School Age Stuttering Therapy: Where Do We Start?

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- Financial
  - I have received a speaker's fee for this presentation
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A bit of housekeeping

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• I know that I cannot possibly present everything you want or need to know about stuttering treatment for school age who stutter in the span of 3 hours,
• So, I will attempt to address the major points of foundational knowledge and skills WHILE
• Also providing you with resources for further education and activities

The WHO’S (World Health Organization) ICF (International Classification Framework) Applied to Stuttering

So, for our time today, here is the framework
• **Function:** Observable/surface speech behaviors
  • **Reactions:**
    • child’s behaviors in reaction to stuttering,
    • child’s thoughts about self and communication,
    • child’s feelings about self and stuttering
  • **Environment:** How others’ perceive/react to stuttering
  • **Impact:** Participation & Activity Limitations
AS WE “GET STARTED” SOMETIMES WE CAN JUMP TOO QUICKLY INTO SPEECH HANDLING TECHNIQUES

Before we ever touch a “speech tool,” we must help our students to build foundational knowledge and skills related to speaking AND stuttering!

All intervention is adjusted to...

- Age
- Awareness
- Cognitive Abilities
- Level of Impact
- Interests

(Some of) What we need

- A feeling of confidence
- A firm knowledge of stuttering
- Evidence based practice
- Natural language to describe what we are doing
- Creativity to make this stage fun!
- A keen eye and ear for ongoing assessment
- ...to know WHY we are doing WHAT we are doing!
What we don’t need

- Inflexible programs of any kind
- ANY materials that we don’t know the theoretical basis of…
- Too many “special” stuttering materials
  - Most anything can be a stuttering therapy material ©
- To be afraid of making kids who stutter “worse” if we discuss speaking difficulties in appropriate and supportive ways!

Firm Knowledge of Stuttering

Let’s spend some time here…

- What is stuttering? /How do we look at it?
- What causes stuttering?
- What about the myths and facts?
- Therapy process
- Avoidance behaviors
- Prognosis (be careful)

Some things to consider…

- There is NO ONE way of doing ANY of this!
- This is NOT a program!! It is a set of possibilities that you may chose to include in the initial stages of therapy, in any order or in any way you chose.
- Mantra: “Matter-of-fact” atmosphere of therapy
- Always taking into account the child’s
  - Age
  - Cognitive abilities
  - Family dynamic
  - Level of awareness
  - Communicative impact
This is truly a blending...
- Of assessment and therapy
- Of knowledge and skill
- Of the *science* and the *art* of therapy
- Of moving from talking about and exploring talking to talking about and exploring *stuttering*

What we REALLY start with...
- Is a multi-dimensional assessment
  - This is the most efficient way to create a treatment plan that is
    - Individualized
    - Appropriate, and
    - Effective

Each assessment must encompass...
- A thorough case history
- Perspectives of others in child’s environment
- Cognitive and affective
- Surface speech behaviors
- “Below the surface” behaviors
- Other:
  - Related speech and language issues
  - Co-existing disorders
The Bones: What we can't live without in therapy!

• Setting up for success!
  • The speech notebook!
  • Hierarchies
  • Systematic Desensitization
  • Manipulating Variables
  • Effect Circles

A speech notebook

• A wonderful example of portfolio documentation!
• The good news is that this can be anything you and your student want it to be! NO RULES apply!

Example of a speaking hierarchy and systematic desensitization...

A sample of discussions of "hierarchies" in the literature:
Campbell, 2003; Guller, 1998; Heinz & Johnson, 1998; Hill, 2003; Shapiro, 1999; Sisskin, 2002; Yaruss & Reardon, 2003
Manipulating Variables

• Working to systematically alter the experience of intervention in order to enhance “real world” growth in skills and concepts presented in therapy
• Examples:
  - length & complexity of utterances
  - degrees of language formulation,
  - clinician model,
  - reinforcement,
  - topic/propositionally,
  - location of sessions,
  - listeners
  - physical activity

See also: Gregory & Hill, 1980

The BIGGIES of “Handling” Stuttering

Student wants to know: Why am I learning/doing this?

All aspects affect any combination of the following communication factors:

- Physical Tension
- Frequency and Severity of Stuttering
- HANDLE Time Pressure
- Ease of Tool Use
- Comfort Level
- Decrease struggle
- Increase ease of communication
- Feeling of Choice/Control
- Tolerance of Communicative Pressures
- Confidence
- Anxiety or Fear
- Hiding/Avoiding Stuttering

Effect Circles and “The Biggies”

- **Effect Circles**

  Ask yourself and your students **WHY** are we doing **WHAT** we are doing? **“The Biggies”**

  We are guiding children with questions that help them understand the reasons behind everything they are asked to do during the process of therapy

  Let’s do some!
What's the Primary GOAL of Treatment for School Age who Stutter?

Foundational Knowledge/Skills (overview 1)

- Learning about SPEECH
  - Explore the “speech machine”
  - Tuning into speech/communication of self & others
  - Playing with speech (ways our voices work)
  - “Catch mes” (different voices)
  - Tight & loose big muscles
  - Relaxation: What it is and what it isn’t
The “Speech Man”  
(Ramig & Bennett, 97)

- Why are we learning this?
  - It is the “underlying map” for everything else we do
  - Discover the process of speech
  - Increase proprioceptive awareness of the “speech works”

- What are the steps?
  - Develop visual “Speech Man” by playing with speech and having child make discoveries
  - Discuss each part of the speech mechanism and how it helps to create speech

How Speech is Made

Exploration of Speech (con’t)

Talking about Talking  
(Williams)

- Speech Machine and how it works  
  (Ramig & Bennett and others)
- “Ways our voice works” (playing with talking)
- Tight vs loose muscles (play with speech)
- “Catch me” games  
  (Dell and others)
  - Including “Ways Our Voice Works”
More Foundational Knowledge & Skills

- Learning about **STUTTERING -101**
  - What is stuttering?
    - Facts/Myths
    - Famous people who stutter
    - Types of stutters
    - Teaching others about stuttering

Let's get to know stuttering!

- Have fun with this!
- Facts and myths
- Dispel and learn
  - Famous people who stutter
    - Using the terminology
    - The “S” word
    - Types of stutters

Even More Foundational Knowledge & Skills

- Learning about **STUTTERING -202**
  - Self-Monitoring
    - Tight & Loose speech muscles
    - “Catch mes” (with stutters now)
    - “Speech Detective”
    - Stay in the moment
    - Freeze & release
Staying in the moment...in a way that neutralizes the reaction...

Tolerating
A
S
KINDLY
Positive peaceful thoughts?
Or
Negative Nervous thoughts?

H. On Freeze and Release

Just a note...Relaxation

What it IS...
And
What it ISN’T!
Remember…

- The student is becoming an “expert” (Murphy) at knowing about talking, stuttering, and communication.
- Therefore, the student can and should be starting the process of becoming his/her own advocate.
- This can be done by having the student teach others about talking and stuttering.

Selected Resources