Defining and Achieving Relevant Therapy Objectives in Pediatric Stuttering

- HIPAA Compliance
- No Relevant Financial Relationships
- No Relevant Non-Financial Relationships
What we thought we knew was wrong

• Psychological Paradigms
  – Confused symptoms as a cause

• Behavioral Paradigms
  – Confused symptoms as a cause
We are afraid of what we do not understand

• SLPs are not properly trained
• SLPs feel anxiety
  – Do not understand
  – Preexisting bias
  – Improper education
  – Little training
• Nothing seems to work well
  – So why bother?
What should we think now?

Let’s redefine everything
Redefining Stuttering

• What the Science is thinking now:
  – Stuttering is a polygenetic mutation phenomenon
  – These polygenetic mutations result in neural processing deficiencies
  – These neural processing deficiencies ultimately result in stuttering behaviors
Redefining Stuttering

- Stuttering is not a speech disorder
  - It’s a polygenetic mutation
    - The first known polygenetic mutation is actually a Lysosomal disorder.
  - The stuttering phenomenon exists in:
    - Speech, handwriting, (typing), signing, musical expression, (dancing)
Redefining Stuttering

• Consider Deafness
  – Is deafness the pathology or the consequence of hundreds of (genetic or neurological) pathologies?
  – Do we try use behavioral techniques to make our deaf kids hear?
    • No. We improve quality of life by prosthetics, maximizing existing abilities, and compensatory strategies.
Redefining Stuttering

• The Stuttering Phenomenon
  – Polygenetic Mutations > Neurological Processing Errors > Failure to Initiate Linguistic Gestures
  – The body then “stutters” (as an action) to prime initiation of linguistic gestures
  – In other words, the body produces overt stuttering behaviors to resolve the neurological stuttering phenomenon
Stuttering Analogy

• The flu is a viral infection.
  – The body responds to the flu: fever, nausea, etc...
    • Reducing fever does nothing to attack the etiology
    • The fever actually serves a purpose in the healing process!
    • A cold bath may reduce the fever, but does nothing to impact the pathology
      – Teaching “fluent speech” may temporarily change the symptom, but do nothing to touch the pathology
      – And the symptom will come right back...
Redefining Stuttering

• What good will it do the client to work against the stuttering (behavioral) response?
  – How many genetic disorders out there do we treat with simple behaviorism?
  – The act of stuttering serves a purpose. By trying to magically remove the act of overt stuttering, how are we offering the body an alternate solution to resolve the stuttered neural state?

• Our treatment objectives need to evolve with our understanding of the condition
  – Targeting “fluency” via behaviorism is counterproductive on an emotive and neurological level
    • It’s not even true fluency anyway... It’s pseudofluency
Redefining the ‘problems’ of stuttering
Redefining the Problems of Stuttering

• Stuttering & Adultery
  – Reductions in behavior are not emotionally satisfying
  – We have to redefine success
    • May not be the case for our young clients, but it’s likely in their future...

• Quality of Life vs. “Fluency”
  – True Fluency vs. PseudoFluency
  – The burden of pseudofluency in vain attempts to be average

• Emotional Intelligence
  – These are kids who will deal with grown up problems

• The time to build a foundation is when they’re young!
  – Effective communication
  – Good stuttering habits > bad stuttering habits
  – Hating the roots of the tree and not hating the tree
  – Building age appropriate cognitive and emotional intelligence
  – Avoiding the stuttering iceberg
Redefining Successful Stuttering Treatment
Redefining Successful Stuttering Treatment

- Do we want to work with stuttering or work against it?
  - Are we trying to create little fluent kids?
  - Are we trying to create better stuttering kids?
    - (Do these kids really have a choice in the matter?)

- Do we want to add to the kids’ life challenges
  - Is a reduction in stuttering really going to help Quality of Life?

