

# Why We Don't Use Social Thinking® (or any commercial Social Skills training programs)

## Therapist Neurodiversity Collective International

• Therapy • Advocacy • Education •  
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"I always find it ironic when a 'therapy' preaches that it teaches 'good listening', but only ever listens to the bias that created it. Pretty poor social skills when it's one side dictating to the other what social skills look like."  
- Kieran Rose, The Autistic Advocate

Thank you to S. Pearce for your research and brilliant articulation of the ableism in the following 7 points:

### 1 IT STIGMATIZES QUIRKY/AUTISTIC TRAITS

Social Thinking: Four Steps of Communication with Michelle Garcia Winner and Casey Baird: <https://youtu.be/trKIQKvIQCo>

### 2 IT DEMONIZES AUTISTIC THOUGHT PATTERNS (THE UNTHINKABLES).

<https://studylib.net/doc/14204476/appendix-b--team-of-unthinkable>

### 3 IT TEACHES CHILDREN IT'S THEIR JOB TO MAKE OTHERS HAVE GOOD THOUGHTS ABOUT THEM (PEOPLE PLEASING).

<https://www.socialthinking.com/-/media/Images/Look-Inside-Product-Images/You-are-a-Social-Detective-Peek-Inside-04.ashx?>



"To sustain social behaviors well across settings means to actively monitor how people are thinking and feeling in those settings." - Michelle Garcia Winner

<http://www.autismsupportnetwork.com/news/social-thinking-and-applied-behavior-analysis-not-black-and-white-autism-22932344t>

### 4 IT DISCOURAGES AUTHENTICITY, WHICH IS ESSENTIAL FOR HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.

### 5 IT MISPLACES THE BURDEN OF DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ON DISABLED PEOPLE:

"If they are to work and live in our communities they are expected to adapt their behaviors accordingly." - Michelle Garcia Winner

<http://www.autismsupportnetwork.com/news/social-thinking-and-applied-behavior-analysis-not-black-and-white-autism-22932344t>

### 6 IT TEACHES WHAT GOOD LISTENING LOOKS LIKE, FAILING TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND APPRECIATE DIVERSE PRESENTATIONS OF GOOD LISTENING

<https://www.socialthinking.com/-/media/Images/Products/whole-body-listening-poster.ashx?>

### 7 IT TEACHES CHILDREN WITH SENSITIVE NEUROCEPTION THAT THEY ARE OVERREACTING TO PROBLEMS, INVALIDATING THEIR EXPERIENCE

Neuroception is a subconscious system for detecting threats and safety. Autistic and other neurodivergent people often have sensitive neuroception.

"The process begins with recognizing what people think and feel about each other in different situations, and then determining the expected desired behaviors to keep others around you accepting you in their presence. The motivation for this learning comes from the desire to be socially validated (socially included) by others."  
- Michelle Garcia Winner

"As with any good social thinking- behavioral program, as the reward shifts towards internal monitoring of their own thoughts and emotions as one begins to recognize how subtle shifts in their behavior can shift people's acceptance of them. To sustain social behaviors well across settings means to actively monitor how people are thinking and feeling in those settings."  
- Michelle Garcia Winner

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"The true lesson of training social skills teaches our students that unless they learn to successfully mask their autistic traits, they are inherently less valuable members of the human race. Social skills training communicates conditional acceptance based on the conditions that non-autistic people determine. It's not fair or ethical." - Julie Roberts, MS, CCC-SLP

