Overview of today's activities
- Discuss bullying and teasing within the larger context of the stuttering disorder
- Briefly define and discuss the nature of stuttering
- Provide an orientation to stuttering that impacts both how we treat the disorder and how we deal with bullying
- Reveal elements that are common to intervention for both

Overview of today's activities (cont.)
- Discuss bullying intervention ideas and strategies relevant for multiple players:
  - child who stutters
  - peers (including the bully)
  - SLP
  - parents
  - teachers
  - others

Seven guiding principles*
1. Stuttering is more than surface behavior
2. What a child can do in therapy is not always what he can do outside of therapy
3. “Fluency” speech is often as embarrassing as stuttered speech
4. SLPs need to be willing to do what they want their clients to do
5. Desensitization precedes change
6. It’s okay to stutter
7. You are not alone
Stuttering is more than surface behavior

- Critical elements of stuttering:
  - Stuttering is involuntary
  - Stuttering is unpredictable
  - Stuttering is variable (“Stuttering 099”)
  - Stuttering has both observable (surface) and unobservable (under the surface) characteristics
  (The unobservable characteristics may be the most important part of the disorder, at least for some – I’d say many – clients. Conversely, the observable characteristics may be the least important part of the disorder.)
  - Fluency (or disfluency) may be the worst metric of stuttering

Stuttering is more than surface behavior (cont.)

- Critical things to keep in mind as you think about stuttering and bullying:
  - The essence of stuttering is loss of control (or a feeling of loss of control); virtually everything we deal with in therapy (e.g., struggle, avoidance) relates to the client’s attempts to cope with that feeling
  - Stuttering is not the same as disfluency
  - Your experience of disfluency is not the same as your client’s experience of stuttering
  - Client A’s experience of stuttering may not be the same as Client B’s experience of stuttering
  - Your client’s speech contains both stuttering and disfluency

More than surface behavior—bottom line

- The words you use to define stuttering (i.e., your “textbook” definition) are less important than how you conceptualize stuttering as a disorder
- The “critical elements” of your definition should guide your assessment and treatment of the disorder
  - (I measure this because…)
  - (I do this activity because…)
  - (and NOT because Bill Murphy, or Bob Quesal, some “expert,” or somebody else, told me to…)

What a child can do in therapy is not always what he can do outside of therapy

- Therapy
  - Cognitive, linguistic, emotional demands are relatively low
  - High level of support
  - Achieving fluency = relatively easy
  - “Real world”
    - More/different demands
    - More uncertainty
    - Achieving fluency = much more difficult
    - Not just a matter of “using speech tools”

“Fluency” speech often as embarrassing as stuttered speech

- “Therapy speech” = perceptually fluent speech
  - natural or easy speech
  - May feel and sound quite abnormal
  - May require considerable effort
- For you to try:
  - Talk “just a little slower” or other “fluency enhancing” skills for just a few minutes
  - How “easy” is it?
- It is not unreasonable for kids to dislike using these techniques!

SLPs need to be willing to do what they want their clients to do

- Put yourself in the situations that your client may find him-/herself in
  - Walk up to a clerk in a store and stutter (well)
    - How does the listener respond?
    - How do you feel?
    - How do you prepare?
    - Is the task “easy”?
    - How “unreasonable” are your client’s reactions?
- Do the activities with your client and discuss
Desensitization precedes change
- (Much more about this later)
- Reduce negative thoughts and emotions
- Self-disclosure
- Others (e.g., parents, teachers) need to be desensitized, too

It’s okay to stutter
- One of the worst messages is “Fluency good – stuttering bad”
- “You are a good kid when you are fluent, a bad kid when you stutter”
- If a child continues to stutter 5 years post-onset, chances are that stuttering will persist
- Therefore goal has to be managing, not eliminating stuttering

You are not alone
- Important for child to meet others who stutter
  - Friends
  - National Stuttering Association
  - Stuttering Foundation of America
- Support is good for parents, too
- You (the SLP) are not alone, either
  - Reach out to fluency specialists (like us and many others) when you feel stymied

