

# Cardinal Rules for Conducting Social Skills Training

Hill M. Walker, 1992

- ☞ Social skills should be taught as academic subject matter content using instructional procedures identical to those for teaching basic academic skills.
- ☞ Whenever possible, social skills should be directly taught along with possible variations in their appropriate application.
- ☞ The critical test of the efficacy of social skills training is the functional integration of newly-taught skills into one's behavioral repertoire and their demonstration/application within natural settings.
- ☞ The social context and situational factors both mediate the use of social skills and must be taken into account systematically in facilitating students' use of them.
- ☞ Social skills training procedures are not an effective intervention for complex behavior disorders or problems. They represent only a partial solution and should not be used by themselves to remediate aggressive or disruptive behavior patterns.
- ☞ Social skill training can be an important complement to the use of behavioral reduction techniques in that it teaches adaptive alternatives to maladaptive or problematic behavior.
- ☞ The instructional acquisition of social skills does not guarantee either their application or topographic proficiency within applied settings.
- ☞ There is considerable inertia operating against the behavioral integration of newly-taught social skills into one's ongoing behavioral repertoire, as is the case with any newly-taught skill.
- ☞ To be effective, social skills instruction must be accompanied by the provision of response opportunities, feedback and incentive systems within natural settings to provide for their actual demonstration and mastery.
- ☞ Social validation of social skills by target consumer groups is a critical step in both the selection and training of social skills.
- ☞ There are two types of deficits in social-behavioral adjustment: social skill deficits (can't do) and performance deficits (won't do). These deficits should be assessed and treated differently as they require different forms of intervention for effective remediation.