- Do we want to try and help manage the kids’ life challenges?
  - How can we improve their Quality of Life?
    - (Are we really doing the kids any favors by denying that pink elephant in the room?)
    - “Fluency” vs. “Stuttering”. Are we doing ourselves or them any favor by trying to avoid feeling uncomfortable?
Long Term Stuttering Tx Objectives

• The stuttering phenomenon isn’t optional
  – Therefore, stuttering should not be punished
  – The habits we form reacting to the stuttering phenomenon likely are optional
  – We can optimize stuttering behaviors, but we likely cannot remove them.
    They serve a purpose.

• Effective Communication
  – With Anyone
  – Anywhere
  – Anytime
  – Without shame, guilt, or fear

• Optimizing “primary stuttering behaviors”
  – We’re not counting. We’re promoting controlled stuttering behaviors.
  – We’re training out uncontrolled moments with controlled moments

• Attacking “secondary stuttering behaviors”
  – Training out bad habits with (good) replacement behaviors
Long Term Stuttering Tx Objectives

- We want to propagandize these kids to prepare them for the challenging years ahead
  - Promoting Congruence (head & heart)
    - Gym propaganda
    - Faith and Cognition lead emotions
  - Promote cognitive intelligence
  - Promoting emotional intelligence
    - These are children dealing with adult problems
    - Acknowledge emotions, identify emotions, address emotions
    - In the older kids, mock-teasing is even a good idea!
  - Promote Self-Advocacy
    - Classroom presentations
    - Model self-advocacy; promote self-advocacy
Long Term Stuttering Tx Objectives

• Promoting the notion of “fluency” = bad
  – Unless you can control genetics...
• Controlled “Primary” Stuttering = Good
  – Teaching controlled “primary” stuttering behaviors = good
• Uncontrolled “Primary” Stuttering = Bad
  – Better to replace behaviors rather than trying to “stop” them
• All “Secondary” stuttering = Bad
  – Better to replace behaviors rather than trying to “stop” them
  – Secondaries are created unconsciously. It’s a life-long whack-a-mole
• Empowering kids with knowledge and emotional intelligence = Good
• Establishing a (local & extended) stuttering community = Good
Long Term Stuttering Objectives

• Jimmy will communicate effectively with anyone, any place, at any time, with minimal shame, guilt or fear.
• Jimmy will communicate effectively by maximizing controlled stuttering moments and minimizing uncontrolled stuttering moments
• Jimmy will not produce secondary stuttering behaviors
• Jimmy will remain (age appropriate) active in the self-help movement.
• Jimmy will continue developing (age appropriate) cognitive and emotional understanding of the stuttering phenomenon
Short Term Stuttering Tx Objectives

• Jimmy will demonstrate & drill controlled volitional stuttering behaviors
  – Bouncing & Stretching

• Jimmy will identify moments of controlled and uncontrolled stuttering
  – Volitional Stuttering & Negative Practice

• Jimmy will use cancellations after moments of uncontrolled stuttering
  – Modified cancellations with volitional stuttering to regain control
Short Term Stuttering Tx Objectives

• Jimmy will participate in turn-taking conversational activities & scaffolded linguistic complexity
• Jimmy will learn about the stuttering phenomenon through books, games, online resources, etc...
• Jimmy will participate in the stuttering self-help movement by communicating with a pen-pal and group treatment sessions
• Jimmy will discuss and share age appropriate stuttering related emotions (identify, label, manage)
• Jimmy will participate in mock teasing exercises
• Jimmy will present stuttering to his class
Treatment Activities

- Pause the Parrot / Hush the Hippo
  - Proactive / Reactionary pauses to reduce linguistic complexity
- Turn-taking games controlling linguistic complexity & communicative exchange
- Bubbles (if respiratory hyperfunction is an issue)
- Funny glasses (if eye gaze diversion is an issue)
- Finger cuffs (if muscle tension is an issue)
  - The more we struggle, the more we get stuck
- Silly Putty
  - stretch
- Bouncy Balls
  - Bounce
  - Turn Taking
- The gym & a snowball fight
  - Back door to the soul
  - Propagandizing on the basketball court
- Draw your stuttering; Write about your stuttering; create a cartoon
  - Ti-Ger.org
Application Time

Let’s talk about some of your clients and apply some of this stuff...