

Comprehensive Stuttering Therapy for Middle-School and High-School Students

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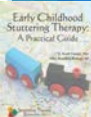



President, Stuttering Therapy Resources, Inc.
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1

Disclosures

- ▶ Financial
 - ▶ Michigan State University (Employment)
 - ▶ Stuttering Therapy Resources, Inc. (Royalties, Ownership)
 - ▶ Overall Assessment of the Speaker's Experience of Stuttering (OASES)
 - ▶ School-Age Stuttering Therapy: A Practical Guide
 - ▶ School-Age Stuttering: How Teachers Can Help
 - ▶ School-Age Stuttering: Information and Support for Parents
 - ▶ Early Childhood Stuttering Therapy: A Practical Guide
 - ▶ Minimizing Bullying for Children Who Stutter
 - ▶ (and more...)
- ▶ Non-financial
 - ▶ National Stuttering Association
(Volunteer consulting, advisory board)

2

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3

My goal: To help you help your students address some of the key challenges for middle-school and high-school students who stutter

- ▶ Part I: What's unique about this age
- ▶ Part II: Reducing your student's negative reactions to stuttering
- ▶ Part III: Reducing the negative reactions of peers (minimizing bullying)
- ▶ Part IV: Reducing the negative reactions of caregivers and others

4

Part I:
Unique aspects of working with middle-school and high-school students

Why do they still stutter?
What do they want from therapy?

5

Why Do They Still Stutter?

- ▶ Most preschool children stop stuttering, but this is not the case for school-age children, adolescents, and adults
 - ▶ Beyond age 6 or 7, stuttering is likely to persist
- ▶ As speech patterns become habituated (as neural pathways become hardwired), the chances that a person will completely stop stuttering diminish
 - ▶ Stuttering behaviors may remain, though they may change in frequency and form over time
 - ▶ This is the natural variability of stuttering

6

Coming to Terms...

- ▶ Middle-school and high-school students may or may not be aware of the reality that their stuttering is likely to persist
 - ▶ They may still be hoping for a cure
- ▶ It may be hard for them to come to terms with the fact that they will probably continue to stutter throughout their lives
 - ▶ They may feel a sense of hopelessness
- ▶ One of the most important things we can do (through therapy and support) is

7

Hoping for a Cure?

- ▶ Understandably, many students want a cure for their stuttering, but this is not something that they can have
 - ▶ **Fortunately, they don't need one!**
- ▶ People who stutter can do anything they want to do in their lives, regardless of whether or how much they stutter
- ▶ Unfortunately, many students (and their caregivers) don't know this (yet), but we can help them learn...

8

How Do We Offer Hope for Middle-School and High-School Students?

Recognize where they are in life
Focus on what *really* matters

9

Being a Pre-Teen/Teen Is Hard!

(Understatement of the century.)

- ▶ Being a pre-teen or teen who stutters can be particularly hard because **any** differences at that age are embarrassing
- ▶ They don't want to be different from their friends because they stutter, but they also don't want to be different from their friends in needing to go to therapy
 - ▶ "stuck between a rock and a hard place"

10

10

Therapy Is Even Harder!

- ▶ It is hard to change communication attitudes
- ▶ It is hard to change speech patterns
- ▶ It is hard to take risks, face fears, and enter new speaking situations
- ▶ It is hard to reduce avoidance or "safety behavior"
- ▶ It is hard to reduce tension and struggle
- ▶ **Caregivers, teachers, and *clinicians* often under-estimate how hard it is to change**

11

11

Keep It Real...

- ▶ Too often, therapy focuses on elusive, non-tangible goals, e.g.:
 - ▶ "Student will use XYZ technique..."
 - ▶ "Student will achieve X% fluency..."
- ▶ These make sense because, of course, the student wishes to be fluent... **BUT!**
- ▶ ***NONE of this is connected to the issues that the student face in real life***
- ▶ ***NONE of this is sustainable over the long term***

12

12

What Should We Work On In Therapy?

To answer this question, we must remember that ***Stuttering is more than just stuttering***

13

What Really Matters?

- ▶ We must address more than just observable speech/stuttering behaviors
 - ▶ (more on this in a moment...)
- ▶ In assessment, we must learn about the specific ways that stuttering causes a problem for the student
 - ▶ How does stuttering get in the way?
 - ▶ What do they have trouble doing that they want to be able to do?
 - ▶ What would be easier if they didn't stutter?

14

We need to think about what is a ***successful*** outcome from stuttering therapy?

"It's not just to get them to use easy starts!"

15

Successful stuttering therapy involves more than just changes in observable speech behavior

- ▶ Improved ease of speaking
- ▶ Improved management of stuttering behaviors
- ▶ Reduced tension and struggle
- ▶ Reduced avoidance
- ▶ Improved communication attitudes
- ▶ Improved communication abilities
- ▶ Improved understanding of stuttering by others
- ▶ Improved quality of life
- ▶ **Reduced negative impact from stuttering**



16

16

How can we do all that?!?

