Working with Attitudes and Emotions in School Age Children Who Stutter

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NOTE: THIS HANDOUT NOT IN SLIDE FORM BECAUSE MANY OF THE POWERPOINT SLIDES ARE PICTURES AND OTHER ORIGINAL WORKS BY CHILDREN WHO STUTTER AS WELL AS EXAMPLES OF HANDOUTS, WORKSHEETS AND TESTING PROTOCOLS. WHILE WE HAVE PERMISSION TO USE ALL THESE MATERIALS IN THE PRESENTATION, WE FELT THAT IT WAS NOT APPROPRIATE TOO TO SHARE THEM ON THE HANDOUTS.

Why Work on Attitudes and Emotions?
- Aids in successful transfer and generalization of speech tools
- Reduces the likelihood of relapse
- Increases successful use of speech tools
- Empowers the child to successfully manage stuttering
- Helps reduce the overall impact of stuttering on the child’s life

Therapy Shift
- Away from focusing on the surface features of stuttering
- Away from a focus on fluency
- Away from measuring progress solely on % fluency
- Toward acceptance
- Toward empowerment
- To helping the child find ways to live successfully with stuttering
- Finding a balance based upon the child’s individual needs

Briggs (1975)
- Found that when healthy expression of negative attitudes is not encouraged children often try to resist those feelings
- Such resistance in children who stutter can lead to increased levels of physical tension
- Murphy (1996) found that such tension may interfere with the child’s ability to successfully manage stuttering

Briggs (1975)
• When opportunities are created for the child to express negative feelings, and those feelings are accepted free of judgment, the feelings will begin to lose their power.
• This occurs within the context of the clinician-child relationship within the therapy environment.

Piaget (1983)
• Cognitive Development
  • Concrete Operational Stage: Elementary and pre-adolescent age children begin to demonstrate logical concrete thinking.
  • They become less ego-centric and more aware of external events, such as other peoples behaviors and responses
  • They begin to compare their own behaviors to those of their peers.

The Experience of School Age Stuttering
• Greater social penalties
• Increased fear of stuttering, especially in front of peers
• Increased intolerance of stuttering
• Negative self talk becomes more predominant
• Increased communication needs/pressure in the classroom
• Emergence of bullying and teasing
• Development of early feelings of shame and isolation

The First Step: Getting Children to Talk about Their Feelings
• Create an atmosphere in the therapy room which encourages the child to explore their feelings and share beliefs about stuttering
• When the child experiences acceptance in the therapy room it leads to a more trusting client-clinician relationship
• Must occur within the context of validating the child’s feelings

Validating the Child’s Feelings
(Chmela & Reardon, 2001)
• Step 1: Listen actively and acknowledge with a word. “Hm, oh, I see”
• Step 2: Periodically reflect the child’s message. “So what you are saying is…”
• Step 3: Probe for more information. “And you don't like reading in class because…”
• Step 4: Label the feeling. “That must be very scary”
Step 5: Validate the emotion. “It’s ok to be afraid to read in class”

Evaluative VS. Encouraging Praise (Faber & Mazlish, 1980)

- Evaluative Praise
  - Includes words such as great, wonderful, awesome
  - Provides judgment based on correct responses
  - Expresses adults’ values and opinions
  - Increases dependence on others for approval
  - May create anxiety or confusion when praise doesn’t match child’s perceptions

- Encouraging Praise
  - Includes a description of the behavior or the effort
  - Recognizes effort and improvement
  - Can be expressed even when the child isn’t doing well
  - Teaches self-motivation and belief in oneself
  - Allows the child to form and internal evaluation

Steps for Using Encouraging Praise

- Make an observation using phrases
  - “I see that you……”
  - “I am noticing that…..”
  - “Are you……”
- Share how you feel
  - “When I see you stand up to your stuttering I am so proud of you. You are so courageous.”
- Sum it up
  - “You are learning how to be a good speech manager!”

Assessment of Attitudes and Emotions

- Chmela and Reardon, 2001; Yaruss and Reardon 2014; and Walton 2013 describe assessment procedures for school-age stuttering which include an assessment of attitudes and emotions as part of a “portfolio” assessment.
- The information obtained through such an assessment is critical to therapy planning, especially for those children who are beginning to hide from or avoid stuttering.

Formal Assessment Measures

- Overall Assessment of a Speaker’s Experience with Stuttering
(OASES-S) Yaruss, Coleman, & Quesal, 2010
- Children’s Attitudes About Talking (CAT) DeNil & Brutten, 1991
- A-19 Scale, Andre & Guitar, 1991

**OASES-S**
- For ages 7-12
- Purpose of the tool is to assess the adverse impact that school-age children experience as a result of stuttering
- Administration time: 20 minutes
- Scoring time: 5 minutes
- Resulting “impact” score tells the clinician if the child is experiencing mild, moderate, or severe negative impact due to stuttering

**How does this tool help the school-based clinician?**
- To understand how the child responds to stuttering in general
- To determine the affective, behavioral, and cognitive reactions the child has to stuttering
- To assess how stuttering affects the child’s ability to communicate in various settings: school, home and work.
- Quantitatively determine how the stuttering is adversely affecting the child’s quality of life.

**How can the OASES-S be used in the school setting?**
- To assess for eligibility
- To assess for treatment planning
- To initiate important discussion topics in therapy
- To probe more deeply into specific responses from the child
- To determine treatment outcomes mid and post therapy.

**Subjective Measures of Assessment**
- What to explore when talking to children about stuttering?
  - How does the child see the problem?
    - Is he aware?
    - How does he describe his stuttering?
    - What does he call it?
  - What is the degree of concern?
    - Is he worried about it?
    - Does he express his concern to others?
Is the child trying to hide his stuttering?
- Does he substitute words?
- Does he use word or situational avoidances?
- Does he have speaking related fears?

