



**PONTARDDULAIS COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL**  
**YSGOL GYFUN PONTARDDULAIS**



**TALKABOUT**

**Learn to live...**  
live to learn

**Byw I ddysgu...**  
dysgu byw



### ***About Talkabout***

Talkabout is a structured programme for teaching and measuring social skills. It is a whole scheme of work which helps you assess, teach, and measure your work easily. It uses a hierarchical method of teaching social skills which means that having assessed the child using the Talkabout assessment, teachers will choose the appropriate level or book to start work at. This means that you may start by developing a child's self-awareness and self-esteem before progressing onto body language. You will then move onto conversation skills and then onto friendship skills and assertiveness.

### ***Talkabout is...***

- **A hierarchical approach to teaching social skills:** foundation skills are taught prior to more complex skills
- **Includes an assessment and outcome measures:** the Talkabout assessment includes a method of quantifying
- **Includes activities and plans of intervention:** Talkabout is a scheme of work that is designed to be followed week by week, with plans for your intervention divided into 3 academic terms for anyone working in schools
- **Suitable for all ages:** the different books are designed with a certain population in mind, so that you will use the resource best suited to your pupils
- **Suitable to put onto a school curriculum:** the Talkabout resources have been written with schools in mind, so that teachers can easily put social skills into their lessons or onto their curriculum
- **Proven effectiveness:** Talkabout has been proved to be an effective tool for developing self-esteem, social skills, and friendship skills

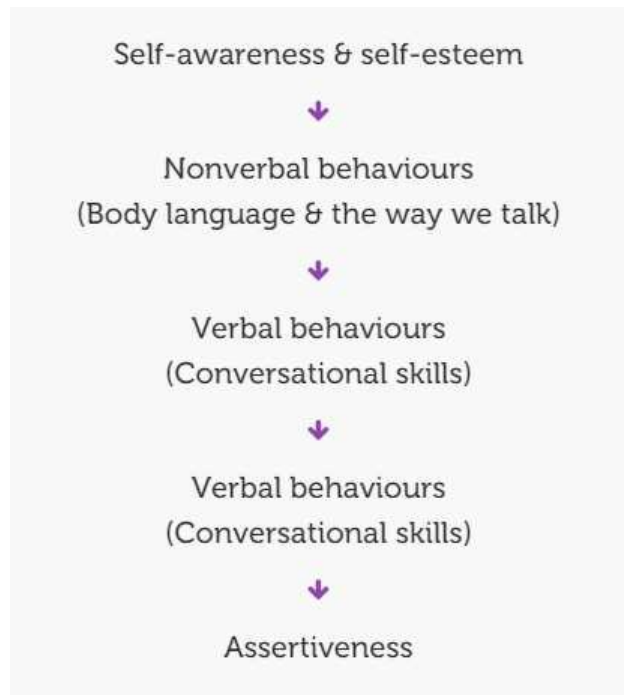
Talkabout is a series of social communication programmes. It is a practical resource which is aimed at improving Social Communication Skills such as:

- Listening
- Conversational Skills
- Body Language
- Awareness
- Assertiveness



### **A bit about the hierarchy**

Talkabout was first developed in the early nineties following a clinical study into the effectiveness of social skills work which found that the success of intervention increased if nonverbal behaviours were taught prior to verbal behaviours, and assertiveness was taught last. In addition, it was found that basic self and other awareness and self-esteem should be developed first if necessary and that friendship skills should be taught after social skills. If we spend time developing the foundation skills of self-esteem and self-awareness and then concentrate on body language prior to the more complex areas of conversational skills, friendship skills and assertiveness we are more likely to see progress.



### **Who is it used for?**

- Children and adolescents with mild learning difficulties
- Children and adolescents with Autistic Spectrum Conditions
- Children and adolescents with Pragmatic Language impairment
- Children and adolescents with poor Social Communication Skills



### **The History of Talkabout**

TALKABOUT was first developed in the early 1990s by Alex Kelly who was working as a speech and language therapist in London, UK. Alex was particularly interested in social skills but was frustrated by two aspects of her work as a therapist. First, there was nothing in the literature to guide her on where to start intervention following assessment; and second, her experience showed that she was not always successful in what she was trying to teach and could not always predict which children were going to improve and which were not. Alex set about to solve these two problems over a period of four years.

Alex started her investigations at a college of further education where she was working with 60 students who had a mild to moderate intellectual disability. The young people she worked with were assessed using an adapted social skills assessment from the Personal Communication Plan by Alex Hitchings and Robert Spence – now published in Kelly (2000). The students were involved in this assessment which gave some insight into their own awareness of their difficulties. From these initial results, students were grouped into their main area of need: body language, conversational skills, and assertiveness. Success was evaluated through retesting on the original assessment and also compared students with poor and good awareness of their needs.

The results were fascinating. They showed that the students who had been working on their conversational skills progressed more if they had good existing non-verbal skills (i.e., body language), and students who had been working on their assertiveness progressed significantly more if they had good existing non-verbal and verbal skills.

In addition, it was found that students who had poor self and other awareness struggled with all aspects of the work. From this, a hierarchy was established which forms the basis of the Talkabout resources. Over the next four years, the programme was piloted using different client groups and a group of willing therapists from throughout the UK. It was found consistently that the success of intervention increased if non-verbal behaviours were taught before verbal behaviours, and if assertiveness was taught last (Kelly, 1996).

