thought" at the top of each card. Use the cards in the activity. The teacher will continue cards to "add a thought" to the conversation (see Figure 9).

One student starts the process by introducing a topic. The next student practices adding a thought to the previous topic, by making a comment that relates to the original topic. After he successfully makes the connection, the game continues to the next student in the rotation of students. The next student responds to the social problem comment by making his own add-a-thought comment. This process can be repeated for as long as desired. An add-a-thought comment by the first student will add a perspective that will be shared with all participants that will be shared with all participants that will be shared with all participants.

During each round, one student will give one observation that all the comments connect to each other. In this activity, students will observe the connections to the add-a-thought comments.

Think about how this activity can be used to help students learn to give feedback in a constructive way. This activity can be used to help students learn to give feedback in a constructive way. This activity can be used to help students learn to give feedback in a constructive way.

In the above paragraphs, the comments open the door to a range of topics. The comments will have a common "Add-a-Thought" theme to use the words "Add-a-Thought" conversation participants will properly connect with any comment about:

1. What they did last night
2. Things they love
3. They love to eat
4. Specific comments about the movie (lightly "break")

Once a person makes their Add-a-Thought comment, it opens the door to a whole new set of possible topics. The next student in the rotation can use any add-a-thought idea:

1. What they did last week
2. What they love to eat
3. Animals
4. Anything in the world.

The key to this technique that is making it useful, is that it allows students to be conversational – rather, an individual conversation in each that can be shared with all students again.

There are several ways to use this activity, but the most common method is to use it during a structured conversation, such as during a structured discussion, presentation, or business meeting. This is not different in another important context to teach our students.

The Add-a-Thought game can be applied to a lot of situations to help students make connections between ideas. This game can be used to help students learn to give feedback in a constructive way.

The Conversation Tree

The conversation tree is a visual metaphor that is used to help students understand the structure of a conversation. The tree has a base and a top. The base is the "Base of Conversation" and the top is the "Top of Conversation". The tree is built by adding "add-a-thought" comments to the base. The tree is built by adding "add-a-thought" comments to the base.

With the use of the tree tool is very straightforward. The teacher will introduce the tree to the students. The teacher will introduce the tree to the students.

The tree tool is a visual metaphor that is used to help students understand the structure of a conversation. The tree has a base and a top. The base is the "Base of Conversation" and the top is the "Top of Conversation". The tree is built by adding "add-a-thought" comments to the base. The tree is built by adding "add-a-thought" comments to the base.

The tree tool is a visual metaphor that is used to help students understand the structure of a conversation. The tree has a base and a top. The base is the "Base of Conversation" and the top is the "Top of Conversation". The tree is built by adding "add-a-thought" comments to the base. The tree is built by adding "add-a-thought" comments to the base.

Figure 10
 Base and Top of the Conversation Tree.

The tree tool is a visual metaphor that is used to help students understand the structure of a conversation. The tree has a base and a top. The base is the "Base of Conversation" and the top is the "Top of Conversation". The tree is built by adding "add-a-thought" comments to the base. The tree is built by adding "add-a-thought" comments to the base.

Figure 11
 Growth of the Tree Through Structured Turn-Taking.

The tree tool is a visual metaphor that is used to help students understand the structure of a conversation. The tree has a base and a top. The base is the "Base of Conversation" and the top is the "Top of Conversation". The tree is built by adding "add-a-thought" comments to the base. The tree is built by adding "add-a-thought" comments to the base.

Avoid assumptions!!

Teach and practice how we share each other's experiences. Many of my adult clients (working in professional jobs in well known companies) have expressed they could not converse because there were so many hidden rules they could not figure out (maintain a topic, etc.).

Explain that people relate to each other's experiences

One person's experience reminds another person of something that happened in their life. The goal is to relate. Relate is central to the word *relationship*.

The purpose of sharing an imagination is to relate. It is not to become smarter, or a better coder, or a lawyer or a doctor, or a cashier—it's to feel connected to community.

When we feel connected to people in the world around us, we are more likely to keep our anxiety and sadness at bay.

Anxiety management when learning new social competencies:

- Humans are risk adverse socially.
- Each person wants their communicative partner to succeed. Otherwise, it becomes awkward for all!
- Try new ways to relate as a risk worth taking!

The pinnacle of all social learning concepts

Sharing an imagination requires the use of all other social learning concepts, including the previous nine concepts we've covered in this webinar series!

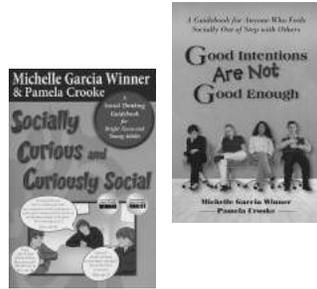
To summarize, some examples of use:

Relating to another person: In a conversation, we imagine each other's experiences, connect our thoughts and feelings, and clarify by asking questions.

Sharing space with another person (co-existing): If you're standing silently in an elevator with someone, you two are collectively having thoughts about each other and creating a shared social environment without words. Depending on the body language, the environment could feel formal, relaxed, stressed, compassionate, etc. This is a form of sharing an imagination.

It's taught throughout our material

Many of our products teach this concept without using the term "sharing an imagination." Examples for teens and adults include these books, which give strategies to help relate to others.



Thank you for joining us through our series of 10 webinars!



Now—review all you've learned

After the webinar, take a few minutes to review the 10 concepts and consider:

- How each concept builds on the next
- Why teaching them slowly, in order, is the best practice for supporting an individual through their social learning journey

Hungry for more?

The 10 concepts taught in this webinar series are a fraction of all that we teach within the Social Thinking Methodology.

Check out our [eLearning video courses](#) to explore *many more* concepts, frameworks, and strategies! Enjoy 50% off your first course, and continuing education credit is available.





Teaching Social Competencies—More Than Social Skills
