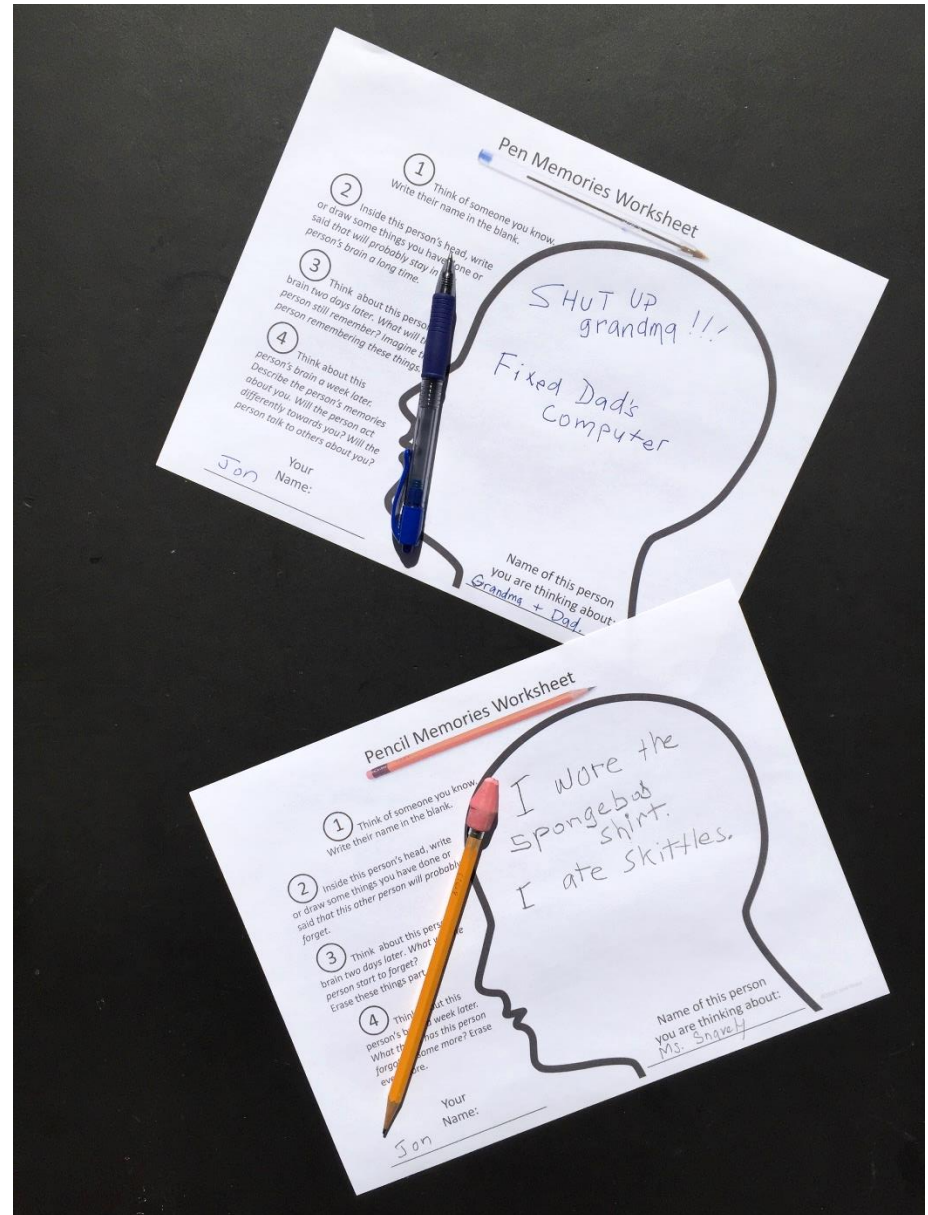


Pencil Memories and Pen Memories

Simple worksheets to help
children understand how
words and actions
affect others

Joel Shaul, LCSW



Children with autism spectrum disorders struggle to imagine what another person is thinking and feeling. Kids with ASD might assume that another person might not form long-term memories or impressions about them. When we are trying to help these children with social skills and conduct, it is helpful to review some basics of social cause and effect from time to time.

Pencil writing, which can be erased, and pen writing, which cannot, can provide the basis for a rough but useful metaphor regarding what others forget and what others remember.

Suggestions on using these worksheets:

Keep these lessons positive. Start with carefully reviewing all the good memories that others have about the child. The idea is to raise awareness and to increase social skills motivation. With that in mind, avoid inducing dysfunctional levels of guilt.

Start with doing some checking up on the child's awareness of other people's memories. Ask questions like, "If you did _____ to _____, would they still remember it after one day? One week? One year?" Start with hypothetical questions about positive words and actions about positive things the child might do or say to others. Then go into negative things.

How to Introduce the activity:

Use words like these to introduce the activity:
"We are going to do an activity called Pencil Memories and Pen Memories. When we do things and say things, other people hear and see us. Some of what they see and hear gets erased over time because it does not matter to them. These are called Pencil Memories, because time can erase them the way an eraser erases pencil. Other memories we will call Pen Memories. These are things that others remember much longer, because what we did was really nice, or helpful, or interesting. Or, because what we did was really mean, rude, or unexpected in some bad way."

Other work on theory of mind & social cause and effect:

On my website, there are two other worksheets on this topic. Click on this link: <https://bit.ly/3cG4YfY> or go to the website and search for Words Hurt, Words Help.



Our Brains Are Like Computers!
Exploring social skills and social cause and effect with children on the autism spectrum

This is my illustrated children's book on this topic. It delves into the topic in greater detail, with lots more worksheets and learning activities.



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Pencil Memories Worksheet



① Think of someone you know.
Write their name in the blank.

② Inside this person's head, write or draw some things you have done or said *that this other person will probably forget*.

③ Think about this person's brain *two days later*. *What will the person start to forget?*
Erase these things part way.

④ Think about this person's brain *a week later*. *What things has this person forgotten some more?* Erase even more.

Your
Name:

Name of this person
you are thinking about:

Pen Memories Worksheet



① Think of someone you know.
Write their name in the blank.

② Inside this person's head, write or draw some things you have done or said *that will probably stay in this person's brain a long time.*

③ Think about this person's brain *two days later. What will the person still remember? Imagine the person remembering these things.*

④ Think about this person's brain *a week later. Describe the person's memories about you. Will the person act differently towards you? Will the person talk to others about you?*

Your
Name:

Name of this person
you are thinking about: