

## **Attribution Retraining**

### **INTRODUCING THE CONCEPTS OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL (CONCRETE ITEMS ONLY)**



**Objective:** To apply the three parameters of assessing circumstances to various concrete concepts.



**Required Materials:** Chalkboard and chalk or dry-erase board and markers; card stock or other heavy paper; tape; paper and pencils for each student



**Required Prep Time:** 10 minutes

**Required Activity Time:** 30 minutes



**Embed Factor:** 4



**Brief Overview:** To prepare for the process of learning to assess or attribute situations, we first introduce the three parameters of the process using only concrete concepts. This makes it easier to determine whether or not students struggle with the concepts or the process.

*REMEMBER: There may be more than one correct answer for each concept. As long as the context of the student's explanation is reasonable, the answer should be considered acceptable.*

The first of these concepts is that of internal vs. external to the self, or individual. For most learners with ASD, abstract concepts or creating concepts from scratch is a great challenge, so gaining expertise through concrete practice is critical to skill performance in the future. Once you have verified that the student has mastered the basic concept in concrete form, you are free to move toward teaching the same concepts with more complicated abstract ideas. Even though there is only one lesson plan, you will repeat it *two more times* so that all three parameters of attribution are covered – so you actually have three lessons in one. It is a good idea to do one at each session with lots of time for practice to ensure learning.

**Step 1:** Draw two large circles side by side on the chalkboard or white board, labeling one Internal and the other External.

## **Attribution Retraining and ASD**

*For younger student's (ages 5-8 years) or for those with more severe behavioral challenges, such as frequent outbursts that lead to swearing or breaking items, you can use the words Inside and Outside if developmentally appropriate.*

**Step 2:** Explain to students that they will be labeling things as either Internal/Inside or External/Outside. To do so, they will have to ask and answer the question, "Is this really part of me as a person, or is it about something outside of me?"

Write the following list of words on the board, and as a group discuss in which of the two circles they belong. It is all right to prompt the students or to label one or two of the words yourself to get the conversation started. As each of the words is labeled, be sure to write it inside the appropriate circle.

Eye color	Age
Thoughts	Environment/surroundings
Shoe size	Schedules
Favorite foods	Rules
Weather	Friends

**Step 3:** Repeat Step 2 by writing each of the words listed below on a piece of card stock with tape on the back. Ask students to take turns choosing a word, labeling it Internal/Inside or External/Outside, attaching the card side in the correct circle, and explaining why they made that choice.

Time (external)	Feelings/emotions (internal)	Money (external)
Traffic (external)	Fears (internal)	Family (external)
Moods (internal)	Sense of smell (internal)	Holidays (external)
Pets (external)		

*For younger or more severely challenged students, this step may require active prompting or support. Don't be afraid to simplify the choices even further to promote skill acquisition. For example, instead of using the word "thoughts," you might want to say "ideas" or "feelings," and for the "words environment/surroundings," you might want to try a specific area such as a classroom or playground or park. As each of the words is labeled, be sure to place it inside the appropriate circle.*

*Students' answers may vary, but for this parameter, answers are likely to be clear-cut. You may find that a student has a reasonable explanation for choosing the*