"That seems like a lot of stuff!"

17

17

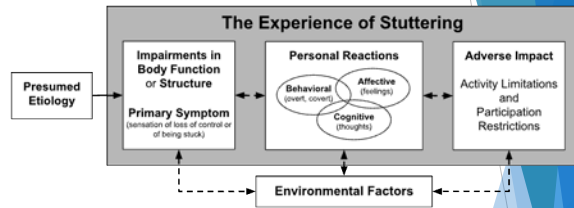
Differences That Make a Difference

- ▶ Write goals that focus on reducing the adverse impact of stuttering
 - ▶ "Student will talk to friends..."
 - ▶ "Student will give book report..."
 - ▶ "Student will order the food they want to eat..."
 - ▶ "Student will experience reduced fear..."
 - ▶ "Student will exhibit less tension and struggle..."
 - ▶ "Student will reduce avoidance behavior..."
 - ▶ "Student will participate fully in class..."
- ▶ **Real-world goals lead to real-world changes that make a difference in a person's life**

18

18

“Stuttering is more than just stuttering”



Model for representing the experience of stuttering
based on the World Health Organization's
International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF)
(Tichenor, Herring, & Yaruss, 2022; adapted from Yaruss, 1998;
Yaruss & Quesal, 2004; Yaruss & Tichenor, 2019)

19

The ICF forms the core of our scope of practice and justifies our work

- ▶ “The ICF framework is useful in describing the breadth of the role of the SLP in the prevention, assessment, and habilitation/ rehabilitation of communication and swallowing disorders and the enhancement and scientific investigation of those functions.”
- ▶ The role of the SLP...includes interactions related to emotional reactions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that result from living with the communication disorder...”

– ASHA Scope of Practice (2016)

20

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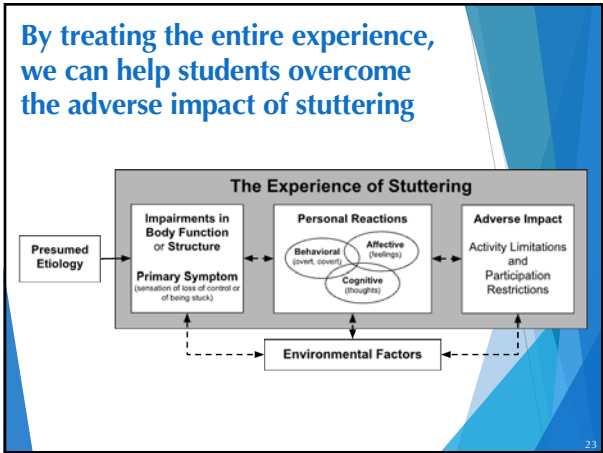


21

Successful therapy helps children participate fully in their lives

- ▶ **Reduced Impairment**
 - ▶ Improved ease of speaking
 - ▶ Improved management of stuttering behaviors
- ▶ **Reduced Negative Reactions**
 - ▶ Reduced tension and struggle; Reduced avoidance
 - ▶ Improved communication attitudes
 - ▶ Improved understanding of stuttering by others
- ▶ **Reduced Activity Limitations and Participation Restrictions**
 - ▶ Improved communication abilities
 - ▶ Improved quality of life
- ▶ **Reduced adverse impact from stuttering**

22



23

Part I Summary:

Understanding the true nature of stuttering helps us understand the unique aspects of working with middle-school and high-school students

24

Part II:

Reducing your student's negative reactions to stuttering

25

Many clinicians are familiar with aspects of treatment focused on changing speech production...

- ▶ This helps the child speak more easily and stutter less severely

26


Successful therapy must also address the child's affective and cognitive reactions to stuttering

- ▶ This helps to reduce their anxiety about speaking and stuttering and improve their confidence and competence as speakers

27

Reducing negative reactions helps children speak more easily *and* communicate more effectively

- ▶ When people are scared, they cannot perform to their best ability
- ▶ Fear leads to:
 - ▶ Increased tension and struggle
 - ▶ Increased avoidance of words, sounds, or situations
 - ▶ Negative thoughts and self-talk
 - ▶ Poor self-esteem and self-confidence
 - ▶ Lower quality of life
- ▶ **The more students fear stuttering, the greater the impact of stuttering on their lives**





28

Before you can help children overcome *their* discomfort with stuttering, **you first have to overcome your own discomfort**

29

(Too) many SLPs are uncomfortable with stuttering – this has to change

- ▶ If we are uncomfortable, when our students are stuttering, it is impossible for us to help them overcome their

- ▶ Fortunately, this is something we can change!

30

The best way to overcome a fear is to face that fear

- ▶ **Desensitization** is the process of gradually exposing yourself to the thing you're afraid of
 - ▶ People with a fear of spiders need to be gradually exposed to spiders to build up a resistance to fear
 - ▶ People with a fear of heights need to be gradually exposed to tall buildings
 - ▶ People with a fear of stuttering need to be gradually exposed to...
STUTTERING



31

31

Desensitization Works!