General Principles Related to Bullying and Teasing

Teasing vs. Taunting vs. Bullying
- Teasing
  - harmless "ribbing" or "joking" from family and friends
  - we have all experienced and enjoyed this
  - often a way to show love or good feelings toward others
  - having fun, not meant to control or harm anyone
  - try to get everyone to laugh
  - everybody enjoys the interchange
  - Ends when one of the participants begins to feel upset or hurt
- Taunting
  - imbalance of power
  - intended to harm
  - laughing at, not with, target
  - sinister motive
  - cruel comments disguised as jokes
  - may be precursor to physical bullying
Teasing vs. Taunting vs. Bullying

- Bullying
  - *inappropriate* teasing – not the same as teasing
  - conscious effort to hurt someone or cause harm
  - bullies seem to want to create more power for themselves by trying to make the person they are bullying feel afraid, rejected, or hurt
  - *never acceptable*, regardless of the situation or the individuals involved
  - bullying is something we want to prevent for all children, not just for children who stutter

Some Facts

- Anywhere from 30% to 60% of children are bullied at some time
- Between 6% and 15% of children are bullied on a regular basis
- Estimates of bullying for children who stutter vary but may be 80% or more
- Children often don’t report bullying because they are embarrassed or feel they deserve it
  - We need to be aware (more about this later)

Effects of Bullying

- guilt
- shame
- embarrassment
- frustration
- loss of self-confidence
- low self-esteem
- withdrawal
- depression
- difficulty making friends
- negative impact on schoolwork
- increased stuttering
- avoidance

The Players

- Bully
- Bullied
- Bystanders
  - (Combination of roles)

A few critical things to reiterate (about stuttering and dealing with bullying)

- Stuttering is not the child’s fault
  - it’s nobody’s fault
- The variability of stuttering is a major factor
  - perhaps the most critical aspect of stuttering
- Changing stuttering is hard work
  - changing how you talk is hard for anybody
- Stuttering is not fun
  - no one “chooses” to stutter

A Five-Step Intervention Model for Helping Children Who Stutter Deal with Bullying
The five steps

- Step 1: Help children understand stuttering
- Step 2: Help children understand bullying
- Step 3: Help children think differently about stuttering via desensitization and cognitive restructuring
- Step 4: Help children develop assertive responses
- Step 5: Help children educate peers

1. Help children understand stuttering

- Stuttering is not due to:
  - Laziness
  - Psychological problems
  - Brain damage
  - etc.
- Stuttering can make you feel bad and make it hard to communicate
- You can learn to overcome these problems and become a good communicator

What we need to know to help children understand stuttering

- Principles:
  - Stuttering is a big secret that everyone knows.
  - Stuttering may negatively affect self-esteem.
  - Early emotions paired with stuttering may include frustration, anxiety.
  - Later, shame may become part of most negative thoughts and feelings.

Shame is often confused with guilt but they are not the same.

Guilt is the uncomfortable or painful feeling that results from doing something we think is wrong. Guilt concerns behavior. Guilt seems to be correctable or forgivable. Guilt is not as destructive as shame and can elicit positive behavior i.e., apologies.

Guilt is only harmful when a person does something repeatedly and can not stop. This is called SHAME-FUSED GUILT.

SHAME

- Shame is the uncomfortable or painful feeling when we realize a part of us is defective, bad, or a failure. We feel shame for being not doing. There seems to be no way out of shame. Shamed people want to hide.

- Shame & shame-fused guilt are highly correlated with avoidance behaviors, personal distress, and non-empathy toward others.
- Shame generates anger toward whoever is thought to be disapproving of the defective self.
Shame and other negative emotions and thoughts become demands or pressures on the speech motor system, exacerbate stuttering and interfere with recovery.

Self-management of stuttering is a complex, highly cognitive task. CHILDREN FAIL OFTEN.

If CWS are given the message you must always use your speech tools, with no acceptance for failure = Increase in negative thoughts & feelings.

The Conspiracy of Easy Fluency
The Stuttering Police

Shame, shame-fused guilt, and many other negative feelings are prevented or reduced through gentle supportive exposure.

As therapy progresses, the child is helped to expose stuttering/negative emotions in more feared, demanding environments.

GOALS

We need to normalize stuttering.
We need to de-awfulize stuttering.
We need to help CWS reconcile stuttering with their life and in doing so the disability is reduced or removed.

