

Preface

As a stutterer, as a speech–language pathologist, and as a listener, I have grown to understand that stuttering is the absolute worst thing in this world . . . *if we do not talk about it*. When I speak with stutterers, to parents of children who stutter, and to professionals, I offer the following advice: Talk about stuttering. My experience has been that when you talk about stuttering, stuttering just is not that bad.

Growing up, I quickly realized that stuttering was not something I was supposed to be doing or talking about. When I spoke, people often looked away from me or laughed uncomfortably, and some people mocked and teased me. Like many, I frequently chose to avoid talking rather than risk stuttering. This meant not raising my hand in class; avoiding social situations, such as attending parties or joining sports teams; and missing many opportunities because of the fear that my stuttering would be heard. In many ways I did not grow up stuttering—I grew up trying not to stutter.

When I was in elementary school, a teacher wrote on one of my educational progress reports, “Peter looks like a stutterer trying to hide his stuttering.” The professional advice given to my parents was, “If you talk about stuttering with your child, the stuttering will get worse.” No one knew to tell us that *stuttering is allowed* and that talking about stuttering is the key to managing stuttering.

Many adult stutterers, reflecting on their childhood, report hearing the word *stutter* only when they were teased or when adults whispered it to each other in another room. Things we whisper about are shameful and bad. A major goal of this book is to demonstrate to clinicians the many ways that they may talk openly about stuttering with children who stutter. Clinicians are shown how to engage stuttering honestly, openly, and productively.

Only after meeting hundreds of people who stutter did I realize that many other people grew up just like me—feeling alone and isolated because of the way they talk. Only as an adult, after years of support from fine speech–language pathologists and self-help organizations, did I learn that by discussing stuttering much of the fear and desperation inherent in the disorder disappears. Something very interesting happens when people who stutter, their clinicians, and family members begin an open engagement and discussion of stuttering—stuttering becomes normal, and managing and talking about stuttering also becomes normal.

In this book the thoughts and experiences of people who stutter are presented in the form of quotes, stories, and poems. They were reprinted from newsletters, books, Web sites, electronic mailing lists, electronic discussion forums, and radio programs. Also, many stories and poems presented throughout this text were written specifically for inclusion in this book and appear here for the first time. I know of no better way to define and explain stuttering than to allow people who stutter to do so for themselves.

Peter Reitzes, MA, CCC-SLP

Introduction and How To Use This Book

Elizabeth Kapstein, co-founder of the first self-help group for people who stutter in New York City, has described her experience growing up stuttering by saying, “I always felt that communication and speaking were for others” (as cited in Caggiano, Kapstein, & Reitzes, 2003). One of the main goals of this book is to demonstrate to children who stutter that communicating and speaking is for them. The therapy approach and activities focus on enabling students to identify and explore stuttering, talk about stuttering, and modify and reduce their stuttering so that communication is easier.

The activities included are intended for children who are 7 to 12 years of age. Many of the lessons may also be used with younger students and junior high school students and are appropriate for group and individual therapy. This book includes 50 lessons with detailed directions and reproducible handouts. With the exception of a few inexpensive items, such as Silly Putty, small balls, and an abacus, everything you need to conduct therapy is included.

This activity book was designed to be *fun*. Children cannot be expected to have the same level of motivation that many adults bring to therapy. By creating a situation in which working on stuttering is enjoyable, students will want to continue returning to speech class (Van Riper, 1973).

At stuttering workshops and speech pathology conferences across the country, I have heard many clinicians and graduate students ask the question, “What do I do with children who stutter?” The cry of the speech–language pathologist is, “Tell me what to do Monday morning.” The activities and discussions in this book answer these concerns. This book was written with the belief there is always something productive and fun to do in therapy with children who stutter.

Organization of This Book

The book is divided into two parts: The first is Insights and Ideas for Therapy Success, and the second is 50 Great Activities: How-To, Handouts, and Homework. Comprehensive appendixes follow these two divisions. A brief description will follow.

