

Understanding & Treating Selective Mutism (SM) in Teens

Child Directed Interaction (CDI) Skills

CDI skills are used during warm up periods with the teen to help them feel less anxious and more successful around new people and in new environments. However, the CDI skills are great to use at all times!

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Labeled Praise: A positive statement about what the teen is doing in the moment. <i>Tell the teen exactly what you like about what they're doing!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases the praised behaviorShows approvalIncreases the teen's self-esteem and confidence	Thank you for using your voice to answer my question. I appreciate that you looked at me while you told me that.
Reflection: A statement that repeats back to the teen his or her verbalization or paraphrases what the teen said. <i>Avoid "tip ups" that turn the reflection into a question!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows interest in the teen's ideasDemonstrates acceptance and understandingIncreases verbal communication	Teen: I'm hungry. Adult: You're telling me you're hungry. Teen: Where is the bathroom? Adult: You're asking me where the bathroom is... (provide answer)
Behavioral Description: A statement about the teen's moment-by-moment behavior. <i>Pretend you are a sportscaster!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Allows the teen to lead the activityDemonstrates enthusiasm and interestTeaches conceptsModels appropriate speech	You are shuffling the deck of cards. I see you shaking your head. You are drawing a sunset with your color pencils.

CDI Guidelines

- ★ Follow the teen's lead in the interaction/activity
- ★ Avoid asking questions and giving commands
- ★ Avoid (constructive) criticism or any negative appraisals of the teen's behavior
- ★ Ignore minor misbehavior (and try to "catch" them behaving appropriately as soon as possible afterwards)
- ★ Describe nonverbal communication without interpreting its meaning (e.g., "I see you're pointing," rather than "I see you're pointing to the chips.")
- ★ Be enthusiastic and enjoy your time with the teen!

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Verbal Directed Interaction (VDI) Skills

VDI skills are used to increase the teen's speech by asking certain types of questions and applying a flexible sequence of prompts to support the teen's success in responding.

<u>Type of Question</u>	<u>Considerations</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Forced Choice: A question in which two or more possible responses are given within the question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helpful during early interactions or in difficult situations• Provides support in selecting a response, making it easier for the teen to answer	Is your favorite color <i>red</i> or <i>blue</i> ? Would you rather <i>play cards</i> , <i>build a Lego set</i> , or <i>do you not care</i> ? Do you want to watch something on <i>Netflix</i> , <i>Hulu</i> , or <i>somewhere else</i> ?
Open Ended: A question in which a possible answer is not suggested within the question. <i>Typically starts with "who," "what," "where," "when," "why," or "how"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows the teen to be more expressive and come up with his or her own response• May be more challenging for teens concerned with being "wrong" or evaluated	Who is your best friend? What did you do at school today? How many siblings do you have? Why do you prefer the pool over the beach?
Yes or No: A question in which a possible or expected response is either "yes" or "no." <i>Try to avoid these!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be answered more easily through nonverbal means (e.g., nodding, shaking head)• Limits responses to just one word• Can be quickly changed into forced choice questions by adding the words "yes or no?" to the end of the question	Do you like seafood? → Do you like seafood, <i>yes or no</i> ? Did you finish your homework? → Did you finish your homework, <i>or are you not done yet</i> ? Is the party on <i>December 5th</i> → Is the party on <i>December 5th</i> or <i>a different day</i> ?

VDI Guidelines

- ★ Always wait between 5-10 seconds for the teen to answer
- ★ Use a reflection + a labeled praise to reinforce verbal responses
- ★ Avoid yes or no questions
 - ★ If/when you ask a yes or no question, change it to a forced choice question right away!
- ★ Describe nonverbal communication without interpreting its meaning (e.g., "I see you're pointing," rather than "I see you're pointing to the chips.")
- ★ Repeat the same question up to 3 times
- ★ If the teen struggles to respond verbally, return to the last situation he or she was successful
- ★ Always revisit questions that were initially left unanswered
- ★ Reflect the teen's speech with your brave (i.e., regular volume) voice, even if he or she whispers, especially in group contexts
- ★ Continue to use CDI skills in between questions

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VDI Sequence Examples

<p>When the teen answers right away:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult: "Would you like to play Uno or with regular cards?" (forced choice) <i>Wait! 1 2 3 4 5 seconds</i> Teen: "Uno." Adult: "Uno." (reflection) "Thanks for telling me what you want to play." (labeled praise) 	<p>When the teen has difficulty choosing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult: "Do you want chocolate or vanilla ice cream?" (forced choice) <i>Wait! 1 2 3 4 5 seconds</i> Teen: No response. Adult: "Chocolate or vanilla?" (forced choice) <i>Wait! 1 2 3 4 5 seconds</i> Teen: No response. Adult: "Do you want chocolate, yes or no?" (forced choice) Teen: Nods head. Adult: "I see you nodding." (behavior description) "Is that a yes or a no?" (forced choice) Teen: "...yes." Adult: "Yes, you want chocolate." (reflection) "Thanks for telling me what you want." (labeled praise)
<p>When the teen answers with a nonverbal response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult: "Would you like to play Uno or with regular cards?" (forced choice) Teen: Immediately points to box of Uno. Adult: "I see you pointing." (behavior description) "Does that mean you want to play Uno or with cards?" (forced choice) <i>Wait! 1 2 3 4 5 seconds</i> Teen: "I want to play Uno." Adult: "You want to play Uno." (reflection) "I appreciate you telling me what you wanted using your words." (labeled praise) 	<p>When the child/teen answers with a barely audible response: <i>*Prompts for louder or full voice should only be used if child is ready to move to that higher step.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult: "Do you want to watch something on Netflix or Hulu?" (forced choice) <i>Wait! 1 2 3 4 5 seconds</i> Teen: Under breath "N.e..f..x." Adult: "I see you are trying to answer." (behavior description) "I couldn't hear you. Tell me again a little louder." (direct command) <i>Wait! 1 2 3 4 5 seconds</i> Teen: "Netflix." Adult: "You want to watch something on Netflix." (reflection) "Thank you for telling me in a loud voice." (labeled praise)
<p>When the teen answers in a whisper: <i>*Prompts for louder or full voice should only be used if child/teen is ready to move to that higher step.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult: "Do you want to eat a sandwich or a burger for lunch?" (forced choice) <i>Wait! 1 2 3 4 5 seconds</i> Teen: "Sandwich." (whisper) Adult: "I hear you whispering." (behavior description) "Tell me what you want with your full voice." (direct command) <i>Wait! 1 2 3 4 5 seconds</i> Teen: "Sandwich." (full voice) Adult: "You want to eat a sandwich." (reflection) "Thank you for using your full voice to tell me." (labeled praise) 	<p>When the teen doesn't respond at all:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult: "Would you rather go bowling or to the arcade?" (forced choice) <i>Wait! 1 2 3 4 5 seconds</i> Teen: No response. Adult: "Bowling or arcade?" (forced choice) Teen: No response. Adult: "Do you want to go bowling, yes or no?" (forced choice) Teen: No response. Adult: "It might be hard to answer in front of all of these people, let's go practice in the hallway." OR "That might be hard to answer right now, think about it and I will come back and ask you in a little bit." OR "Go practice with (familiar person) and then come back and tell me."