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Social Communication Intervention Script for story book, *Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns It's Okay to Back Away*

Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns It's Okay to Back Away, 2011, Howard Binkow and Susan F. Cornelison, Thunderbolt Publishing, We Do Listen Foundation, Tien Wah Press, Singapore

Sharing a Story to Facilitate Social and Emotional Learning

Many children with disabilities such as developmental language disorders, language-learning disorders, social communication disorders, or autism spectrum disorders have difficulty with aspects of social and emotional learning. These children often need explicit, repeated instruction designed to facilitate emotion understanding, conversational ability, and language comprehension and production skill. The following informal script is designed to help interventionists (caregivers and professionals) focus on and emphasize important concepts.

The following storybook has been selected because it has a well-defined story structure, clear language, rich emotion content, and engaging illustrations. A script is provided to guide interventionists as they share this book. Initially, concepts are listed that this book is particularly well suited to teach. These include social and emotional knowledge, interactional skills, vocabulary, and language structure.

Following the list of concepts, a series of prompts is provided for each story page. These prompts include questions, comments, and brief activities (e.g., making a facial expression in a mirror) designed to teach specific concepts. The interventionist may read the story text for each page and then present any of the prompts they feel would be most appropriate. The script is designed to be flexible and adjusted to each child's needs.

Following story sharing, the interventionist may guide children to enact the story using simple props. This activity facilitates story comprehension by assisting children to understand the internal states and motivations of characters. Older children may prefer a readers' theater format or choose to provide additional text or dialog to the storybook by using attachable note paper.

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Concepts to stress

- 1. Emotions experienced in response to certain situations, happy/excited, sad, mad, frustrated, lonely**
- 2. Recognizing one's experienced emotions**
- 3. Anticipating how one's actions influence the emotions of others**
- 4. Recognizing and managing anger**
- 5. Relationship between hungry and angry (Feeling hungry can make one feel angry more easily.)**
- 6. Mixed emotions—angry/mad and sad**
- 7. Prosocial behavior: Appreciating the effects of one's actions on others, strategies to manage anger**
- 8. Structural: complete simple sentence forms, complex sentences with causal connections (but, if, so, because)**

Title Page

Look at picture

Look, this is a book about Howard B. Wigglebottom.

What do you think will happen in this book?

Now let's look at it together

Page 4-5

Read: "I'm Howard B Wigglebottom..."

Look at Howard, how does he feel? (Howard looks like he is angry.)

Why is Howard Angry? (Howard is angry because everyone has been saying he did the wrong things.)

Page 6-7

Read: "Well, that makes me mad!"

Wow! How does Howard look here? (Really mad)

(Discuss the fact that angry and mad mean the same thing.)

Why is Howard so mad? (Howard is mad because everyone says he does the wrong things.)

Page 8-9

Read: "and sad, too..."

What is Howard doing here?

Why is he sitting on his bed? (Howard is sitting on his bed because he is in time out.)?

Howard is thinking about his day.

Look at Howard here. (p. 9) How does he feel? (Howard is so hungry that he cannot concentrate on his schoolwork.)

Page 10-11

Read: "He remembered being really happy at the beginning of the day..."

Why was Howard happy at the beginning of the day?" (Howard was happy because they were having spaghetti and chocolate milk for lunch.)

Look at Howard here (p. 11) What is Howard thinking about?

Why is Howard's stomach making noises? (Talk about the fact that Howard is so hungry that he is uncomfortable.)

Page 12-13

Read: "Finally..."

What did Howard do? (Howard cut to the front of the line.)

Why did Howard cut in line? (He cut in line because he was so hungry.)

Look at this person (fox). How does he feel about Howard's cutting in line? (He is mad because Howard cut in line.)

(Talk about the fact that the other kids are probably really hungry too. Howard did not think about how the other kids would feel if he cut in line.)

Howard did not get his way.

If you were there, what would you say to Howard?

Page 14-15

Read: "He kept his eyes on the chocolate milk..."

How did Howard feel when Oinky took the last chocolate milk? (Howard had a lot of feelings. Howard felt mad and sad and frustrated [define].)

(Talk about the fact that one can feel more than one emotion at a time.)

What did Howard do?

Was that a good idea? (Discuss why)

How did Oinky feel when Howard kicked the milk out of his hands? (Oinky looks sad—it was probably a bad surprise for Oinky.)

Howard did not get his way. (Ask child about a time when they have felt like they did not get their way)

Page 16-17

Read: "What a mess you made..."

Look at what Howard has to do.

How does Howard feel about that? (He is sad and mad because he has to clean up the mess.)

Do you think Howard is still hungry? How does that make him feel? (Howard probably feels mad and even hungrier.)

Page 18-19

Read: "He was hungry and very grumpy..."

Look at Howard.

(Talk about how Howard showed the anger he felt.)

Have you ever felt so mad/angry that you lost your cool? (Offer a personal example if possible.)

How does Howard feel when he does not get his way? (Howard feels mad and sad and frustrated when he does not get his way.)

Page 20-21

Read: "That's it, Howard B. Wigglebottom, I'm taking you to the principal..."

What do you think happened in the principal's office?

If you were the principal, what would you say to Howard?

Page 22-23

Read: "After school, thinking about his day made Howard very sad..."

Howard did not have a good day, did he?

How does Howard feel? (Howard feels sad because he did not get his way/he had such a bad day.)

It was nice of Ali to come see Howard, wasn't it? Friends try to help each other feel better.

What did Ali do to help Howard feel better? (Ali told Howard what to do when one feels angry.)

(Talk about Ali's way to tell scared from hungry from angry.)

(Discuss Ali's suggestions about how to handle anger.)

Page 24-25

Read: "Every day after school, Ali helped Howard..."

When Ali feels angry, what does he do? (When Ali feels angry, Ali backs away and does something to feel better.)

Do you think this will work for Howard?

Page 26-27

Read: "Jumping..."

What is Howard doing?

(Discuss the techniques)

Why does Howard need to practice? (Discuss the fact that one would need to practice to be able to handle anger this way. Talk about the fact that it gets easier with practice.)

Page 28-29

Read: "After a few weeks..."

Discuss the following steps:

"Stop, that's okay"

"He listens to his tummy"

"Backs away"

"And then goes out to play" (Do something to feel better.)

Howard learned what to do

Summary: Let's think about what happened in this book. Howard had a really bad day. Howard did not get his way, and he did things that were not nice. When Howard was angry, he cut in line, grabbed chocolate milk from Oinky, and tried to hit Oinky. Howard got in a lot of trouble and had to have a time out. Howard was so mad that he lost his cool. (That's like having a tantrum.) Ali helped Howard find things to do when he felt really mad. Howard learned to stop, back away, listen to his tummy, and then find something fun to do.

Dialog/enactment activity:

Look, I have a rabbit that looks a little like Howard. I have other animals that look like Howard's friends. Let's look at the book again. You pretend like you are Howard. You be Howard, and tell me what you are thinking on every page, okay? I will be some of Howard's friends. (Repeat and have the child take the roles of other characters). Try to get the child to understand how Howard's

actions and words affect his friends. If preferred, guide the child in a modified “readers’ theater” where the child voices one or more characters. As an alternative activity, on as many pages as possible, have the child say or dictate dialog or thoughts for the characters. Emphasize what the characters are feeling and why. Create a thought bubble or a dialog bubble attached to the page with a sticky note. When finished, read the story again including the dialog bubbles. Adjust as needed for the individual child.