Islands of Competency
### Keys to Progress

- It’s not your fault.
- It’s not mom’s fault.
- It’s not dad’s fault.
- It’s no one’s fault.
- (and bullying is not your fault)

### Sometimes we can smooth out our speech BUT sometimes we can not. Trying to keep our stuttering a secret can make us stutter more and feel bad.

**IT’S OK TO STUTTER.**

### 2. Help children understand bullying

- Bullying involves the bully, bystanders, and the child
- Bullying is *never appropriate*

### 3. Help children think differently about stuttering

- Many children have negative thoughts and feelings about themselves and stuttering
- These can exacerbate the problem
- Reducing negative thoughts and feelings is accomplished through
  - Desensitization
  - Cognitive Restructuring

### Desensitization

- Reducing negative feelings about stuttering (or anything else that bothers someone)
- Experiencing what the child fears in a controlled, supportive environment
- “Deawfulizing” and having fun with stuttering

### Some activities for desensitization

- Teaching adults and others how to stutter
- Making representations of stuttering (e.g., clay models, pictures, water balloons) and destroying them
- Games involving “longest,” “ loudest,” “funniest,” etc., stutter
- Introducing child to other people who stutter or self-help groups
Example of a desensitization activity: Teaching others how to stutter

Example of a desensitization activity: Drawing and cutting up a “stutter”

Example of a desensitization activity: Creating and destroying clay models of “stutters”

Cognitive Restructuring

- Learning to “think differently” about stuttering—and about bullying
- Based on a process of identifying unrealistic, maladaptive, or unhelpful thoughts by:
  - examining the evidence (or lack of evidence) supporting those thoughts, and
  - replacing those thoughts with more realistic thoughts that enable children to deal with the challenges they face

Cognitive Restructuring

- Is based on altering unrealistic, maladaptive thoughts.
- Helps children examine the evidence (or lack of) for their unrealistic thoughts.
- As a beginning clinician you may want to begin with simplified approach.

Cognitive Restructuring

- The processes is called Using Positive Self-Talk.
  - Child is told we all have 2 kind of voices inside of us.
  - Helpful voices that make us feel good.
  - Mean hurtful voices that are not nice and make us feel bad.
  - When we are upset about stuttering usually our hurtful voice is turned on.
  - Learn how to fight back; change that hurtful voice to our helpful voice.
Your SLP will teach you to write down your hurtful thoughts (“stinkin’ thinkin’”).

She will also help you to turn on your helpful voice and write down what it says. Good helpful thoughts always destroy “stinkin’ thinkin’”.

When our helpful voice wins we feel better and can usually make our speech smoother.

A Big Caveat

- Always allow the child to introduce the negative thoughts or feelings.
- This insures the issue is of present concern and is currently important to the child.
- Encourage child to write down the experience, the thoughts and feelings and what he believes are the negative consequences.
- Help child to disprove or reduce the unrealistic thoughts.

HURTFUL, MEAN THINKING
(Stinkin’ Thinkin’)

I stuttered in class today and now everyone thinks I’m stupid.

POSITIVE, HELPFUL THINKING

So I stuttered in class—big deal. Everyone knows I stutter and they know I’m not dumb. I get A’s & B’s in my subjects. Also in speech class we looked up facts about stuttering and it has nothing to do with being dumb.

Advanced Strategies Using Cognitive Restructuring

- We are not teaching positive self-thinking
- Cognitive restructuring is about realistic thinking (at times stuttering is scary and it’s ok to feel anxious, etc.)
- THE GOAL IS TO MODIFY INTENSE EMOTIONS BY CHANGING INTENSE UNREALISTIC BELIEFS

What to tell clients

- How we feel comes from how we think.
- When something happens to us we can have different types of thoughts.
- Some of these thoughts can make us feel more worried that others.
- When we’re scared, it’s because we think bad things will happen.

When we are scared etc. about stuttering we have thoughts called “worried stuttering thoughts.”

When we don’t feel bad about stuttering we have thoughts that are called “calm thought.”

If we can change “worried thinking” to “calm thinking,” we will feel less bad about stuttering.
It’s not easy to change how we think because we have been thinking this way a long time.

But with lots of practice we can learn to change our “worried thoughts” about stuttering to “calm thoughts.”

When we can do this, we stutter less, can smooth out the stuttering we still have, and feel good about talking to others.

