

Stuttering Modification Strategies

Stuttering Modification strategies should be implemented when the following are observed or reported by the person who stutters (PWS):

1. Struggle and/or tension
2. Anticipation of stuttering events
3. Avoidance, such as circumlocutions, situation avoidances, or simply not talking
4. Fear of talking
5. Linguistic secondary behaviors are observed, such as fillers (*um*), starters (*Well, you know*), postponements (delay in saying a word to delay stuttering)

The three strategies below should be taught in order, as the skills learned in the first strategies are needed to be successful in the subsequent strategies.

CANCELLATIONS

- The purpose of this technique is to take control of tension ***after*** a moment of stuttering.
- After the stuttered word, the student should:
 1. *Pause* long enough to figure out where the tension is.
 2. *Release* the tension in the speech muscles.
 3. *Start the word again at the point where the disfluency occurred* with an easy start or an easy stutter. **Do NOT** restart the sentence.
- The student can start practicing cancellations in short conversations, then gradually move toward using cancellations in more challenging situations.
- The use of Cancellations helps the student learn to recognize moments of stuttering more quickly so he can make changes in his speech.
- It also gives the student the opportunity to take control of his speech and helps him decrease his avoidance of stuttering.
- Cancellations help Increase student's confidence that he can manage the tension in his speech and make talking easier.

PULL-OUTS

- Also called *Slide-Outs*.
- The purpose of this technique is to release tension **during** a moment of stuttering, then easing into the rest of the word or phrase.
- During the moment of stuttering, the student should:
 1. *Identify* where the tension is in the speech muscles.
 2. *Reduce* the physical tension a little bit at a time.
 3. *Continue* speaking to say the word and move on to the rest of the phrase.
- Pull-Outs help reduce physical tension so child can speak more easily.
- They increase the feeling that the student (and NOT his stuttering) are in control of the speech.
- Pull-Outs give the student a choice about how to stutter (tense vs. easy) and helps him change “involuntary stuttering (NOT under his control) to “voluntary speaking” (under his control).
- They keep the speech moving forward, as opposed to Cancellations, which stops the forward flow of speech.
- This technique is easily practiced with pseudostuttering to help gain a feeling of control over the speech. Then, as the feeling of control increases, the child can try it out in longer sentences or with higher levels of tension.
- Remember that the goal is to take control of the tension so the student can keep speaking smoothly. He doesn't want to just “push through” the moments of stuttering without changing the tension because pushing through results in more speech tension. Pull-outs help the student get more control as well as decreasing the tension in the speech muscles.

PREPARATORY SETS

- The purpose of this technique release tension at the beginning of a word where the student ***thinks he is likely to stutter***.
- It is most appropriate for individuals who demonstrate *anticipation of stuttered moments*.
- The student should speak normally (without modification) until he feels that he is coming to a word where he will experience tension...and most probably disfluent speech.
- *Begin the word with an easy start* (to reduce physical tension) instead of tensing muscles. Any of the techniques used for Fluency Shaping can be used here and the student will have ore success if he uses multiple strategies.
- The obvious benefit of Preparatory Sets is to help reduce the tension and increase fluency ***before*** the moment of stuttering.

After the student has learned the three techniques in order: Cancellations, Pull-Outs, Preparatory Sets, he should then ***use them in reverse order.***

- In other words, if he experiences a moment of stuttering, he first uses whatever strategy works best for him when he implements a Preparatory Set. If he is unsuccessful and he experiences a stutter anyway, he should try to pull out of it. If he is successful, great. He continues talking. If he is unsuccessful, however, he should cancel by stopping, taking a breath while releasing tension, and then pick up where he left off.

PSEUDOSTUTTERING

- Produce fake moments of stuttering *on purpose* so they are under the student's control. It should be used whenever the student wants to reduce speech tension or when he wants to let his stuttering out, when it's under *his* control.
- After the stuttered word, the student should:
 1. Use a short repetition ("bounce") or stretch ("slide") while he is in talking.
 2. Try different types of stutters (longer/shorter, harder/easier) until he finds the balance that's right for him.
- Pseudostuttering helps decrease the discomfort of stuttering and it reduces the physical tension that occurs during "real" moments of stuttering.
- It also helps make sure that stuttering won't ever stand in the way of what he wants to say and it helps the student be more open about the fact that he stutters so he will always be able to say what he wants to say, regardless of whether or not he stutters.
- Using voluntary stuttering may be hard at first, but the more the student does it, the easier it will get.
- To help the student get better at voluntary stuttering, he should first start out in easy situations, then gradually move toward hard and harder situations as he gets more comfortable with his speech and his stuttering.
- Voluntary stuttering will help the student gain more comfort with his speech and his stuttering and this will help him say what he wants to say without worrying about his speech.
- The student should remember that he can use voluntary stuttering to help reduce tension in his speech and to help him prevent the really big stutters from happening as often. It does not need to be used all the time; only when it will help.