Therapy with Teenagers Who Stutter: What Needs to be Changed and Who Decides?

Stuttering therapy with children is made more challenging as the child moves through the normal developmental changes that characterize adolescence. It is not unusual for teenagers to appear unmotivated or noncompliant in therapy. As a result, they may opt out of therapy at exactly the time when a relationship with a caring therapist can help them discover options for managing stuttering.

To work effectively with teens who stutter, therapists need to first understand and appreciate the challenges and opportunities that define the adolescent years. Along with these developmental changes, the speech-language pathologist needs to be able to assess “goodness of fit” between the teen’s readiness for therapy and the approach used. This presentation describes ways to help adolescents explore their readiness to manage their stuttering, and how to apply this knowledge to develop their own policies about what they want to change and how they will do it.

Learner Outcomes
1. Participants will recognize specific aspects of adolescent development that are important to consider in therapy for stuttering.
2. Participants will describe the “common factors” in therapy and how these might apply to stuttering intervention.
3. Participants will discuss motivational interviewing and its relevance for establishing a therapeutic alliance between therapists and teens, and in both goal selection and promoting readiness to change in adolescents who stutter.

Management of Stuttering with Adolescents and Adults

The presenter will describe three primary goals of therapy and four related principles of a successful therapeutic experience for adolescents and adults who stutter. Related topics include the development of agency, the importance of the therapeutic alliance and characteristics of effective (and ineffective) clinicians. We will conclude with suggestions for a constructivist-narrative approach for counseling.

Learner Outcomes
Those attending this presentation will be able to
1. Describe a clinical rationale for facilitating successful clinical management for adolescents and adults who stutter.
2. Provide your client with specific goals and a sense of direction during the therapeutic process.
3. Describe awareness of the constructivist-narrative counseling approach.

WALT MANNING is a professor in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at The University of Memphis. He has published more than 100 articles in a variety of professional journals and has presented to regional, national and international audiences. He is an editorial consultant for professional journals and since 1997 he has been an associate editor for The Journal of Fluency Disorders. He is a board certified specialist in fluency disorders and a fellow of ASHA and has received the honors of the Tennessee Association of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists. The third edition of his text “Clinical Decision Making in Fluency Disorders” was published by Delmar/Cengage Learning in 2010.

TRICIA ZEBROWSKI is a professor in communication sciences and disorders at the University of Iowa. She is a fellow of ASHA and an ABFFD certified specialist in fluency and fluency disorders. Zebrowski’s research focuses on the development of early stuttering and the cognitive factors underlying change readiness for teenagers who stutter. She directs UISPEAKS, a weekly summer-residential program for teenagers who stutter. Contact Zebrowski at tricia-zebrowski@uiowa.edu.
Dr. Eugene B. Cooper
1933–2015

The University of Alabama Department of Communicative Disorders mourns the death of Dr. Eugene B. Cooper, professor emeritus of communicative disorders. He died Nov. 21, 2015, at the age of 81.

He served as chair of the department for 30 years and was a dedicated teacher, a gifted therapist and an inspirational mentor to many. The Cooper Lecture Series was established to honor him and his wife Crystal for exemplary service to the University.

Dating back to the 1950s, Gene was one of the first to recognize that the relationship between client and clinician is one of the most important aspects of stuttering treatment. Still widely accepted today, Gene’s original approach to treating the “whole person” has left a lasting mark on the field, and has improved the lives of so many people who stutter.

To recognize his contributions to the University of Alabama Department of Communicative Disorders, the Eugene B. Cooper Memorial Award has been established to honor an outstanding graduate student.

Current and former faculty, staff and students of the department extend their heartfelt sympathy to Cooper’s wife, Crystal; their sons, Philip and Ivan; and the extended Cooper family.

This course is offered for up to 0.80 ASHA CEUs (Intermediate level, Professional area).

This event is sponsored in part by the Alabama Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. The Alabama Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.