



iMsocial™ Group without an Intellectual Disability Session One – Getting to Know You 1

Facilitators –

Session set up: Set up the session with the group sitting in a half circle so that participants can all see each other. You may need to pre-warn the children that they will be expected to sit in a different seat each session or after each activity. This avoids issues with ownership over seating.

Filming tip: For the first session it is important that the children are comfortable in the group and are settled into the new environment. For the group facilitators it is very important to get to know the children and help them settle in. There will be no filming in this session.

Children come in, settle down (5 minutes)

Activity One – Getting to know you game (10 minutes)

Start the game once all the children have arrived.

For this activity you can use a ball or other suitable object. Throw the ball to someone in the group when you catch the ball you can share something about yourself. This can be as simple as your name.

In the first activity of the session we use a game to give the children the opportunity to get to know each other in a more relaxed atmosphere. The focus is on the game and not in particular on the individual.

Activity Two – Introducing ourselves (10 minutes)

The group sits in a circle. With the group decide what kind of information we can share with each other to introduce ourselves, write the suggestions on the whiteboard. Let everyone have a turn at introducing themselves to the group.

Let the children decide together what they would like to share about themselves. Keeping in mind that this is information you would only share with someone when you meet him or her for the first time (name, age, year level at school). The group facilitator will encourage everyone to have a go.

Activity Three – Group name and group rules (10 minutes)

The group sits in a circle. Explain to the group that every group has to have rules. What are the rules this group needs?

Each group will need some rules to have it function properly. Why? Think about a team sport. If everyone does what he or she likes to do then the team is not able to score a point; it will be chaos on the field. Each team also has a team leader (e.g. coach) to train the team, encourage and support the team and to ensure everyone has a role in the team.

*Ask the children to come up with a list of rules they think are important to have in the group. This will give them ownership over the rules and it means you haven't imposed the rules on them. When you have to refer to the rules during group time you are reminding them of their **own** rules.*

After collecting all the rules the children can come up with, you should be able to categorise them into four/five different groups e.g.; listen to each other, one person speaking at the time, respect each other and property. This will reduce the list of rules into approximately four rules, which will make it easier for the children to remember them.

For more information about setting up group rules, refer to Baker (2003) 'Social skills training for children and adolescents with Asperger syndrome and social communication problems'.

After the group has decided on the group rules ask them to come up with a name for the group and choose a reward puzzle picture that best represents the group.

Write down all the suggestions on the whiteboard. Try to let everyone have a go at suggesting a name for the group. Make sure they are sensible and keep an eye on the time. This activity does not need to take too long. To decide on the name let the children vote for their two favourite names. The children are allowed to put up their hand twice while you read out the list. The name that gets the most votes will be the name for the group. If there is a tie get the children to vote for the ones with the most votes only. Allow only one vote each.

Note: facilitators will explain how the reward chart is used in Session 2.

Snack Time (15 minutes)

Time to have a snack and a drink and some time to chat to each other.

Snack Time is an important time for the children to interact with the each other, to have a break from the learning component of the program and to reload themselves.

Sensory Time – Stepping Stones (10 minutes)

*During the session learning activities and activities that require concentration are followed by activities that will provide the children with the opportunity to reload and obtain the required sensory input. You can choose a sensory activity from the list or use the suggested **Stepping Stones** activity.*

*Refer to the **Sensory Time Suggestions List** for instructions on how to perform this activity.*

At the start of the program you might find that you need to add more sensory activities to help the children settle into the new environment. You can easily add another sensory activity at any time during the session. Sensory activities do not need to be very long, one minute activities can work effectively to regulate focus.

Activity Four – Computer games time (20 minutes)

The group sits in a circle. First explain to the children how the computers work and introduce them to the rotation system we have for taking turns with partners at computer time.

*You can create your own rotation schedule or download the **Rotation Schedule** provided in the Pre-Season Program.*

The games time is spent on the computer. Different games are provided plus the access to the Internet provides a whole scope of games for the children to play. We purposely only allow the children to play games with a strategic focus, which will encourage the children to work together to achieve the goals of the game.

To make sure the children all get a chance to work with each other we use a rotation schedule. This will prevent arguments about just wanting to play with one child. The first few sessions of the program allow the children to choose their own games. This could mean that the two children sharing the computer can play a different game each.

Pack up and say goodbye – 10 minutes

Time to get your snack, drink and bag. Say goodbye to everyone.

Each session will end with a brief overview of the session and some positive comments on the session by the facilitators. Before the children are allowed to go home everyone has to say goodbye to each other, teaching them the skill of saying goodbye.