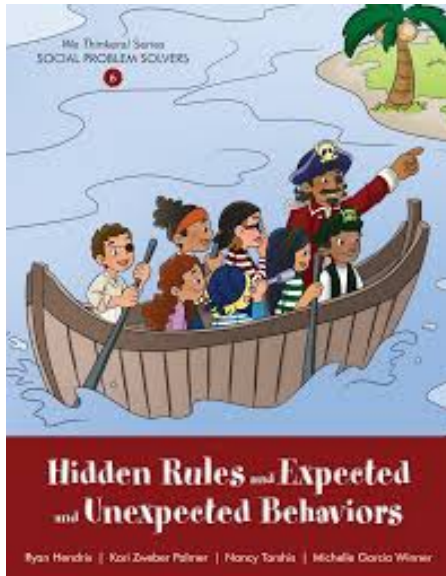


## Social Thinking Concept 6: Hidden Rules and Expected and Unexpected Behaviours



### Why do We Teach this Concept?

Every social situation has “hidden rules.” They are commonly shared and understood yet not usually verbalized or explicitly taught. We can either follow these rules with expected behaviours or not follow these rules with unexpected behaviours. We adapt our behaviour to keep others feeling comfortable and having comfortable thoughts about sharing space with us, which ultimately keeps us feeling comfortable too. No one does what is expected at all times, therefore we teach students that we have the ability to change others’ thoughts and feelings by changing our behaviours.

Take note: this concept is easy to teach incorrectly! We want to avoid simply telling children that their behaviour is expected or unexpected. The goal of teaching this concept is for students to decipher the hidden rules which will help them learn to organize around the behavioural expectations for a situation.

Here are two free articles that can help you further understand the nuances of teaching these important concepts:

- Why do we use the Expected-Unexpected Social Thinking Vocabulary:  
<https://www.socialthinking.com/Articles?name=Why%20do%20We%20Use%20the%20Expected-Unexpected%20Social%20Thinking%20Vocabulary%20Article>
- Are You Teaching Expected and Unexpected the Wrong Way:  
<https://www.socialthinking.com/Articles?name=Are-You-Teaching-Expected-and-Unexpected-the-Wrong-Way>
- How is Teaching Hidden Rules Different From Teaching About Expected/Unexpected Behavior: <https://www.socialthinking.com/Articles?name=Hidden-Rules-Different-from-Expected-Unexpected>
- Are You Teaching Deeply, or Redirecting Behavior? Using the Social Thinking Vocabulary Terms Expected and Unexpected:  
<https://www.socialthinking.com/Articles?name=UsingtheTermsExpectedUnexpected>

### Materials:

- Book 6: Hidden Rules and Expected and Unexpected Behaviours
- Unit 6 Plan from The Social Problem Solvers Curriculum
- Family Letter and At Home Activities
- Optional Music Activity: Music CD Track 7
- Visuals: Comfortable (green) and uncomfortable (red) thought bubbles
- Handouts 6.3 - 6.8 from USB drive (included in We Thinkers! GPS book) or The Social Problem Solvers Curriculum (pages 209-223)

*Social Thinking® concepts are introduced to early learners ages 4-7 through the Social Thinking curriculum, We Thinkers! Volumes 1 and 2, written by Ryan Hendrix, Kari Palmer, Nancy Tarshis, and Michelle Garcia Winner. (www.socialthinking.com)*

### Optional Additional Materials:

- Social Behaviour Mapping: <https://www.socialthinking.com/Products/social-behavior-mapping-connecting-behavior-emotions-consequences>
- Social Stories by Carol Gray: <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/>
- Social Thinking and Me: <https://www.socialthinking.com/Products/Social%20Thinking%20and%20Me>

### Activities:

- Read Book 6 Hidden Rules and Expected and Unexpected Behaviours:
  - See Unit Plan handout for ideas on what to discuss at each “stop and notice” icon.
  - More generally, encourage students to guess what kind of behaviour (expected/unexpected) each character is using. Also, encourage students to guess what kind of thought (comfortable/uncomfortable) other characters are having about the behaviour. Reinforce the idea that characters are able to change those thoughts and feelings of others by changing their behaviour.
- See Unit Plan for activities. Here are some additional activities to do with your class:
  - Act it out:
    - After reading the book, act out unexpected behaviours in the classroom (e.g. standing on chair, talking to board with back to students, etc.). Have students identify whether behaviour is expected or unexpected and whether it gives them comfortable or uncomfortable thoughts using their coloured thought bubbles. Make it BIG and obvious; the sillier the better.
    - Have students act out expected and unexpected scenarios as well.
  - Watch videos such as “Buddy the Elf discovers New York” “Elf- Breakfast Spaghetti”, variety of Mr. Bean videos.
  - Tour the school and discuss hidden rules and expected behaviours in each environment.

### Language to Reinforce the Concept

*After teaching the concept, use these words in everyday activities:*

- Comfortable/uncomfortable thoughts e.g. *“I am having a comfortable/uncomfortable thought about that behaviour.”*
- Expected/unexpected behaviours e.g. *“Joey’s body is in the group. That is expected!”*
- Use *Oops!* to help students change what others are thinking and feeling about their unexpected behaviours. *“The group plan is to line up for music. Reading your book at your desk is unexpected and it is making me have uncomfortable thoughts. Oops! Can you put your body in the group?”*
- Use previously learned concepts such as “Body in the Group”, “Whole Body Listening”, “Thinking with Your Eyes” to highlight expected and unexpected behaviours. *“Michelle is thinking about me with her eyes. That is expected!”*

### Teachable Moments

- During book reading, ask students to point of expected and unexpected behaviours. This can be done with most books, but try:
  - No, David! - David Shannon
  - Interrupting Chicken - David Ezra Stein
  - My Mouth is a Volcano - Julia Cook
  
- When a behaviour issue comes up in class, discuss how our actions can affect our friends' feelings and thoughts. For example, say *"When you take things from a friend without asking, that is unexpected. Oops! It gives your friend an uncomfortable thought. How can you change your friend's thought to a comfortable thought?"* After student comes up with an alternative, reinforce the concept of the hidden rule. For example *"That's a good idea! It is expected that you ask for something and wait for your friend to give it to you. "*
  
- Front-load students with the hidden rules of different environments, such as library, on the school bus, in the hallways, at a museum. For example, *"Tomorrow we are going to the Art Gallery. The hidden rules of an art gallery include : no touching the artwork, walking feet, quiet voices."*