

An Example of a Social Story About Pandemics and the Coronavirus – Introduction

You will need to change this to better fit the individual you are writing for and please note, it is only provided as an *example* not an exemplar.

This is an example Social Story about the Coronavirus. A Social Story is not a 'Bossy Book'. It is a carefully crafted and personalised story which enables a child or young person (CYP) to rehearse a social situation and gain understanding of a set of circumstances. Social stories can be meaningful and useful to many CYP who are neuro-diverse, not just those with a diagnosis with autism.

The example is based on an example published on-line by the renowned author, teacher and psychologist Carol Gray who is widely recognised as the originator of the Social Story model. The more American elements of her story have been changed to better fit our local situation while still adhering to the basic principles of a Social Story.

There are a specific set of guidelines for the construction of a Social Story and you must adapt, re-adjust and personalise this example to meet the specific requirements of an individual. It is offered as a guidance example.

To summarise, the principles which must be adhered to in writing a Social Story are:

- Descriptive sentences – Descriptive sentences describe what happens, where the situation occurs, and why. The situations should be as accurate as possible and should include terms such as 'usually' or 'sometimes', rather than 'always', in order to avoid literal interpretations, and to help the CYP cope with change. The ratio of descriptive sentences within a social story is usually from 2-5.
- Perspective sentences – Perspective sentences describe the reactions and responses of others in the target situation, and sometimes the reasons for their responses, and may describe the feelings of others. The ratio of perspective sentences within a social story is usually from 2-5.
- Directive sentences – Directive sentences describe desired responses to social situation, and tell the CYP in positive terms, what they should try to do or say in the target situation. They often begin with, 'I will try to...'. The ration of Directive sentences in a social story is usually one.

More advanced social stories include additional sentences that outline what the CYP or supportive adult might do to remember, prompt or carry through the new piece of behaviour that a social story usually outlines in the directive sentence. In a more advanced social story like the example provided, people in the environment and the CYP have key and clearly written roles to play.

- Control sentence – Control sentences are statements written by the CYP to identify strategies that they may use to help them recall the information in the social story. The ratio of control sentences in an advanced social story is usually no more than one.
- Co-operative sentences – Co-operative sentences identify what others will do to assist the CYP. The ratio of co-operative sentences in an advanced social story is usually one.
- Partial sentences – Partial sentences encourage a CYP to make guesses regarding the next step in a situation, including the responses of other individuals and their own feelings and responses. The ratio of partial sentences within an advanced social story is usually one.

The illustrations used in a social story must be those which are relevant to the story and easily understood by the CYP. The language level must be carefully matched to the language level of the CYP, particularly their understanding of written language. Clarity and simplicity are key as a social story is often in use prior to and sometimes during a period of anxiety or change.

The original Carol Gray social story about pandemics and the coronavirus can be accessed [here](#).

More information about social stories and on how to write a social story can be obtained from colleagues in your local special school. You may also find these links useful:

- [Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations](#) from the National Autistic Society
- [Social Stories Writing Guide video](#) – a psychologist from the UK explains.
- [What are Social Stories\(TM\)?](#) video – Carol Gray gives an explanation and update

My story About Pandemics and the Coronavirus

This story is about pandemics and the Coronavirus. A pandemic is when many people in a large area become ill. A pandemic is usually caused by a new virus. (Descriptive)

The Coronavirus is a virus that is spreading fast and causing a worldwide pandemic now. Viruses are so small that it takes an electron microscope to see them. People can't see if a virus is near them. (Descriptive)

People are sensible. Even though they can't see the Coronavirus, they know what to do. They use healthy habits and work together to make it harder for the Coronavirus to spread. This helps to keep people healthy during the pandemic. (Perspective)

People wash their hands carefully during a pandemic. They wash their hands more often. Adults make sure children know how to wash their hands well. Adults remind children to wash their hands a lot. (Perspective)

The Coronavirus has been traveling quickly from one person to another. If many people are close together in the same place, that makes it easier for a virus to spread. More people become ill quickly. (Descriptive)

Sometimes schools close during a pandemic. (Descriptive)

Sometimes schools stay open during a pandemic. (Descriptive) They stay open for some children so that they can be kept safe while their parents go to work. That way, children are safe and adults in school help them learn and play. (Perspective)

A pandemic can cause people to change their plans and they do not go to fun and crowded places. This is because people try to avoid crowds in a pandemic. They stay farther apart from one another so it's harder for a virus to spread. (Perspective) People will go to fun and crowded places when it is safe to do this. (Perspective/Directive)

My parents/carers/adults are learning more about the Coronavirus every day. They watch the news and look for information. They are taking care of me too. If I have questions, they can help. (Perspective/Co-operative)