



WHEN I STUTTER: Practical Approaches to Intervention and Discussing the Psychological Impact of Stuttering

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ABOUT THE FILM

WHEN I STUTTER is an award winning documentary film that has been in over 50 screenings around the world including numerous film festivals, universities and organizations. It has also been presented at many professional conventions including CSHA ('17,'18,'19), ASHA ('17,'18), NSA, APA, and the Joint World Congress in Hiroshima. The film has garnered strong praise by audiences everywhere and has received 7 awards (including "Audience Favorite" and "Best Documentary"). Most recently, we were honored with the SUPPORTER OF PEOPLE WITH FLUENCY DISORDERS AWARD from the International Fluency Association.

WHEN I STUTTER is the culmination of 4.5 years of filming and post production work. The film is comprised of stories from nineteen individuals from various backgrounds who openly talk about how

stuttering has impacted their lives. These stories run the gamut of human emotions... Some stories are dark, some are funny and others are triumphant! Interspersed throughout the documentary, are “educational vignettes” that help elucidate some of the mysteries and questions that surround stuttering. Several of the interviewees are speech and language professionals (e.g., Barry Guitar, Gail Wilson Lew, Scott Palasik and many others). The other interviewees are people from various backgrounds (age, gender, ethnic, socio-economic) who happen to stutter. One of the subjects was filmed through several therapy sessions and many therapy approaches are employed to not only help the client stutter more easily but also to use the newly acquired skills in a real world context. Topics such as suicide, feeling imprisoned, bullying, redemption, difficulty with names, the role of sensitivity, the freeing nature of creative outlets in stuttering among many other topics will be seen in the film.

THE GOAL OF THE FILM

In making WHEN I STUTTER, the goal of the film was always to create a resource for spreading stuttering awareness that would movingly and accurately reveal the profound impact that stuttering can have on one’s life. Public perceptions and even those of speech language pathologists often emphasize only the physical manifestations of stuttering. However, stuttering frequently has long-term effects that adversely affect the quality of one’s life. Speech pathologists are professionally and ethically obliged to seek understanding of the client as a whole person, strongly considering and addressing his or her emotional well-being. This is not a new idea...

Charles Van Riper, Barry Guitar, Vivian Sheehan and many other stuttering specialists taught that the most effective way to help a person who stutters is by decreasing the focus on fluency and treating them holistically. It is essential to reintroduce and reinforce this concept in order to provide effective intervention and contribute to a client's positive sense of self, regardless of speech imperfections. Parents, friends, and the public at large need to know what may result from a lifetime of stuttering and what can be done to improve the lives of those who contend with it.

PRESENTATION FORMAT & LEARNER OBJECTIVES

This presentation will be broken down into three segments. Each segment is approximately 22 minutes in length. After each segment, the film will be paused and further discussion/analysis of the therapy portion of the film will be provided by Speech Language Pathologist John Gomez.

- Segment 1: Initiating a conversation with a client in order to bring awareness to secondary behaviors and modify the way one stutters in order to stutter “more easily”.
- Segment 2: Identify ways to help their clients generalize the skills learned in the therapy room to the "outside world." In particular, the value of desensitizing a client from the fear of using the phone.

- Segment 3: Using assessment video footage to help the client see progress and work toward moving past psychological barriers.
- At the conclusion of the film the psychological impact of stuttering will be discussed in addition to ways in which this film can directly and indirectly be used to help your clients.

CONCEPTS TO BE DISCUSSED:

- ☒ The value of treating the “whole person” in stuttering therapy
- ☒ Film: An alternative medium for getting information out into the world
- ☒ Thought experiments (i.e., “what if”) and perspective taking for therapists who treat people who stutter
- ☒ The principle of charity as a guiding philosophy
- ☒ Confirmation bias and it’s role in “central tendency” or categorical therapy
- ☒ There is no “one way” in therapy but the focus is ALWAYS on communication
- ☒ The politics of stuttering
- ☒ The importance of self-help support groups
- ☒ Do todays SLPs feel equipped to work with people who stutter? If not, why?
- ☒ Challenging and questioning our notions of what it means to be fluent
- ☒ Intentionality and why the “intentions” of what we do matter as much as the technique itself
- ☒ The ultimate goal of stuttering therapy is “Saying what you want, when you want, whether or not you stutter.”

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Footage from “Adult Stuttering Therapy by Dr. Charles Van Riper” Courtesy of The Stuttering Foundation of America. All rights reserved.

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THANK YOU for attending!