32

32

Remember...
students are not afraid
that they will be fluent

They are afraid that
they will *stutter*

33

33

We want our students to learn that it's okay to stutter – they're not doing anything wrong!

- ▶ The more they learn that it's okay to stutter, the more they learn that THEY are okay
- ▶ The more they know that they are okay, the easier it is for them to cope with stuttering



- ▶ And...the less likely they are to avoid, to tense and struggle, to fear, and to feel bad

34

Desensitization takes time

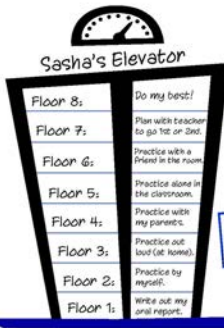
- ▶ You cannot simply “drop” people into a stressful situation and expect them to sink or swim!
 - ▶ That's what our students have been doing all their lives! They need help to overcome their fear



- ▶ We can help by gently **guiding them** toward experiences that reduce rather than increase fear
 - ▶ This means following a *hierarchy*

35

Hierarchies help us get from where we are to where we want to be



- ▶ SLPs use hierarchies for nearly everything we do
 - ▶ E.g., articulation therapy is presented in an orderly fashion, moving from easier situations to harder ones
- ▶ We can do the same thing in helping our students start with easy situations and move toward harder ones **when facing the fear of stuttering**

36

Self-help groups help children reduce their negative reactions by showing them *they're not alone*



37

Another therapy activity: Help your students meet others who stutter

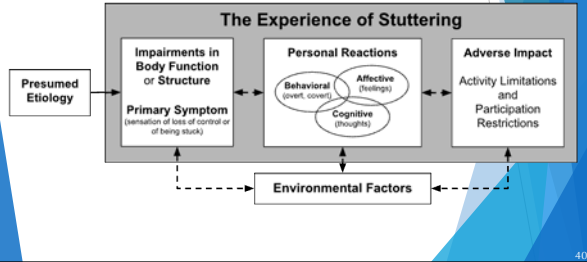
- ▶ Self-help organizations have local chapters and conferences for adults, teens, and youth
- ▶ Make sure to connect *all* of your students with self-help and the broader stuttering support community in some fashion
 - ▶ Websites (NSA: www.WeStutter.org; SAY: www.SAY.org; Friends: www.FriendsWhoStutter.org)
 - ▶ Newsletters
 - ▶ Local chapter meetings
 - ▶ Family days
 - ▶ National or regional conferences
 - ▶ Online connections

38


Meeting people who have “been there” and made it through offers children (and their parents) hope for the future

39

Part II Summary: The more students reduce their own negative reactions to stuttering, the more they reduce the negative impact of stuttering



40



Part III:

Reducing the negative reactions of the student's peers (Minimizing Bullying)


41

Children who stutter live in an environment that does not understand their condition

- ▶ This applies to:
 - ▶ **Parents**, who just want their children to stop stuttering (understandably) and have trouble accepting the true nature of the condition
 - ▶ **Teachers**, who may exclude children who stutter or not know how to respond to them at all
 - ▶ **Peers**, who may bully children who stutter or fail to stand up for them when they are bullied
- ▶ *We must help children educate the people in their environment to further reduce the adverse impact from stuttering*

42



Peers can provide tremendous support for children who stutter, but often they do not because they don't understand the disorder



43

Bullying is particularly problematic for children who stutter



- ▶ Children who stutter are more likely to experience bullying than other children
 - ▶ 59% of children who stutter report being bullied about their speech (Blood et al., 2011)
 - ▶ 56% of children who stutter reported being bullied at least once per week (Langevin et al., 1998)
 - ▶ 75% of adults who stutter reported that bullying interfered with school work (Hugh-Jones & Smith, 1999)
- ▶ Because of their communication difficulties, children who stutter find it harder to respond directly to bullies – **they need our help!**



44

What SLPs can do to minimize bullying

A 6-step intervention program to help children minimize bullying (after Murphy et al., 2013)



45

What is bullying, anyway?

- ▶ Bullying is different from teasing (Tattum, 1989)
 - ▶ **Teasing** involves harmless “ribbing” or “joking” from family or friends
 - ▶ Teasing is a way of showing love or good feelings toward others
 - ▶ Teasing is having fun
 - ▶ Teasing is not meant to be hurtful
 - ▶ Teasing is enjoyed by everyone involved in the situation
 - ▶ **Bullying** involves a conscious effort to cause harm
 - ▶ Bullying is hurtful
 - ▶ Bullying is an attempt to control someone
 - ▶ Bullying is done to create power for one person and take power away from another person
 - ▶ Bullying is never acceptable
 - ▶ Bullying is something we want to prevent—for all children, not just children who stutter

46


Different kinds of bullying

- ▶ Bullying can occur in different ways...
 - ▶ Bullying does not only involve physical intimidation or aggression
 - ▶ It can also involve **verbal comments** (name calling, verbal taunts, insults) that cause a person to feel bad (“psychological bullying”), and actions aimed at creating **social isolation** (“relational bullying”)
- ▶ ...and in different places
 - ▶ It doesn’t happen only on the playground
 - ▶ It can occur in the classroom, on the bus, over the phone, via the Internet (“cyberbullying”), in the mall, and anywhere else a child interacts with others (both children and adults)

47

Who is involved in bullying?

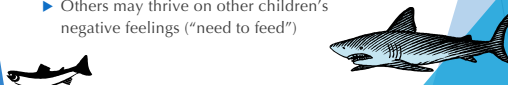
- ▶ Bullying typically involves several people (Coloroso, 2008)
 - ▶ **Bully:** the child who is doing the bullying
 - ▶ **Bullied:** the child who is being bullied
 - ▶ **Bystander:** the other children in the school, situation, or environment
- ▶ *A comprehensive bullying management plan must take into account the needs of all of these individuals*
 - ▶ ...and all of the locations and situations in which bullying might happen.



48

Why do bullies bully?

- ▶ Many bullies have low self-esteem (Donnellan et al., 2005)
 - ▶ They pick on others to make themselves feel stronger
- ▶ Some bullies are “popular” kids who have a low tolerance for differences in others
 - ▶ They pick on others who stand out
- ▶ Many bullies lack basic social skills and a sense of empathy or understanding for others
 - ▶ Some may not care about the feelings of other children
 - ▶ Others may thrive on other children’s negative feelings (“need to feed”)



49

Why don't bystanders help?

- ▶ Bystanders may “go along with” the bully
 - ▶ When asked, they often say that they did not mean to harm the child who is being bullied
 - ▶ They may even be friends with the child, but they may be afraid of the bully and unsure about what to do
- ▶ Even when bystanders don’t join with the bullying, their lack of support hurts
 - ▶ A child who is being bullied may feel isolated when other children don’t stand up for them
- ▶ Thus, bystanders can be perceived as either contributing to the problem or contributing to the solution – not doing anything

50

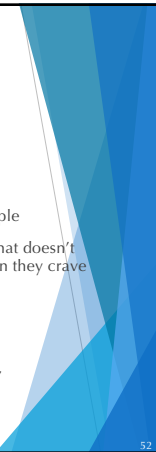
What happens when a child is bullied?



51

Bullying make us feel bad

- ▶ **Bullies bully people about things that bother them**
 - ▶ Bullies seek out differences between individuals, then they attack people based on those differences
 - ▶ They are not interested in just *any* differences – they are only interested in the differences that bother people
 - ▶ If a bully tries to pick on a person about something that doesn't bother them, the bully won't get the negative reaction they crave
- ▶ **Bullies know what bothers someone based on their reactions**
 - ▶ If a person reacts negatively to the bully's comments, the bully will continue to pick on those differences
 - ▶ *What if the person could react less negatively?*



52


What happens when a child who stutters is bullied?



53

Bullying makes stuttering harder

- ▶ **Bullying makes people feel bad**
 - ▶ When children who stutter feel bad, they may be more likely to stutter more
 - ▶ They may stutter more frequently or more severely (i.e., with more physical tension and struggle)
 - ▶ The more severely a child stutters, the more difficult it may be to respond verbally to the bully
- ▶ **Bullying isolates people socially**
 - ▶ Children who stutter are already at risk for social isolation – bullying exacerbates the separation
 - ▶ Other children who do not understand stuttering may be more likely to become active or passive bystanders – either way, this increases the child's isolation




54

6 Steps for Minimizing Bullying

- ▶ Step 1: Teach children about stuttering
- ▶ Step 2: Teach children about bullying
- ▶ Step 3: Help children think differently about stuttering by increasing their self-esteem and desensitizing them to stuttering and bullying
- ▶ Step 4: Help children develop appropriately assertive responses to bullying
- ▶ Step 5: Help children educate their peers about stuttering and bullying
- ▶ Step 6: Teach parents and others about stuttering, stuttering therapy, and bullying

55




Step 1: Teach children about stuttering

- ▶ The more children understand about stuttering, they less insecure they will feel.
 - ▶ This gives them power to face not only their stuttering and the comments of bullies and bystanders
- ▶ Some key facts about stuttering
 - ▶ Stuttering is not the child's fault – it's a genetically determined, neurologically defined condition
 - ▶ It's not learned, it's not a psychological problem, and it's not caused by parents or by something the child did wrong
 - ▶ Stuttering varies over time and in different situations
 - ▶ Changing speech is hard work – therapy is not easy
 - ▶ Though there is no cure, children can learn to communicate effectively

56


Step 2: Teach children about bullying



- ▶ The more children understand about bullying, the less they will think that bullying is their fault
 - ▶ This helps them separate their feelings about their stuttering from their feelings about bullying and gives them even more power to face bullying situations
- ▶ Some key facts about bullying
 - ▶ Bullying is not their fault
 - ▶ Bullying is not the same as teasing
 - ▶ Bullies bully because bullies have problems of their own
 - ▶ Bullies crave negative reactions
 - ▶ Bullying is **never** right
 - ▶ Children *can* work to minimize bullying

