

Excellence Grounded in Faith



Social Filter

We all have something in our brain called a “Social Filter.” The definition of a social filter (noun) is the manner in which one appraises a social situation to know the appropriate reactions or responses to such a situation. When we use our social filter it can help us decide what is okay and not okay to say in social situations (to keep as thoughts or say out loud).

Sometimes students have difficulty taking the perspective of another student/person or struggle to regulate their emotions and end up blurting out hurtful messages that would be better left as a thought. We are all guilty of this sometimes. These students can benefit from lessons and activities related to using their social filter.

Think it or Say it?

- Everybody has an invisible filter in the front part of their brain. It can be called a brain filter or a social filter. This helps us determine what thoughts are okay to say and what we should leave as thoughts
- Sometimes children have difficulty regulating their emotions or taking the perspective of another and end up making statements that hurt others' feelings
- Teaching children about a social filter can help them determine if the thought is a think it or say it, an inside thought or an outside thought, a thinking bubble or a talking bubble

Who would benefit from learning about social filter?

The simple answer is: WE ALL WOULD!! It is true that we all say things that we wish we would not have to our family members, co-workers, etc. It is in those times that we should have used our social filter. It is the same for children as they are growing and entering new developmental stages, how to interact socially and appropriately.

Perspective Taking

- Taking the perspective of others is an important skill. What we say and do has an effect on the people around us, it is important to think about how what we say will make another person feel before we say it.
- When we use our social filter, we THINK about how our words and actions affect other people. Our social filter works by keeping our unkind thoughts to ourselves and sharing our kind thoughts with the people around us.
- Learning and integrating this information will help to enhance relationships, improve interactions, and help build friendships.

In the classroom

- Read stories
- Provide models and examples for perspective taking and using social filter (think it, filter it, say it)
- Encourage students to think before they speak. For example:
 - “I told grandma that I liked her haircut and that made her feel good.”
 - “I don’t really like Mrs. Smith’s new sweater. I decided to keep that thought in my ‘thinking bubble’ because if I told her she might feel upset.”
 - “Instead of telling my classmate he has bad breath, I will just keep it to myself.”

Continuing the conversation at home...

At home, when your student(s) forget to use their social filter you can use those as learning opportunities. Be open as parents, with your student(s), when you forget to use your social filter and share what you could have done (or filtered) differently. You can also ask your student(s) how they would feel and work on perspective taking. Reading books or listening to books on You Tube with younger students is a great way to continue the conversation about using their social filter.

Books on Social Filter:

I Can’t Believe You Said That!: My Story About Using My Social Filter...or Not! by Julia Cook

Straight From the Horse’s Mouth by Julia Cook

My Mouth is a Volcano by Julia Cook

Being Frank by Donna W. Ehardt

Interrupting Chicken by David Ezra Stein

Books on Perspective Taking:

<https://thecolorfulapple.com/2020/08/books-perspective/>

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References

Everyday Speech

Social Thinking Curriculum, Michelle Garcia Winner

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