

Social Skills Training for Serious Mental Illness

Role Play Buddy (RPB) Guide

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

- Clinicians not trained in Social Skills Training for Serious Mental Illness*
- Students/interns
- Peer Support Specialists
- Veterans that have completed an SST group and have a great knowledge on SST role plays

*Those trained in SST can also be RPBs.

SST Facilitator Responsibilities to the Role Play Buddy (RPB):

- Prior to the first SST session, facilitator meets with RPB to explain group structure using the SST Clinician Quick Guide. Describes SST groups as being positive, welcoming, and encouraging, and answers any questions.
- It would be helpful for RPB to be familiar with group members' goals. Facilitator could ask group members for permission to share with the RPB at their individual sessions or to share at the beginning of the first SST session.
- 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 Veteran *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. RPB should be very clear how subsequent role plays will change, if applicable.

Role Play Buddy Responsibilities:

- Meets with the Facilitator prior to beginning SST to make sure he/she is clear on SST group structure; may also observe an SST session*
- *Highly encouraged (but not required) to complete the web course "What is Social Skills Training? An Overview and Refresher" prior to helping with SST.
- Prior to each session, meets briefly with the 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 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 Quick Guide/board.
- Helps the Facilitator model the skill in a brief simple role play focused on the steps. The Facilitator actually demonstrates the steps.
- Follows the instructions of the Facilitator provided in role play set-up. If the 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 Veteran to use the steps of the skill (e.g., pausing to allow the Veteran to do the steps; allowing time for the Facilitator to use the steps on the board to prompt the Veteran).
- Gives a positive/neutral response to the Veteran in role plays when applicable (e.g., "Sounds good! I can look into your request.").
- Joins in applause after role plays and 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 Facilitator on how to alter second and third role plays if applicable.
- Has fun in SST!

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

- Co-Facilitators (Primary and Second Facilitators) can alternate leadership role across sessions; with Facilitator/RPBs, the Facilitator is always the Primary Facilitator.
- Secondary Facilitator can help manage any behavioral concerns that occur within SST sessions; with Facilitator/RPBs, the 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 Veterans.
- Secondary Facilitator and RPB both provide feedback and input as appropriate.
- Secondary Facilitator may have more input into setting up role plays scenarios, how role plays can be shaped, and potential outside practice assignments. RPB also can give ideas as appropriate.

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
- *(Step 6 should occur about 15 minutes into a 50-minute group)

Roles of Facilitator and Role Play Buddy in SST Sessions

Welcome Group and Set Agenda: *Facilitator*

Step 1. Review outside practice: *Facilitator*

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

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

Step 4. Explain the steps of the skill: *Facilitator leads reading/discussion of steps*

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

Step 6. Have a group member role play: *Facilitator assists Veteran in role play set up and makes sure the group member is clear on the plan; RPB does role play with Veteran as planned*

Step 7. Elicit and provide feedback: *Facilitator leads feedback including providing and eliciting feedback from group members; RPB provides feedback as appropriate*

Step 8. Have the member role play again: *Facilitator helps set up the role play and makes sure the Veteran is clear on the plan; RPB does role play with Veteran as planned*

Step 9. Elicit and provide feedback: *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: *Facilitator helps set up the role play and makes sure the Veteran is clear on the plan; RPB does role play with Veteran as planned. 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: *Facilitator*