Step 1 in Cognitive Restructuring: Identifying the thought behind the emotion

- Ask child: “What is making you feel scared?”, “What are you worried about?”, “What bad thing are you expecting to happen?”
- Help child formulate these as “worried thoughts.”
- Focus on the thought not the feeling: “I will stutter on every word I read out loud in Mrs. Jones’ class and everyone will laugh” VS “I will feel embarrassed.”

Step 2: Looking for Evidence for the Thought

- Tell child we handle the “worried thought” by looking for evidence.
- If child strongly believes he will stutter a lot and kids will laugh, he will have high anxiety and perform poorly.
- If the predicted estimate could be lowered, the child will have less anxiety.

We want to help the child reduce the estimate of the probability they expect the negative event to occur.

- When searching for evidence use detective or superhero analogy.
- As a detective they search for clues to find out if their “worried thoughts” are true.
- “How do you know this bad thing will happen? What evidence is there that this bad thing will happen?”

Sources for Gathering Evidence

- Past experience: “What happened before in this situation? Have you always stuttered on “every” word you read and do “all” of the kids laugh?”

- Alternative possibilities: Generate other possible outcomes, “What else could happen?” “I don’t always stutter but if I do I can use my speech tools and the words will come out smoother.”

- “I can start out with some pretend stuttering. This always helps me slow down and helps stop the hard blocks and then it’s easier to use my pullouts.”

- Taking a Different Perspective: Help child look at the situation from another person’s perspective. “The other kids know about my stuttering from my classroom presentation. They understand how hard this is for me. Some kids may even think I’m brave if I raise my hand and ask to read first.”
“I know most of the kids in my class are interested in learning about stuttering so if I use my pullouts and prolonged speech I’ll educate them even more about how people who stutter can use speech tools to speak more smoothly.”

**Step 3: Evaluating the Thought on the Basis of the Evidence**
- After gathering all the evidence, help child determine how likely the bad event they are worried about will happen as they described it.
  - “Based on the evidence how likely will it be that you stutter on all the words and all the kids laugh?”
- Older clients: use probabilities/percentages or qualifiers “very likely,” moderately likely” etc. or use continuum 1———5———10

**Step 4: Examining the Consequences of the Feared Event**
- Final step for clients 10 yrs or older: Challenge the consequences of the feared outcome.
  - “What is the worst thing that could happen?”
- Their answer is usually the initially stated feared thought.
- Most important concept for SLP is to indicate even if the worst happens, it’s usually not as bad as we thought it would be and we can always figure out ways to handle it.

**Putting it All Together**
- Teaching a child who stutters to engage in cognitive restructuring takes time and much practice.
- Need to help them work through many examples in many sessions.
- Work through the steps from “worried thought” to “calm thought” by writing every thing on large sheet of paper.
- Group TX is very effect because all kids help brainstorm the different steps.

4. Help children develop assertive responses
- A critical part of the bullying management plan is helping children who stutter respond to bullies in assertive but non-aggressive ways
- Assertiveness training in general can be helpful for many children who stutter, because they may have difficulty sticking up for themselves verbally
Responding to bullies

- Typically, responses would be short:
  - “I” statements
  - “Mighty Might”
  - “Broken record” technique
  - etc.
    - (Be careful – what the child says may make the bully more aggressive)
- Disappearing act
- Accomplished through role-playing

Example: Making a movie of ways to respond to bullies

5. Help children educate peers

- As children grow older, they spend more and more time with their peers, and they begin to take more and more of their cues for how to respond to life situations from their peers
- Therefore, it is critical that the peers of children who stutter understand what it means to be a child who stutters

The Classroom Presentation

- Help children become more open about their stuttering
- Help classmates understand what stuttering is
  - As a result bullying behavior may be decreased, particularly among bystanders
- When children who stutter experience success in talking openly about their speech in the classroom, it helps to reduce their fear and embarrassment
  - Stuttering continues to be “deawfulized” and “normalized” in the classroom
- Help the child improve generalization and maintenance

Preparing the child for the classroom presentation

- Ask: “What do you want others to know about your stuttering?”
- “What would it be like if other people knew these things?”
- Child vs. SLP’s role in presentation
  - Age of child
  - Severity of stuttering
  - Degree of anxiety
  - etc.