57

Step 3: Help children think differently about stuttering



- ▶ Stuttering is embarrassing
 - ▶ This is why children react the way they do
 - ▶ They feel bad about themselves, and they may feel that the bully is right about them
 - ▶ It's that negative response that the bully craves
- ▶ If children could be *less embarrassed* by stuttering, they might be able to respond in different ways
 - ▶ If children could respond in a way that does not give bullies the negative response they crave, the bullies will (eventually) move on
 - ▶ *We can help children learn to respond differently to the comments of bullies*

58

58

This is not the same as saying, "just ignore it"

- ▶ Parents often tell children to "just ignore" comments about their speech
 - ▶ It's very hard for children to ignore hurtful comments when people are picking on them about the thing they hate most about themselves
- ▶ What parents are really trying to say is, "don't give bullies the negative reaction they craves"
 - ▶ Their intention is right...it's just too hard for kids to do while stuttering still bothers them
- ▶ The key to success is helping children become less bothered by their stuttering
 - ▶ This is one of the goals of stuttering therapy anyway!



59

59

How can we help children become less concerned about their stuttering?

Desensitization
Cognitive Restructuring
Acceptance

60

60

More desensitization activities


- ▶ **Teach others how to stutter** and assign letter grades to their performance (fun, empowering)
- ▶ **Draw stuttering** so the child can illustrate for themselves and others what the moment of stuttering is like
- ▶ **Play with stuttering** through games where children are rewarded for producing the longest, loudest, or silliest examples of pseudostuttering
- ▶ **Get support** by including children in group therapy and self-help experiences
- ▶ Show children that **they're not alone** by introducing them to famous and not-so-famous people who stutter



61

Pseudostuttering


- ▶ ...producing (fake) moments of stuttering behavior on purpose
 - ▶ Also called *voluntary stuttering* or *voluntary disfluency*
- ▶ ...allows the child to experience the feared behavior (stuttering) in a supportive setting
 - ▶ Can be done in different ways, in different situation, with different listeners
- ▶ Helps children confront and overcome their fear of stuttering by regaining a sense of control
- ▶ Helps children practice stuttering modifications techniques (e.g., pull-out, cancellation)



62

Yet another therapy activity: Purposeful self-disclosure


- ▶ Acknowledging stuttering helps to reduce uncertainty for the speaker and the listener
 - ▶ If a child can simply say, "Yes, I stutter," then this helps to reduce a lot of the pressure
 - ▶ There is no longer anything to hide, avoid, or be ashamed of
- ▶ One way to do this:
 - ▶ Help the child conduct interviews with caregivers, teachers, peers, and others about stuttering
 - ▶ This helps them be more open about stuttering while, at the same time, educating others about stuttering
 - ▶ This can be the pinnacle of a hierarchy that starts with talking about stuttering in the therapy room



63

Cognitive restructuring

- ▶ ...learning to “think differently” about the problems we face in life
 - ▶ Based on the work of Beck (1979), Ellis (1962) and others (e.g., Rapee et al., 2000)
- ▶ Basic premises:
 - ▶ how we *think* about something influences how we *feel*
 - ▶ Some of our thoughts are worried thoughts...
 - ▶ They make us feel **more** scared
 - ▶ Some of our thoughts are calmer thoughts...
 - ▶ They make us feel **less** scared
 - ▶ If we can change our worried thoughts to calmer thoughts, we will feel less scared



64


Examples of worried thoughts and calm thoughts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Worried thoughts ▶ I will stutter on every word if I read out loud in class and everyone will laugh at me. ▶ I'm always stutter when I talk to girls. ▶ I can't answer questions in class because everyone will stare at me if I have a block. ▶ I can't do... because ... ▶ If I stutter, then ... (something bad will happen) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Calmer thoughts ▶ I might stutter on some words, but I am getting better at not worrying about that as much. ▶ Some people might laugh at me, but not everyone. I have friends in class, and they won't try to make me feel bad on purpose. ▶ I might stutter when I talk to people, but it's okay to stutter.
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65

Changing worried thoughts into calmer thoughts

- ▶ Children can work to change their thoughts
 - ▶ **Identify the worried** thoughts behind negative feelings
 - ▶ **Gather evidence** about the thoughts
 - ▶ **Evaluate the thoughts** based on the evidence
 - ▶ **Change the worried thoughts** to calm thoughts
 - ▶ **Examine the possible consequences** of the feared event
- ▶ Our goal is not to *convince* children to think differently, but to give them the opportunity to evaluate their existing thoughts
 - ▶ We encourage children to be detectives, seeking out evidence for (or against) their current thoughts
 - ▶ This way, they come to make changes on their own



66

Form C: Changing Worried Thoughts into Calm Thoughts

Name _____ Grade _____ Age _____ Date _____

Use this form to analyze your worried thoughts. There may be some that you can't do much to reduce with calm thoughts. Fewer worried thoughts leads to less fear!

