

LACOE Special Education Symposium 2018

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About the Film

WHEN I STUTTER is a documentary film which movingly and accurately reveals the profound impact that stuttering may 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.

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. In addition to interviews and vignettes, a young man is followed on his journey through stuttering therapy. The relationship that he forms with the speech-language pathologist and the progress that he makes is truly heartwarming.

Ongoing goal for the client inside the therapy room and in the real world:

1. Say what you want, when you want, whether or not you stutter (GOLDEN RULE).
 - a. Not avoiding any words or any situations.
 - b. Going directly into blocks and not using any secondaries or avoidances.
 - c. Using good eye contact.
 - d. Being open about his/her stuttering.

Objectives of Stuttering Modification Techniques (Prolongations, Easy Onsets, Cancellations, Pull-Outs)

1. To teach a person who stutters that he/she can alter their stuttering pattern. People who stutter frequently feel that their stuttering cannot be changed.
2. To learn a new desirable behavior to take over for the old undesirable behavior. A person who stutters must have something to substitute for their old stuttering pattern, as we generally do not unlearn a behavior.
3. To teach a person who stutters to attack his/her feared words without hesitancy.
4. To teach the person who stutters to begin his/her feared words with the first sound immediately, instead of preceding his/her speech attempt with various secondaries and avoidances.
5. To give the person who stutters confidence in speaking so he/she no longer avoids words and situations.
6. To learn a pattern which is more socially acceptable and also easier for the person who stutters to do.
7. To keep his/her speech on a voluntary level.
8. To demonstrate that the person who stutters controls his/her stuttering; stuttering no longer controls him/her.

Eye Contact

One of the first goals to work toward is eye contact. It is very important for the development of a healthy attitude toward stuttering. The reason people who stutter (PWS) look away is because they are ashamed/embarrassed and/or they just do not want to look at the negative reactions of their listeners. Also, listeners compound the problems by looking away thinking that they are helping the PWS.

Good eye contact begins with looking at a person normally, not staring. Try to maintain eye contact, especially when blocking. Sometimes you may have to redirect the client by using a hand signal or other cue. By maintaining good eye contact the PWS is stuttering with dignity. Many times the stuttering will decrease once the shame and embarrassment are gone.

Remember to praise, praise, praise. Examples are: "That was great eye contact."

"Wow, that was a tough block but you hung in there with good eye contact."

Possible/Goals Objectives Concerning Eye Contact

1. The client will maintain good eye contact when stuttering in 9 of 10 disfluencies during 5 minutes of conversational speech.

Mirror Work

Mirror work is especially good to use for improving eye contact, analyzing and identifying stuttering symptoms, and learning how to control stuttering. The PWS must learn to look at his/her eyes and face and analyze their habitual behaviors.

This at first is very hard to do because the PWS does not like looking at his/her stuttering. Many are totally unaware of what types of secondaries they are doing.

This is an effective way of determining how a PWS stutters, and later, a method to decrease and eliminate secondary behaviors and mannerisms. Mirror work should be done with one or more people around, because most PWS seldom stutter by themselves. The notable exception is when using the telephone.

Possible Goals/Objectives Concerning Mirror Work

1. While looking in a mirror, the client will maintain good eye contact with himself in 9 of 10 moments of stuttering.
2. While looking in the mirror, the client will analyze his disfluencies and identify where and how he got stuck in 9 of 10 moments of stuttering.

A Stuttering Survey for the Client

Pardon Me. My name is _____ and I am a person who stutters. I am working on my speech in a speech therapy class. May I ask you a few questions on how you feel about stuttering?

1. What do you think causes stuttering?
2. Do you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed when you talk to a person who stutters?
3. What do you think a person who stutters should do to overcome their stuttering?
4. Do you know anyone else who stutters?
5. If so, what was their stuttering like?

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