More Than Eye Contact

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How Do You Define Eye Contact?

**i love it when i catch you looking at me**

Methods folks try for eye contact

- Look at me
- Moving chin to see
- Bending oneself into a pretzel
- Stare at them
- Give a reinforcer for looking
- Holding a reinforcer in front of their eyes
- Say good looking when looking
Developmental steps

• Gazing/ turns to studying
• Returning a smile
• Initiating a smile
• Sharing other emotions

• Non verbally: Seeking more information: Is it safe, do I have permission, where is it, Note: Seeing more meaning
• Communication- vocal, gestures, verbals

The desire to share comes in early...

And we adults WANT it to... we try very hard!
Social referencing involves looking to a significant person in order to (gauge one’s own emotional response) actually, it’s a lot more than that definition.

WHY BOTHER?
We have to think about the "why".

Why we look?
- To study
- To share
- To get information
- Note: This process happens naturally/developmentally
- Do we ever look at people for no reason?
Why don’t we reference? (Look)

- Nothing to share
- Don’t need any information
- Don’t need to study
- Nervous?
- Thinking?
- Distractions
- Daydreaming😊

Information seeking? What kind?

- Where
- When
- Why
- Is that right?
- Safety
- How (do you feel/ explain further)
- Meaning (what do you mean/think)
- Sending and receiving information is key
- People who did not use all channels of communication are limited.

Information referencing
What about emotion sharing?

Are you really....

- Happy?
- Sad?
- Angry?
- Bored?
- Tired?
- Frightened?
- Puzzled?
- In love?
- In hate?
- These are internal states shared by our faces.
As we get older, emotions get more complicated.
In many ways

For lots of reasons

Why does referencing not take place with ASD

- Sharing has not developed
- Don't recognize uncertainty thus need for information
- Don't have studying response
- Note: Some times other foundations are not developing
- Nervous? Stressed?
- Overwhelmed
- Distracted
- Day dreaming
What Happens When Social Referencing Does Not Develop

THE FIRST RELATIONSHIP By Daniel Stern

In RDI We train and supervise Parents

We start with parents/families. Training for teachers, other therapists, etc comes after family intervention. Note: All of our goals are parent and student goals. Referencing (eye contact) just one of the many

Parent training steps for this goal

- Assessment
- More non-verbal communication
- Slowing down
- Pausing
- Directing non-verbally
- Learning to frame engagements to create the why bother (which we are going to do today)
- Video review/meetings
Let the Games begin
• Study
• Staring contest
• Information sharing
• More information sharing
• Emotion sharing
• When faces and words do not match

Referencing lays foundation for...

• Inferring
• Joint Attention
• Perspective taking
• Empathy
• Relationship planning
• Just to name a few
• Note: In not referencing faces, children/adults often become completely dependent on verbal instruction. They are cut off from a huge communication resource

Joint Attention is focused by two or more people on the same object or person.
Communication note: All Channels of communication are important

- Face
- Gestures
- Porosity in your voice
- Body position
- Channels of communication

Finishing up...next time someone talks to you about eye contact...

You will remember it is more than just eye contact.

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Before we go: RDI=
Dynamic Thinking

- Coordinating with others
- Collaborating
- Creating
- Inference
- Flexibility
- Problem Solving
- Gray thinking

Emergence of Selective Social Referencing in Infancy
Tricia Striano and Philippe Rochat
Department of Psychology
Emory University

Michelle Winner's work gave me a better understanding of what was needed in addressing this area and how to go about achieving the goals. She uses the term "thinking with our eyes". So in the child with a ASD, teaching the importance of using our eyes to gain information from others or from the environment is one of the earliest lessons. The lesson starts simply as a game involving detecting what objects someone is looking at by following their eye gaze. It then progresses to determining what someone might be thinking about when looking at a particular object. The child learns that people look at things when they are thinking about them. Thus when they are looking at something, they are likely thinking about it. From there, the child learns the importance of using his own eyes to look and think about things and others, to glean information this way, and to convey his own thoughts this way. For some reason, some children do not develop this skill intuitively; this is especially a problem in children with ASD. But once a child is taught the power of the eyes, natural "eye contact" develops.