Identify: What are the worried thoughts behind your negative feelings?
 I'm going to stutter on all the words if I read out loud in class, and then all the kids will laugh at me.

Gather Evidence: What has happened before? What else could happen?
 • Sometimes I've stuttered on some of the words I read, but I've never stuttered on all words.
 • Once, Jimmy laughed when I stuttered, but the teacher got mad at him.

Evaluate: Use the evidence to test your worried thoughts. How likely are they?
 Not at all likely Not very likely Neutral Sort of likely Very likely

Change: Based on the evidence, replace the worried thoughts with calm thoughts.
 • When my speech teacher and I gave our presentation, all the kids talked about how they didn't like to be laughed at.
 • I might stutter a little, but I'm getting better at not worrying about it.
 • I have a lot of friends in class, and they won't try to make me feel bad or purpose.

Examine: (Optional) What is the worst thing that is LIKELY to happen?
 How can you handle it?
 • Even if I stutter a bunch and lots of kids laugh, I can handle this.
 • I can use my speech tools. The kids will understand why I talk differently.
 • I could talk to my best friend Larry. Sometimes he gets teased, and talking with him would help me feel better.

For more information and examples, visit us online: www.stuttering.com

From Murphy et al. (2013). *Minimizing Bullying for Children Who Stutter*. Stuttering Therapy Resources, Inc.

67

Acceptance

- ▶ Acceptance of stuttering can help to reduce negative reactions, and reducing negative reactions can help to improve communication
 - ▶ **Acceptance does not mean “giving up” or just leaving the child to stutter** – it means coming to terms with stuttering so stuttering does not play a negative role in the child's life
 - ▶ One can work toward acceptance while still working to modify speech or stuttering behavior
- ▶ Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) and other mindfulness approaches are showing good success in helping people live more easily with the challenges they face

68

As a child overcomes their fear of stuttering, it will be easier to **respond** to bullies in less negative ways

That is, they will be better able to “ignore” the bullying and take actions that will lead to less bullying in the future

69

Step 4: Help children respond appropriately to bullying

- ▶ Bullies crave the negative reactions they get
 - ▶ If they don't get those negative reactions from one child, they will seek those negative reactions from another
 - ▶ There is nothing we can do through the child who stutters that will help bullies – **they need help of their own!**
 - ▶ *School-wide bullying management programs can help bullies, too.*
 - ▶ All we can hope to do through the child who stutters is to **redirect** the bully away from talking about stuttering
- ▶ If children who stutter can say to the bully, "no, that doesn't bother me," this will help to redirect bullies so they won't keep picking on our students about their stuttering.

70

Redirecting bullies

- ▶ Simple, matter-of-fact comments can defuse the situation and show bullies that they are not going to get what they want
 - ▶ The bully says, "You stutter!"
 - ▶ The child who stutters says, "Yeah, you're right."
 - ▶ *What's the bullying going to say next?*
- ▶ If the bully doesn't get the negative reaction, they will try something/someone else
 - ▶ Of course, they are accustomed to getting a negative reaction from the child who stutters, so they might keep trying for a while...

71

Sample responses

- ▶ The bully says, "You stutter!"
- ▶ The child who stutters says...
 - ▶ "Yup, I do." or "I know..." or "Did you just notice?"
 - ▶ "You told me that yesterday. It's still true."
 - ▶ "I don't like it when you say that" and other "I" statements
 - ▶ "That's really not nice of you to say. I wish you'd stop."
 - ▶ "You should have seen me before..."
 - ▶ "Did you know that I go to speech therapy for that?"
 - ▶ "Huh?" or "I can't hear you" or "So." repeatedly (after Cooper, 2000 – the "squeaky wheel technique")
 - ▶ "I know, now are you still playing this game?"

72

The problem is...
Verbal responses
 can be very difficult
 for children who stutter

They will need our help
 to learn **what to say**
 and **how to say it effectively**

73

73

Role-playing

- ▶ Role-playing gives the child the opportunity to select and practice different verbal responses
 - ▶ **Direct role-playing:** the child who stutters plays themselves and the SLP plays the bully
 - ▶ **Reverse role-playing:** the child plays the bully and the SLP plays the child who stutters
- ▶ In "Let's Make a Movie," you and the child:
 - ▶ Brainstorm about different responses to bullying
 - ▶ Write a script for what the bully might say and how the child might respond (verbal responses to redirect)
 - ▶ Act out different responses to see what might work best
 - ▶ Practice responses that help to minimize bullying

74

74

Form D: Let's Make a Movie!

Name _____ Grade _____ Date _____

Use this paper to plan the role-playing scenes and information you'd like to show in your movie about bullying.

