

# Stuttering: It's Not a Secret!

How should one respond to children/teens who stutter..as parents, teachers and friends?

# Why Do We Treat Stuttering Like a Secret?

- Fear that talking about stuttering will make it real.
- Not knowing how to deal with uncomfortable moments.
- Fear that we will make it worse by acknowledging it.
- Somehow, if we don't say anything, maybe the student will not be aware of the stuttering.
- Fear that we might do something to increase the stuttering.

# The Gorilla in Your Living Room/Classroom

- It's OK to talk about stuttering
- A child/teen knows that s/he is having a hard time talking
- Pretending that you don't notice sends a negative message
- Bringing stuttering out in the open takes away the shame and fear
- Children/teens need a safe place to talk about their pain, fears and communication!

# What do I say?

- How to handle the topic????
  - Acknowledge that you notice
  - Reassure the child/teen that everyone has trouble talking sometimes
  - Explain that you are interested in the message rather than how s/he says it.
  - Praise the teen/child for saying what s/he wants to say whether the message is *bumpy* or *smooth*!

# What do I do when speaking to a teen/child who stutters?

- Be a good listener
- Give the child/teen plenty of time to express an idea.
- Do not “give advice”..such as “slow down”
- Maintain relaxed eye contact
- Allow the child/teen to work through a message without trying to “help” by finishing the sentence

# Fluency Friday Plus.....

- FFP started as an idea in the Spring of 2001....with the hope that we could get kids who stutter together.
- I wanted my students who stuttered to meet other kids who shared similar fears, hopes and feelings about stuttering.
- Several professionals in the Cincinnati area who agreed to work on this project.

# Fluency Friday...

- The first event occurred in 2001 with 20 children/teens who stuttered and a few parents who spent the day talking and sharing hopes, ideas and information.
- Each year we have continued to grow. FFP-2007 had 57 children/teens who stutter, approximately 60 parents, 45 graduate students from the University of Cincinnati and Miami University and 18 supervisors.

# Current Leadership includes

- Many speech-language pathologists from the Cincinnati area...Irv Wollman and the fluency team from Children's hospital. Hamilton County Educational Service Center provides support and also other school districts.
- FFP represents multiple practice settings: university, educational, private practice & hospital.



# What are the goals of FFP!

- ❖ Intensive treatment for CWS in both individual and small group settings.
- ❖ Supported practicum for graduate students.
- ❖ Parent training/education about stuttering.
- ❖ Developing ideas and information to share with practicing slps including a manual and a web page which continue to be updated and expanded.

# Why talk about FFP.....

- Ideas and information are available at [www.fluencyfriday.org](http://www.fluencyfriday.org)!!!
- Each year we ask..what is possible?..yet we have a vision..FFP 2008 will be better based on these visions. We want to reach more children/teens including more children from lower income areas. We have tried to serve kids from the Cincinnati Public School district but transportation has limited participation. Current plans are to expand the program to this area.

# What is FFP for the kids?

- Everyone gets an A!
- Everyone contributes and is acknowledged.
- Leaders emerge....among the kids who stutter
- FFP “gives hope” to many kids who feel alone.
- FFP is a program that provides the structure for success..

# Some additional thoughts on FFP....

- The stories from students who attend FFP reflect the power of feeling normal when communicating.
- Parents receive help...adults who stutter also contribute....the open discussion of emotions allows grieving and healing.
- Our profession desperately needs professionals who can treat children & teens who stutter.
- Our team welcomes your support!