Possible outline for a classroom presentation

- Introduction
- Classroom participation
- Definition
- “Stuttering is no one’s fault?”
- Facts and Myths
- Famous (and not-so-famous) people who stutter
- How does it feel to stutter?
- Speech Management Tools
  - “This is not easy!”
  - What is bullying?
  - Who has been bullied and how should we respond?
  - Helpful responses to stuttering
  - Questions and Answers
Example: Classroom presentation

Helping parents and others in the child’s environment

Parents:
Six things they can do to help
- Identify bullying
- Understand the situation
- Listen and provide support
- Validate their child’s feelings
- Develop a support network
- Bully-proof their child
- ALL OF THESE THINGS APPLY TO US, AS WELL

Identify Bullying
- How do parents know when it happens?
  - Some children will tell them!
- Others may not; parents can watch for signs
  - Shift in attitude
  - Reluctance to go to school
  - Desire to spend time with younger children
  - Sudden drop in grades or school performance
  - Lack of interest in interacting with peers
  - Dramatic changes in health (stomach aches)
  - Changes in SPEECH (increased stuttering severity, increased avoidance)

Understand the Situation
- Rule 1: THINK before you ACT (this is for us, too)
  - Many parents may want to jump right in and try to solve the situation
  - Their kids don’t necessarily want them to do that!
- Why wouldn’t we take action?
  - All is not necessarily as it seems (different viewpoints / different opinions about what is actually going on)
  - Children can benefit from learning strategies for managing bullying more independently
  - Of course, if the child is in physical danger, then immediate action is certainly warranted

Listen and Provide Support
- We are experts at listening
  - Others? Not so much...
  - Parents want to listen, but they may be caught up in their own feelings about the situation
  - Parents can benefit from learning some of the same skills we have developed
- Active / Empathetic Listening (Egan, 2012)
  - Reflecting
  - Letting the child know that he’s not alone in facing the situation
Validate their Child’s Feelings
- Children need to hear that their concerns about being bullied are valid
- They also need to hear:
  - NOBODY deserves to be bullied
  - IT IS NORMAL to feel upset and scared
  - THERE IS HOPE for changing the situation
- Parents (and SLPs) can reinforce this message, while allowing the child to express his concerns

Develop a Support Network
- When we are bullied, we may feel alone
- The more we know that there are other people who understand us, the easier it is to face:
  - Part of the support network involves school personnel
  - Parents (and SLPs) can connect children with self-help/support groups (NSA, Friends)
- Parents (and SLPs) need this support too!

Bully-Proof Their Child
- Bullying is less likely to affect children who have:
  - Well-developed self-esteem
  - A strong sense of "personal power" (The ability to act in a way that supports self-esteem; Kaufmann et al., 1999)
  - A safe place to go, where they can be themselves
  - The firm knowledge that they are okay even though they stutter
- Parents and SLPs play a key role in teaching children these all important lessons

Teachers: They can help, too!
- Get the Facts about the situation
- Get Involved once they understand the situation
- Help Children Learn to Solve Problems using common problem-solving strategies
- Remember Their Unique Perspective as a person at the center of the child’s life
- Work to Prevent Bullying by creating a safe place for everyone in the class
- Prepare Children to handle difficult situations
- Involve the SLP, their best ally in reducing bullying

Some quick thoughts
- Getting involved does not necessarily mean punishing the bully...
- Again, children benefit when they learn problem-solving skills they need for working through these issues.
- This does not mean that we leave them to work it out on their own; but we do want them involved in the solution.
- Teachers are unique and they have a unique role to play for all children.

Problem-Solving
- IDEAL problem-solver (Bransford & Stein, 1993)
  - Identify the Problem
  - Define the Problem
  - Explore Possible Strategies
  - Adopt and Implement a Plan
  - Look Back and Evaluate the Effects
- Every child can learn to work through these steps to figure out new ways of facing challenges in their lives.
Preventing Bullying

- Educate everybody about:
  - What bullying is
  - Who is involved (bully, bullied, bystander)
  - How it affects people
- Create an atmosphere of:
  - "NO tolerance" for bullying
  - Acceptance, respect, and support for all people

Working Together

- In partnership with teachers, parents, and children who stutter, we can provide an environment that helps our students overcome the problem of bullying
- None of us needs to face this alone - together, we are stronger than any bully

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