

Social Skills Training (SST) Role Play Buddy (RPB) Guide

Individuals that can be SST Role Play Buddies include...

- Providers trained in SST
- Providers not trained in SST
- Peer Support Specialists
- Students/interns

SST Leader Responsibilities to the Role Play Buddy:

- Prior to the first SST session, provides copies of the RPB guide and the SST Quick Guide to the RPB and meets with RPB to review these guides and explain group procedures. Describes SST groups as being positive, welcoming, and encouraging, and answers any questions.
- Provides RPB with web course information, "[What is Social Skills Training for Serious Mental Illness \(SST\)? An Overview and Refresher.](#)" Completing the web course is encouraged but not required for the RPB.
- Prior to the first SST session, brief the RPB about the group members' goals.
- Meets with RPB prior to sessions to plan model scenario, then clearly states model scenario immediately before starting the model with RPB in group session.
- Sets up role plays and makes sure the group member and RPB clearly understand roles in the scenario and the plan before starting role plays. Emphasizes who the RPB is pretending to be and the basic plan for what RPB will say.
- Clearly states the focus for second/third role plays before beginning so that the RPB understands their role in those role plays.

Role Play Buddy Responsibilities:

- Meets with the SST Leader prior to beginning SST to make sure they are clear on SST group procedures; may also observe an SST session.
- Highly encouraged (but not required) to complete the web course "[What is Social Skills Training for Serious Mental Illness \(SST\)? An Overview and Refresher](#)" prior to helping with SST.
- Prior to each session, meets briefly with the SST Leader to plan together the model scenario and possible role play scenarios for group members.
- Respects that SST sessions are highly structured and supports the SST Leader and structure by not speaking off-topic or encouraging too much discussion.
- Has a basic knowledge of the group session sequence and is able to follow along with it using the SST Quick Guide.
- Helps the SST Leader model the skill in a brief, simple role play focused on the steps of the skill. The SST Leader models the steps of the skill.
- Follows the instructions of the SST Leader provided in role play set-up. If the SST Leader inadvertently does not set up role play before beginning, the RPB can prompt set-up, e.g., "What situation are we role playing?"
- Provides opportunities in role plays encouraging the group member to use the steps of the skill (e.g., pausing to allow the group member to do the steps; allowing time for the SST Leader to use the steps on the board to prompt the group member).
- Gives a positive/neutral response to the group member in role plays when applicable (e.g., "Sounds good! I can look into your request.").
- Joins in applause after role plays and at every opportunity in the session.
- Gives brief, specific, positive feedback to group members about role play performance when appropriate (e.g., "Your eye contact really was great!").
- Follows instructions from the SST Leader on how to alter second and third role plays, if applicable.
- Has fun in SST!

Co-Leaders (both trained in SST) vs. Role Play Buddies

- Co-Leaders (Primary and Secondary Leaders) can alternate leadership role across sessions; with RPBs, the SST Leader always leads the SST group sessions.
- Secondary Leader can help manage any behavioral concerns that occur within SST sessions; with RPBs, the SST Leader takes the lead on this.
- Both Secondary Leader and RPB help Primary Leader model the skill with the Primary demonstrating the steps.
- Secondary Leader and RPB both perform the role plays with the group members.
- The Secondary Leader and RPB can also briefly contribute to all portions of the group session sequence.

Brief SST Group Session Sequence

****Welcome and set agenda****

Step 1. Review home assignments (for sessions other than the first session)

Step 2. Establish the importance of the skill

Step 3. Discuss the steps of the skill

Step 4. Model the skill; review with members

Step 5. Have a group member role play

Step 6. Elicit and provide positive, then constructive feedback

Step 7 Have the member role play again

Step 8. Elicit and provide positive, then constructive feedback

Step 9. Repeat role play for 3rd time and elicit/provide *only* positive feedback

Step 10. Repeat Steps 5-9 with each group member

Step 11. Develop home assignments

Roles of SST Leader and Role Play Buddy in SST Sessions

Welcome Group and Set Agenda: *SST Leader*

Step 1. Review home assignments: *SST Leader; RPB can briefly contribute as appropriate.*

Step 2. Establish the importance of the skill: *SST Leader; RPB can briefly contribute as appropriate.*

Step 3. Discuss the steps of the skill: *SST Leader leads reading/discussion of steps; RPB can briefly contribute as appropriate.*

Step 4. Model the skill; review with members: *SST Leader demonstrates the steps of the skill and RPB helps; SST Leader leads review of model.*

Step 5. Have a group member role play: *SST Leader assists group member in role play set up and makes sure the group member is clear on the plan; RPB does role play with group member as planned.*

Step 6. Elicit and provide positive, then constructive feedback: *SST Leader leads feedback including providing and eliciting feedback from group members; RPB provides feedback as appropriate.*

Step 7. Have the member role play again: *SST Leader helps set up the role play and makes sure the group member is clear on the plan; RPB does role play with group member as planned.*

Step 8. Elicit and provide positive, then constructive feedback: *SST Leader leads feedback including providing and eliciting feedback from group members; RPB provides feedback as appropriate.*

Step 9. Repeat role play for 3rd time and elicit/provide *only* positive feedback: *SST Leader helps set up the role play and makes sure the group member and RPB is clear on the plan; RPB does role play with group member as planned. SST Leader leads feedback including providing and eliciting feedback from group members; RPB provides feedback as appropriate.*

Step 10. Repeat Steps 5-9 with each group member: *Same roles as in Steps 5-9.*

Step 11. Develop home assignments: *SST Leader; RPB can briefly contribute as appropriate.*