

## **Social Communication Disorder**

Social communication disorder is identified when a child has difficulties in understanding and using verbal and non-verbal communication in social contexts. As such, these children may face difficulties with social interactions, such as taking turns during a conversation, making appropriate comments and interpreting facial expressions, body language and tone of voice.

The cause of social communication disorder is unknown. The disorder may be a diagnosis on its own or may co-occur with other conditions such as intellectual disability, language disorders or a traumatic brain injury. In the case of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), social communication difficulties are a defining feature, along with restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior.

Social communication disorder can lead to far-reaching problems, such as having difficulties in participating in social settings, developing peer relationships, achieving academic success and performing successfully at the workplace.

With treatment and rehabilitation, children with social communication disorder can learn and develop the necessary social skills to communicate effectively and efficiently with others.

### **How is it treated?**

Social communication intervention involves teaching a variety of social scenarios to the child to help him/her gain a better understanding of complex situations. Following this, the child will learn what are socially appropriate behaviours and responses and contrast them with inappropriate behaviours. The final step would then be to integrate this new knowledge into real life situations.

Treatment may also involve behavioural interventions to modify existing behaviours or to teach new behaviours, creating social scripts specific to the child's needs and using social stories to help explain social situations more explicitly.

### **What does rehabilitation involve?**

The overall aim of rehabilitation is for the child to learn and acquire the necessary social skills involved in communication with others, so as to improve relationships and functional outcomes.

A case history will be obtained, followed by an assessment of the child's communication abilities. Usually, an interview with the child's family or caregivers will also be done as part of the assessment. Based on the child's profile of strengths and weaknesses, therapy tasks will then be developed by the speech therapist, for the child to practise both within and outside of the clinic setting.

### **Useful websites**



[Social Communication Disorder](#)

[Social Communication Disorder and How is it Treated](#)