

## UCLA PEERS<sup>®</sup> TRAINING SEMINAR SERIES

### 1) *Nature of the Intervention:*

- a. The UCLA Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS<sup>®</sup>) is a 14-week evidence-based social skills intervention for motivated teens in middle school or high school who are interested in learning ways to help them make and keep friends. It has a strong evidence-base for use with adolescents (ages 11-18) with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Laugeson et al., 2009; 2012). In addition, the PEERS intervention has been found to be appropriate for adolescents with ADHD, anxiety, depression, and other socioemotional problems. During each group session teens are taught important social skills through the presentation of concrete rules and steps of social behavior and are given the opportunity to practice these skills in session during socialization activities. Parents are taught how to assist their teens in making and keeping friends by providing feedback through coaching during weekly socialization homework assignments. The PEERS<sup>®</sup> Training Seminar Series is designed specifically for mental health professionals and educators interested in learning and/or implementing the PEERS<sup>®</sup> intervention into their clinical practice and various communities.
- b. Topics of the PEERS<sup>®</sup> intervention include, but are not limited to:
  - i. Conversational skills
  - ii. Entering and exiting conversations
  - iii. Finding appropriate friends
  - iv. Appropriate use of humor
  - v. Good sportsmanship
  - vi. How to organize and have successful get-togethers with peers
  - vii. How to handle arguments and disagreements with peers
  - viii. How to handle verbal teasing, physical bullying, cyber bullying, rumors, and gossip
  - ix. How to change a bad reputation
- c. Outcome measures of the intervention include:
  - i. Parent-report measures:
    1. Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS), Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS), Social Anxiety Scale (SAS), Empathy Quotient (EQ), Quality of Socialization Questionnaire (QSQ)
  - ii. Adolescent-report measures:
    1. Social Anxiety Scale (SAS), Friendship Quality Scale (FQS), Empathy Quotient (EQ), Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale (PHS2), Quality of Socialization Questionnaire (QSQ), Test of Adolescent Social Skills Knowledge (TASSK)

2) ***Training Details:*** The PEERS<sup>®</sup> Training Seminar is designed exclusively for mental health professionals and educators who are interested in learning and/or implementing the PEERS<sup>®</sup> intervention into their practice. Mental health professionals and educators attending the UCLA PEERS<sup>®</sup> Training Seminar can expect 4- days of intensive instruction regarding the implementation of the PEERS<sup>®</sup> intervention. Attendees will benefit from: didactic instruction in a small group format, direct observation of current UCLA PEERS parent and adolescent groups, role-playing demonstrations, and videos of previous PEERS<sup>®</sup> groups.

- a. **Trainers:** Elizabeth A. Laugeson, Psy.D., Director of the UCLA PEERS Clinic, and Mina Park, Ph.D., BCBA, UCLA Postdoctoral Fellow, serve as course instructors throughout the PEERS<sup>®</sup> Training Seminar.
  - i. Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson is a licensed clinical psychologist and an Assistant Clinical

Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior. Dr. Laugeson is the Founder and Director of the UCLA PEERS Clinic, which is an outpatient hospital-based program providing parent-assisted social skills training for adolescents and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other social impairments.

- ii. Mina Park, Ph.D., BCBA is a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior under the mentorship of Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson. As a postdoctoral fellow for the UCLA PEERS Clinic and a PEERS<sup>®</sup> Certified Provider, Dr. Park co-facilitates parent training groups, serves as an intake clinician, and assists Dr. Laugeson in conducting PEERS<sup>®</sup> Training Seminars for mental health professionals and educators.
- b. **Trainees:** Enrollment in the PEERS<sup>®</sup> Training Seminar is limited to 20 spaces per cycle, thus allowing ample opportunity for attendees to ask questions and participate in mock role-plays and other small group activities. The small group training format also affords attendees the unique opportunity for live observation of PEERS<sup>®</sup> participants and their families currently enrolled in groups conducted through the UCLA PEERS Clinic. The training is designed for mental health professionals with degrees in mental health including, educators, and graduate students. The training is not appropriate for parents of adolescents seeking social skills interventions; however, parents are encouraged to participate in our PEERS<sup>®</sup> groups. Post-training supervision is not required as part of the certification process, but inquiries from attendees following the training are always welcomed and encouraged by the training staff. Individual training for professionals is not available.
- c. **Frequency and Location of Training:** The PEERS Training Seminar occurs over a four-day period encompassing a total of 24 hours of training. There are three trainings offered during each calendar year onsite at the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior.
- d. **Train the Trainer:** The PEERS<sup>®</sup> Training Seminar does not contain a train-the-trainer model in its current design, although this may be considered for the development of future trainings.
- a. **Manual:** Each attendee will receive a copy of the published PEERS<sup>®</sup> treatment manual, *Social Skills for Teenagers with Developmental and Autism Spectrum Disorders: The PEERS Treatment Manual* (Laugeson & Frankel, 2010), as well as the unpublished *PEERS School-Based Treatment Manual* (Laugeson, unpublished).

### 3) Evidence-base for the intervention:

- a. Research has examined the efficacy and durability of PEERS<sup>®</sup>, a parent-assisted social skills group intervention for high-functioning adolescents with ASD. Results indicate that teens receiving PEERS<sup>®</sup> significantly improved their social skills knowledge, social responsiveness, and overall social skills in the areas of social communication, social cognition, social awareness, social motivation, assertion, cooperation, and responsibility, while decreasing autistic mannerisms and increasing the frequency of peer interactions (Laugeson et al., 2009; 2012). Independent teacher ratings reveal significant improvement in social skills and assertion from pre-test to follow-up assessment. Examination of durability of improvement revealed maintenance of gains in nearly all domains with additional treatment gains at a 14-week follow-up assessment (Laugeson et al., 2012).
- b. Please see attached publications.

### 4) Provisions for cultural adaptation:

- a. Efforts have been made to ensure treatment materials are culturally sensitivity and adaptable. Terminology used in the program is defined and straightforward, making it easy to comprehend

and disseminate. The PEERS<sup>®</sup> program is used internationally in over a dozen countries and has been translated in over a half dozen languages.

**5) Contact information:**

- a. Information regarding the PEERS<sup>®</sup> Training Seminar Series can be found on our website: [www.semel.ucla.edu/peers](http://www.semel.ucla.edu/peers)
- b. Further inquiries can be sent to the PEERS Clinic Coordinator:  
Jessica Hopkins  
UCLA PEERS Clinic  
300 UCLA Medical Plaza, Suite 1276  
Los Angeles, CA 90095-6967  
(310-267-3377)  
[peersclinic@ucla.edu](mailto:peersclinic@ucla.edu)
- c. The cost of the training is \$2,200.00 USD per attendee, and a limited amount of research scholarships are available for each training.

**6) Supplementary Materials**

- a. Laugeson, E. A., Mogil, C. E., Dillon, A. R., & Frankel, F. (2009). Parent-assisted social skills training to improve friendships in teens with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 39(4), 596-606.
- b. Laugeson, E. A., Frankel, F., Gantman, A., Dillon, A., & Mogil, C. (2012). Evidence-based social skills training for adolescents with autism spectrum disorders: The UCLA PEERS program. *Journal for Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 42(6), 1025-1036.
- c. People magazine article about PEERS<sup>®</sup>
- d. PEERS<sup>®</sup> Training Seminar Flyer