

STRATEGIES FOR FLUENCY!

Fluency Shaping: (Manning, 2001) Stuttering is viewed as a physical phenomenon. If the speaker follows the rules of speech mechanics, his speech will be fluent: if he violates these rules, his speech will not be fluent. As incorrect and distorted muscle movements are altered, the speaker is able to achieve fluent speech. The client is carefully taken through gradations of muscle movements associated with sounds and sound sequences which are less and then gradually more complex. Clients are informed about the basic classes of sounds in English and associated vocal tract features. The ability to self-monitor the accuracy of new skills is emphasized. The client becomes completely responsible for self-managing his speech.

Full Breath Target: Synergistic TX: (Bloom and Cooperman, 1999) Teach the client to inhale through the mouth in a relaxed manner, with particular attention to relaxation of the throat and a smooth downward movement of the diaphragm. Differentiate between a full breath and a deep breath. In a full breath, the client must monitor two areas. The diaphragm must move smoothly during the inhalation and the vocal tract including the articulators must stay relaxed. At the top of the full inhalation, the client must not tighten and needs to begin speaking without hesitation. Air and voice must begin at the same time.

Gentle Onset Target: This target addresses the harsh, abrupt initiation of phonation that is common in many pws. Full breath must occur first before gentle onset is effective. Gentle onset is taught by exaggerating the initiation of sounds/words. First the client demonstrates very low amplitude vibration of the vocal cords, followed by a gradual increase in the loudness of phonation and finally a decrease in loudness to the initial amplitude level. This is first practiced with vowels and then with sounds and speech of increasing difficulty. This practice should not be used outside of treatment, but as a training tool for the client.

Movement Target: This target provides for the smooth transition from sound to sound and from word to word. The client is taught to recognize the different properties of the sounds of the language and to utilize the first two targets to master the third. The classes are divided into vowels, voiced consonants, voiceless consonants and plosives.

Fluency Shaping with CWS:

Easy Starts/Easy Speech: The child/teen is generally instructed to begin speech a little slower, with less tightness, and slightly softer. Once the child achieves fluent speech at the word level, the length and complexity of responses is increased. Carryover and self-monitoring are taught to the children.

Stretching: The child/teen can also be taught to slightly stretch the beginning sound to ease into production.

Light Contacts: The child/teen is taught to “touch” the articulators together lightly and softly. Light contacts are used on sounds that involve more contacts such as plosives and labials.

Pausing and Chunking: The child/teen practices forward moving speech by grouping words together and adding pauses in places where natural breaks would occur.

Stuttering Modification: Stuttering Modification techniques target the speaker’s struggle and avoidance of the core moment of stuttering causes which includes tension. The primary focus of the stuttering-modification approach involves the reduction and management of fear and avoidance, typically via desensitization and assertiveness training. Treatment focuses on modifying the surface features of stuttering into intentional, open, smooth, and relaxed forms, which are intended to replace the old, out-of control, and reflexive stuttering. (Manning, 2001).

Cancellation: After a stuttering event has occurred, the pws waits a few seconds and then produces the word again in an easier manner that is slower and controlled. Another option is to reproduce the stuttered word fluently.

Pullout: PWS must catch themselves in a moment of stuttering and then produce a pull-out, easing themselves out of the stuttering event. The speaker must not rush through the rest of the word, but produce it slowly and in a controlled manner as when canceling a stuttered moment.

Preparatory Set: Preparatory set is used prior to the production of an upcoming word that the pws anticipates will be stuttered. Using a slower rate and light articulatory contacts the pws begins the first sound of the word slowly, smoothly, and easily. The word is completed in a slow, relaxed, smooth manner. (adapted from Zebrowski & Kelly, 2002)

Other techniques that lean towards Stuttering Modification:

Stuttering on Purpose: This technique can help the pws feel more comfortable with stuttering and less anxious in difficult speaking situations. This is also called “Easy Stuttering” and helps the pws understand the role of avoidance and fighting stuttering in speaking situations.

Pausing and Phrasing: This is when you break up sentences or utterances into smaller units. This helps the pws learn to manage breathing and to apply strategies mid-response.

Bouncing: This is repeating a word or sound in an easy way. This practice helps the pws learn to manage muscle tension and to become comfortable with the moment of stuttering.