

## *FLUENCY FRIDAY PLUS: 2003*

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The **Fluency Friday Plus 2003** project was held at The University of Cincinnati on November 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. The project addressed the following objectives:

- Intensive treatment, individual and group, for children with stuttering problems, K-12
- Supervision of graduate students in speech-language pathology in the treatment of fluency disorders
- Continuing education for clinicians/supervisors in the community
- Education and support for parents and extended family members concerning issues related to fluency treatment and the disorder of stuttering.
- Community education concerning the disorders of fluency.

Fluency Friday Plus (FFP) is an intensive treatment program for children with stuttering (CWS) disorders, K-12<sup>th</sup> grade. This project is a collaborative effort involving speech/language professionals across the greater Cincinnati area including university, private practice, hospital and educational work settings. Community speech-language pathologists from each of these settings provide supervision of graduate students from Miami University and the University of Cincinnati. The graduate students provide the direct treatment during the program. The students receive training from the organizational team of FFP in addition to completing a course on stuttering and/or fluency disorders at the graduate level. In addition, community professionals receive support and training in the treatment of children who stutter. A comprehensive parent program includes speakers, group discussions and teen/adult panels.

The 2003 Fluency Friday Plus event involved the following people:

- 40 children/young people (CWS) received treatment (K-12)
- 44 graduate students from Miami University & The University of Cincinnati provided the treatment
- 10 members of the Fluency Friday Plus organizational team coordinated various aspects of the event
- 16 community Speech-Language Pathologists provided direct supervision & two attended for the educational portion of the program
- 8 Sycamore High School Thespian Students facilitated role playing and skit development
- 65 parents & extended family members participated in educational programs
- 10 volunteers assisted with organizational issues

During the day and one half event, the participating children/teens received **3.75hours** of individual and **3 hours** of group treatment. Fluency Friday Plus Activities included:

- **Individual and Group Treatment** – CWS attended both individual and peer group sessions. In addition to practicing fluency targets, issues such as attitudes about speaking and the emotional of dealing with a stuttering disorder were addressed.
- **Role Playing/Skits** – Opportunities were designed for CWS to “act out” various situations concerning feelings, difficult speaking situations and dealing with comments or teasing. Skits were shared with parents at the end of each day in the Closing Ceremonies.
- **Open Microphone** - During the lunch hour of the first day, CWS were encouraged to speak to the participants in an auditorium setting using a microphone. In this supportive environment, a number of students felt free to tell jokes and stories.
- **Conversational Breakfast** – This breakfast was held Saturday morning to provide opportunities to practice social conversation. Ten Conversational Stations were developed to allow the students to practice telephoning, reading out loud to a group, handling teasing, asking and answering questions, telling a story & explaining, doing a one minute monologue, learning a card trick and teaching it to someone, fake stuttering for one minute, persuading someone and telling someone you stutter.
- **Parent Training**- An educational program for the parents and extended family members provided opportunities for parents to enter into discussions on topics of interest. In addition, lectures by experts in the field of fluency disorder were scheduled. Donna Cooperman, Ed.D. spoke on “Parenting a Child with a Fluency Disorder. Rodney Gabel, Ph.D. spoke on “Thoughts on Coping with Stuttering: One Person’s Perspective.” This year break out sessions addressed the following topics: School Services for CWS, Helping Your Child Handle Difficult Situations, and Insurance & Resources for obtaining services. Members of the FFP team led these discussions.
- **Teen Panel** –A group of teens met with the parent group to answer questions and to share their experiences as young people who stutter. This forum enabled the teens to speak freely to a large, “listener-friendly” group audience who respected their courage and maturity and valued their unique insights.
- **Seminars** – Graduate students from both universities attended special seminars given by the FFP organizational team to address the specifics of treatment during the Fluency Friday Plus project.
- **Siblings & Friends** – This program was new in 2003. On Saturday morning, nine siblings & friends joined the program and participated in activities designed to help family members and friend understand stuttering.
- **Web Page/ Graduate Clinicians/Supervisors Booklet** –The Fluency Friday Plus Web page originally developed by Victor Pennecamp, was updated and expanded. The web site facilitated the distribution of applications and information to the participants and contained handouts. for graduate students and parents. The web address is [www.fluencyfriday.org](http://www.fluencyfriday.org).

Graduate students were assigned to one or two CWS. Where possible, the graduate students were responsible for contacting professionals, the parents and the child prior to FFP. During FFP, the graduate students collected speaking samples using procedures developed specifically for FFP. This sample included a word count, a timed sample, disfluency analysis and severity rating scale. Attitudinal Scales, Speaking Hierarchies and Rating Scales were also utilized. The graduate students developed treatment materials in each of the three treatment domains of Speech Targets, Attitudes & Emotions and Environmental situations. Graduate students received feedback from supervisors throughout the event, in both written and discussion form.

Supervisors were recruited from all practice settings. Prior to FFP, supervisors participated in a training session to review the procedures, activities and forms utilized at FFP.

The following professionals comprised the Fluency Friday Organizational team planning the 2003 event. Information, treatment ideas and data from the 2003 event will be shared in published articles, presentations and in training seminars throughout the coming year.

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The Fluency Friday Plus project was developed in 2001 due to the need for children/teens with stuttering disorders to receive intensive treatment and to interact with other students who are experiencing similar feelings regarding speech. It was important to the core committee to provide support and training for families to deal with the difficult issues that occur for children with fluency problems. Local universities who were interested in unique clinical training opportunities for graduate students supported the project. Community speech-language pathologists provided supervision and received continuing education hours in fluency disorders. The University of Cincinnati generously donated their facilities for the program. The project has continued to grow and develop with the monetary support of the Southwestern Ohio Speech, Language & Hearing Association, the Ohio Speech-Language-Hearing Association and the Procter & Gamble Grant program. On behalf of the committee and the many students, families and practicing speech-language pathologists who participated in the project, I want to thank these organizations for their continued support!