How do others see the problem?
- Do his parents or teacher think the child is concerned?
- If so, why do they think so?
- What are their specific concerns

**IEP Goals for Attitudes & Emotions**
- Change in impact scores from the OASES-S
- Increase in hand raising in the classroom
- Increased communicative risk taking in the classroom
- Increased open discourse regarding stuttering
- Increased problem solving skills for speaking situations which are difficult and fearful (oral presentations)

**Activities**

**Using Drawings and Artwork**
- Helps the child express emotions and feelings that he may find difficult to express verbally
- Helps the clinician better understand how the child views his stuttering
- Artwork can provide the child with opportunities to begin to understand and process the impact their stuttering may have on their lives
- May help parents understand the child’s experience with stuttering

**Drawing can be used to express feelings, beliefs, perceptions and experiences**
- Feelings: Isolation, embarrassment, being different, frustration, helplessness, shame
- Beliefs: Stuttering is bad, not good at talking, stuttering should be hidden,
- Perceptions: people don’t listen, people look at them as different, what stuttering feels like
- Experiences: teasing on the playground, having a bad block, a fearful moment

**Therapy Worksheets**
- “The School-age Child Who Stutters: Working Effectively with Attitudes and Emotions
- Chmela and Reardon, 2001
- Uses a variety of pen and paper tasks which provide the child
with opportunities to share feelings related to stuttering non-verbally

- Provide the base from which to explore these feelings through open discourse in therapy

**Open Discourse**
- Talk with the child about stuttering in an open, supportive manner
- Validate fear, frustration and concern
- Help the child problem solve issues regarding communication expectations
- Use encouraging rather than evaluative praise
- Send the message that how the child feels is more important than “fixing” the surface features of their stuttering
- Create a “safe house” in the therapy room for exploration of negative emotions

**Writing Activities**
- Journaling
  - Writing about their day
  - Communication choices
  - Triumphs
  - Feelings
- Writing Stories
  - About stuttering in general
  - About specific experiences
  - About feelings regarding communication

**Using Positive Affirmations**
- “I can stutter my way”
- “I can stand up to my stuttering”
- “I am the expert of my speech”
- “Stuttering is only the way I talk, not who I am”
- “Stuttering can be a very small problem”
- “I can be good at communicating and still stutter”
- “I have important things to say”
- “It is not HOW you say it, It is WHAT you say that is important”
- “I have talking choices”

**“What is True?” Chmela, 2006**
- Stuttering is no one’s fault
- Kids should say what they want even if they stutter
- It’s okay to have sad feelings about stuttering
- Sometimes speech machines don’t work right
- Sometimes kids can make talking harder than it needs to be
• Speech tools don’t always work
• Eye contact will make you bigger than your stutter
• Lots of kids wonder or have questions about stuttering.
• Kids who stutter are regular kids

**Speech Rings**
• Individual to each child
• A great place to write positive affirmations
• Investigation assignments
• Stickers and stamps
• Document positive experiences
• Homework assignments
• Becomes a “story” of the child’s journey in therapy

**Self-Advocating in School**
• Teacher Letter
  • Educate the teacher about the child’s needs in the classroom
    • Introduce themselves as a child who stutters
    • Explains specific areas of difficulty
    • Ways the teacher can help in the classroom
    • Things that are not helpful for teachers to do
    • Share things they have learned in therapy
  • Gracie’s letter
  • Mikey’s letter

**Classroom Presentation**
• Classroom presentation
  • Talk about famous people who stutter
  • Talk about the speech machine and how speech is produced
  • Teach the children about what stuttering is
  • Talk about friends can and cannot help the CWS
  • Show the DVD “Stuttering for Kids by Kids”
  • Teach all the children how to stutter on their their names-for candy!

**Positive Self Talk**
• Children who stutter frequently give themselves negative messages about talking and stuttering
  • I can’t say that
  • I can’t be in drama because I stutter
  • I know the answer but I can’t raise my hand because I will stutter
  • I stuttered so hard on that
Problem Solving

- Empowers the child
- Helps them consider the situation and logically make a plan based upon what they know is true
  - What choices did I make?
  - What happened?
  - What can I do in this situation?
  - What could I have done differently?
  - What can I do the next time?

Friends: The Association of Young People Who Stutter

- Mission: To provide support to young people who stutter and their families
- Annual 3-day convention
- Friends Across America: Annual one-day workshops.
  - Denver workshop is typically in November
  - ASHA CEU's for SLP's
- Stepping-Up Mentoring Program
  - Pairing up children with older children who stutter to provide support

What kid’s want their parents to know about stuttering!

- Don’t keep bugging me
- It’s ok to talk about stuttering
- I want my teacher to call on me more
- Stuttering is not FUN!!!!
- It is not bad to stutter
- I can still be happy if though I stutter
- Everything is NOT about NOT
- Stuttering makes you, you!

Resources: Websites

- www.coloradostutteringtherapy.com
  - Center for Stuttering Therapy
- www.stutteringhomepage.com
- www.stutteringhelp.org
  - Stuttering Foundation of America
- www.friendswhostutter.org
  - Friends: The Association of Young People who Stutter
Resources: Books, DVD’s and Materials

- Fun with Fluency for the School-Age Child. Walton, 2014, Pro-ed. Austin TX
- Focus on Fluency: A Fluency Tool Kit, Chmela, 2004, Super Duper
- Trouble at Recess, Stuttering Foundation of America

References

- Faber, A. & Mazlish, E., (1980), How to Talk so Kids Will Listen & Listen so Kids Will Talk. Avon Books
- Walton, P. (2013). Fun with fluency for the school-age child. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.