1. Think back up when others make fun of my stuttering. I would like to...
 I punch somebody... With my fist.
 I tell a teacher... Say "Get a life!"
 I ignore the bully... Make a joke.
 I scream really loudly!... Keep saying "Yeah, you're right."
2. Think back though there's what might happen if I try these strategies...
 If I punch somebody... then he might punch me back.
 If I tell a teacher... then he might get in trouble.
 If I ignore the bully... then he might not know what to say.
 If I say "Yeah, you're right!"... then he might get bored and give up.
3. Strategies that make sense: There are the strategies I'd like to record for my movie!
 I tell a teacher... Keep saying "Yeah, you're right!"
 I ignore the bully...
I pretend to punch him, but I won't really do that.
4. Get ready: I can't wait to tell my audience about making and filming!
 The cast that will act in my movie...
 It's not fair to make fun of me because stuttering isn't my fault.
 The learning speech strategies, but they don't always work.
 It can be really embarrassing to stutter, but I'm learning to deal with it.
5. Movie Premiere!
 I will invite... myself and... family members to watch my movie.
 Come for... Alan, Dad, Grandma, Uncle Bob,
Bill, Larry.
 Movie date: Monday, October time: 3:30
 Location: Speech Room
 Tickets I want to order at my Movie Premiere: Ignore and Stutter.

From Murphy et al. (2013). *Minimizing Bullying for Children Who Stutter*. Stuttering Therapy Resources, Inc.

75

75

Quick Quiz Question

- ▶ Is it necessary for a child to be fluent when using verbal responses to redirect the bully?
 - ▶ NO! It is irrelevant whether or not they are fluent!
 - ▶ Still, they do have to be able to provide the responses
 - ▶ If stuttering is too severe, then the plan won't be as effective.
- ▶ So, the student will need to practice with you and others until they can provide the responses
 - ▶ Perhaps the student will use a fluency strategy
 - ▶ More likely, they will use a stuttering management strategy or pseudostuttering to help them say what they want to say

76


Responding appropriately to bullies helps to minimize bullying

What about the bystanders?

77

Step 5: Help children educate peers about stuttering & bullying

- ▶ Bystanders often go along with the bully
 - ▶ They may be afraid of the bully themselves
 - ▶ They don't want to get picked on next
 - ▶ They don't understand bullying
 - ▶ They may not know that the bully will pick on them anyway
 - ▶ They don't understand stuttering
 - ▶ It is a confusing behavior to watch if nobody has told you about it
- ▶ We can help the bystanders become part of the solution by giving them the facts about bullying and stuttering
 - ▶ The more they understand, the more likely they will be to help (or at least, not hinder)



78

There are many ways to educate peers about stuttering

- ▶ Acknowledge stuttering openly
 - ▶ A key aspect of desensitization
- ▶ Provide information about communication an communication disorders in general
 - ▶ Important part of a broader tolerance training program
- ▶ Annual “teacher letters” to gain “space” for stuttering
- ▶ Distribute handouts an brochures about communication and stuttering at school
 - ▶ Great activity for ISAD, BHSM, NSAW

79


The “Classroom Presentation”

- ▶ A chance for children to provide information about stuttering directly to their peers
- ▶ To get started...
 - ▶ Ask the child, “If you could tell your friends anything you wanted to tell them about your speech, what would you tell them?”
 - ▶ Most children have already thought about this – they have a list of facts in mind that they’d like to share
 - ▶ Brainstorm with them about ways to share these thoughts
- ▶ Your students will soon see that the best way for others to learn about stuttering is for them to teach others about stuttering!

80

Sample components of a classroom presentation

- ▶ Introduction (why are we here?)
- ▶ Classroom participation (what do people know about stuttering?)
- ▶ Definition of stuttering
 - ▶ “Stuttering is no one’s fault”
- ▶ Facts and myths about stuttering
- ▶ Famous (and not-so-famous) people who stutter
- ▶ How does it feel to stutter? (pseudostuttering)
- ▶ What are speech management tools
 - ▶ “This is not easy!”
- ▶ What is bullying?
- ▶ Who else has been bullied and why?
- ▶ How should we respond when somebody is bullied?
- ▶ Helpful responses to stuttering
- ▶ Questions and answers



81

The more other kids know about stuttering (and bullying), the more likely they are to be **part of the solution**, not part of the problem

What about everybody else?

82

Step 6: Teach caregivers and others about stuttering

- ▶ Parents/caregivers, teachers, and administrators can all play an important role in minimizing the impact of bullying – and helping to prevent it
 - ▶ Unfortunately, many do not know enough about stuttering to understand the child’s experiences
 - ▶ They may think that stuttering is just a “speech issue”
- ▶ We can help them
 - ▶ Help parents understand stuttering and **come to terms** with the fact that their child stutters
 - ▶ Help teachers and administrators understand how common bullying is for children who stutter and how bullying can exacerbate the stuttering disorder

83


Part III Summary: Children can overcome the effects of bullying, and we can help

- ▶ Help children learn that they are okay and that it’s okay to stutter
- ▶ Help children learn to respond appropriately and directly to bullying
- ▶ Help other people in the environment (especially peers) learn what stuttering is, what bullying is, and why it’s never okay to bully somebody else
- ▶ Help parents learn how to support their children’s development of self-esteem and personal power
- ▶ Help teachers and administrators create an accepting environment that is supportive of differences between people

84

Part IV:
Parents and caregivers
need just as much help
coming to terms
with stuttering
as their kids do.


