Forward Moving Speech

By Dean Williams

A Stuttering Modification Approach

- The objective is to "stutter more fluently".

- Intervention deals directly with the fears associated with stuttering behaviors, focus is on staying in the present and on what person is doing while speaking.

- Person learns that stuttering is a behavior that they do, and not something that just "happens" to them.

Underlying Theoretical Rationales:

1. Stuttering develops as a negative reaction by the child to disfluencies while speaking.
2. The behavior of stuttering is purposeful.
3. Fluency breaks are caused by what the stutterer is doing or has done to interfere with talking.
4. Stutterers attend to internal cues (feeling of stuttering), which causes them to modify their speech in an attempt to avoid stuttering.
5. Stutterers come to believe that stuttering is something that "happens to them" despite their efforts to prevent it.
6. Four specific fears of stuttering motivate the stuttering reaction: fear of being considered as a stutterer, fear of being unable to finish a word, fear that once stuttering begins it will not stop, and fear of feeling out of control.
7. Stutterers attend to what they are feeling, not what they are doing.

Therapy Style

- Clients learn that speech is a complex behavior.
- Clients learn how to "talk about their talking".
- Clients learn to practice and modify their speaking behaviors.
- Clients learn to identify fluent and disfluent speech in themselves and others.
- Clients learn to identify the behaviors that interfere with effective speech.
- Clients learn to alter these interfering behaviors during spontaneous speech.
- This is not a quick, intensive program.

Success

- A person's ability to control instances of stuttering (stuttering smoothly) is the criterion of success (Williams, 1979).

- Success is not perfectly fluent speech.

- Success is best measured by the client.

- Success is achieved when client recognizes what they do to precipitate disfluent speech, and modifies those behaviors during speech.

- The way clients view themselves as a speaker is a subjective measurement that only they can know.

Generalization and Maintenance

- Generalization is a fundamental objective of therapy.

- Generalization involves moving from being controlled by fears to coping constructively with speaking behaviors (in presence of negative feelings from past speaking experiences).

Data Regarding Program Success Rate

- "We are familiar with no research studies that specifically evaluate the efficacy of this approach,"
  (Quesal & Yaruss, 2000, p. 186).

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

-Clients are actively involved in therapy.

-Stuttering is not viewed negatively.

-Self-esteem increases as client realizes change is dependent on what *they do*.

-Clients emotions are addressed in therapy.

-Fear of speaking is reduced because clients have more control of their speaking behaviors.

Weaknesses

-Motivation to change speech is necessary.

-Client must be cognitively able to attend to their speaking behaviors.

-There is no data on treatment outcomes.

-Forward Moving Speech is primarily a philosophy rather than a step-by-step formula for how to treat stuttering.

Recommended Use

- We would recommend using the *Forward Moving Speech* approach because it addresses the underlying issues associated with stuttering behaviors. By conquering these underlying issues, the client gains the power to speak more effectively.

References

- Quesal, R.W. & Yaruss, J.S. (2000). Historical perspectives on stuttering treatment: Dean Williams. Contemporary issues in communication science and disorders, 27, 178-187.
- Williams, D. (1979). Controversies about stuttering therapy (H. Gregory, ED). Baltimore: University Park Press.