

# Social Skills Training for Serious Mental Illness (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 Facilitator 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 Facilitator 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 Facilitator 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 Facilitator 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 Facilitator model the skill in a brief, simple role play focused on the steps of the skill. The SST Facilitator models the steps of the skill.
- Follows the instructions of the SST Facilitator provided in role play set-up. If the SST Facilitator 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 Facilitator 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 Facilitator on how to alter second and third role plays, if applicable.
- Has fun in SST!

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

- Co-Facilitators (Primary and Secondary Facilitators) can alternate leadership role across sessions; with RPBs, the SST Facilitator always leads the SST group sessions.
- Secondary Facilitator can help manage any behavioral concerns that occur within SST sessions; with RPBs, the SST Facilitator takes the lead on this.
- Both Secondary Facilitator and RPB help Primary Facilitator model the skill with the Primary demonstrating the steps.
- Secondary Facilitator and RPB both perform the role plays with the group members.
- The Secondary Facilitator 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 outside practice (for sessions other than the first session)

**Step 2.** Establish a rationale for the skill

**Step 3.** Briefly have members share a relevant experience or rationale

**Step 4.** Explain the steps of the skill

**Step 5.** Model the skill; review with members

**Step 6.** Have a group member role play

**Step 7.** Elicit and provide positive, then constructive feedback

**Step 8.** Have the member role play again

**Step 9.** Elicit and provide positive, then constructive feedback

**Step 10.** Repeat role play again and elicit/provide positive feedback

**Step 11.** Repeat Steps 6-10 with each group member

**Step 12.** Develop outside practice assignments

## Roles of SST Facilitator and Role Play Buddy in SST Sessions

**Welcome Group and Set Agenda:** *SST Facilitator*

**Step 1. Review outside practice:** *SST Facilitator; RPB can briefly contribute as appropriate.*

**Step 2. Establish a rationale for the skill:** *SST Facilitator; RPB can briefly contribute as appropriate.*

**Step 3. Briefly have members share a relevant experience or rationale:** *SST Facilitator; RPB can briefly contribute as appropriate.*

**Step 4. Explain the steps of the skill:** *SST Facilitator leads reading/discussion of steps; RPB can briefly contribute as appropriate.*

**Step 5. Model the skill; review with members:** *SST Facilitator demonstrates the steps of the skill and RPB helps; SST Facilitator leads review of model.*

**Step 6. Have a group member role play:** *SST Facilitator 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 7. Elicit and provide feedback:** *SST Facilitator leads feedback including providing and eliciting feedback from group members; RPB provides feedback as appropriate.*

**Step 8. Have the member role play again:** *SST Facilitator 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 9. Elicit and provide feedback:** *SST Facilitator leads feedback including providing and eliciting feedback from group members; RPB provides feedback as appropriate.*

**Step 10. Repeat role play again and elicit/provide feedback:** *SST Facilitator 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 Facilitator leads feedback including providing and eliciting feedback from group members; RPB provides feedback as appropriate.*

**Step 11. Repeat Steps 6-10 with each group member:** *Same roles as in Steps 6-10.*

**Step 12. Develop outside practice assignments:** *SST Facilitator; RPB can briefly contribute as appropriate.*