In fact, they need more.



85

Most parents just want their children to stop stuttering, but this is not something they can have

- ▶ It can be difficult for parents to realize that there is no cure for stuttering
- ▶ Often, nobody has told them before, so it falls to us
- ▶ We need to present this information in a way that helps them come to accept stuttering
- ▶ Focus on the fact that while there is no cure for stuttering, children can learn to manage their stuttering so it does not have a negative impact on their lives



86

Helping parents understand that there is no cure for stuttering gives them the opportunity to start the healing process

87

Help parents focus on what's really important to them (and their child)

- ▶ To help parents understand the broader goals of treatment, ask them this question:

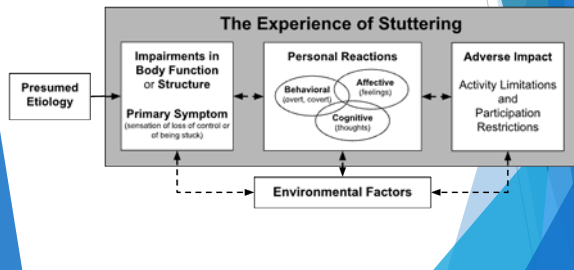
Assuming your child does continue to stutter...

What would you like their life to be like in five years?

- ▶ Most want them to be happy, healthy, well-adjusted, not held back, able to communicate, to have friends
- ▶ These are *exactly* our goals for therapy; we're just not getting there the way they expected us to

88

We're not just working on speech and hoping for the best... we're working on speech and all the rest



89

Parents must understand the importance of all of the components of therapy

- ▶ They generally “get” the speech work
- ▶ They may not understand the importance or purpose of other aspects of therapy:
 - ▶ Learning about stuttering
 - ▶ Learning to manage stuttering
 - ▶ Educating others about stuttering
 - ▶ Desensitization and pseudostuttering
 - ▶ Learning to talk freely even when stuttering
 - ▶ Accepting stuttering

90

Therapy is an *experiential* process - You have to live it to get the benefits

- ▶ The parents have typically been observers of the therapy process (for school-age children)
- ▶ They have not directly been involved in the day-to-day work of therapy
 - ▶ If they have been involved, it's probably taken the form of reminding their children to practice
- ▶ They have not received the benefits of education, increased understanding, desensitization, increased acceptance, and learning about management skills
 - ▶ *In other words, they're still stuck at the beginning!*



91

91

A therapy activity: *The child is the therapist*

- ▶ **After each therapy session, the child re-enacts the entire therapy session with the parents**
 - ▶ Reinforces what the child has learned in therapy
 - ▶ Gives parents the opportunity to “live” the therapy, so they can make changes in their own lives
 - ▶ Supports the child’s development of self-confidence and self-esteem as the expert about speaking
 - ▶ Ensures that the child is practicing
 - ▶ Helps the parents understand what is actually being done in therapy
 - ▶ Puts the parent in the ‘proper’ position as supporters rather than directors of the child’s therapy process



92

92


Part IV: Summary:
The more caregivers can understand and accept their children’s stuttering, the more they can support their children as they develop healthier attitudes of their own

93

93

Overall Summary: By taking a comprehensive view of stuttering, we can help middle-school and high-school students learn to:

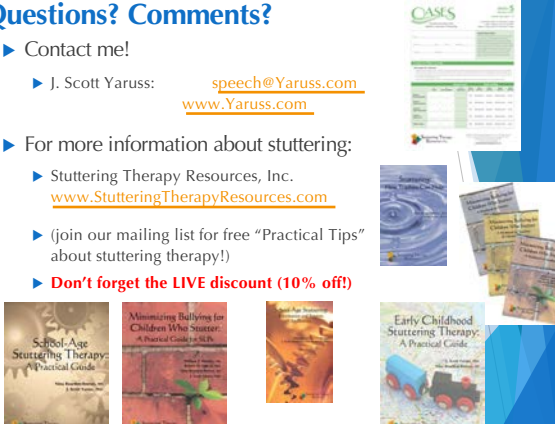
- ▶ Improve their ability to manage speech and stuttering (covered in a different presentation)
- ▶ Reduce their own negative reactions to stuttering
- ▶ Educate others about stuttering and thereby reduce their negative reactions to stuttering
- ▶ Create a supportive caregiver environment



94

Questions? Comments?

- ▶ Contact me!
 - ▶ J. Scott Yaruss: speech@Yaruss.com
www.Yaruss.com
- ▶ For more information about stuttering:
 - ▶ Stuttering Therapy Resources, Inc.
www.StutteringTherapyResources.com
 - ▶ (join our mailing list for free "Practical Tips" about stuttering therapy!)
 - ▶ **Don't forget the LIVE discount (10% off!)**



95