Insights and Ideas for Therapy Success

Two sections are included in this part of the book:

- What You Need To Know About Stuttering
- Your Tools for Successful Stuttering Therapy

What You Need To Know About Stuttering contains facts, data, first-hand descriptions, and discussions about stuttering that seek to define and explain this often puzzling disorder. Important topics such as the growth and maintenance of stuttering, primary

and secondary stuttering behaviors, and the effects of teasing are discussed. You will be provided with a solid foundation for understanding people who stutter that supports the therapy approach and activities used in this book.

Your Tools for Successful Stuttering Therapy provides the basic tenets of working successfully with children who stutter. Important treatment topics are discussed, including the importance of creating a “stutter friendly” therapy environment, keeping therapy fun, teaching speech strategies or “tools,” teaching the difference between productive and unproductive speaking strategies, and writing goals. This section prepares you to confidently begin using the activities that are in the second part of the book.

50 Great Activities: How-To, Handouts, and Homework

Five sections of activities are offered:

- Identifying and Exploring Stuttering
- Practicing Speech Tools
- Learning the Facts
- Uncovering Feelings
- Targeting Language and Stuttering Goals

The activities focus on helping students identify aspects of their stuttering, talk about stuttering, use speech tools to manage and control stuttering, learn about stuttering, and work on stuttering while also working on concomitant language delays. Speech–language pathologists use many terms to describe physical and motoric speech management skills, such as pull-outs, bouncing, and cancellations. It is common for these to be called speech helpers, techniques, strategies, controls, or tools. In this book the term *speech tools* is preferred.

The majority of activities in this manual may be used for multiple purposes and to achieve multiple goals. Just as the human body uses primary and secondary muscle groups when lifting heavy objects, the activities in this book have primary as well as secondary goals.

Appendixes

The appendixes include reproducible forms that are used across multiple activities, such as the Stuttering Homework form, Speech Class Guest Passes, the Scorecard, and Stuttering Awards. Also included are the following: an adapted handout of a brochure for teachers published by the Stuttering Foundation of America; a collection of stories and poems written by adults who stutter that is specifically for children who stutter; and a discussion about Altered Speech Feedback (ASF). The altered speech feedback discussion was included because its most notable forms, Delayed Auditory Feedback (DAF) and Frequency Altered Feedback (FAF), are currently “hot topics” in the stuttering commu-

nity and in the field of speech–language pathology. The appendixes also offer information about several stuttering organizations that are valuable resources for you to have.

Homework and Handouts on CD

For your convenience, a CD is included with this manual, containing all of the handouts and homework assignments. When preparing a lesson, you may choose to use the CD to print out the pages you wish to give to students, or you may photocopy the pages from the book if you prefer.

Successfully Using the Activities

The majority of the activities in this book may be repeated many times. Each student or group of students will have favorite activities, and you will also have favorite activities. Repeat and modify these popular lessons to achieve the desired goals.

This book should not be treated like a recipe in which you start at the beginning and work toward the end. When preparing a lesson plan, it is appropriate to choose from different sections of the activities to find the ones that best meet the current needs of your students. Although some activities, such as making a stuttering bulletin board (see Post It–Activity 37), may take several sessions to complete, many other activities take considerably less time.

You will want to come to speech class prepared with goals and activities, but be flexible so that you can address and meet the timely needs of students (Ramig & Bennett, 1997). For example, if a student comes to speech class and is upset about his teacher interrupting him when he stutters, this would be a good day to introduce Do You Read Me?–Activity 35 (from the Uncovering Feelings section) in which students write a letter to their teacher about stuttering. If a student comes to class anxious about an upcoming class presentation, this would be a good time to review speech tools, such as voluntary stuttering and pausing, presented in the Practicing Speech Tools section.

The five sections of activities in this book will be useful for different children at different times. For example, if a student is unable to discuss stuttering or work on speech tools because she is unaware that she is stuttering, you will initially want to focus on the activities in Identifying and Exploring Stuttering. If a student is unable to work on using speech tools because she is ashamed of stuttering, you will want to spend time focusing on the activities in the Uncovering Feelings section and the Learning the Facts section.

The Why and How of Homework

Many activities include homework assignments that support or expand upon the specific goals of the activity. These homework assignments may also be used during speech class as additional therapy activities. You may use the homework activities exactly as

presented or as models for writing your own homework assignments.

You are not expected to use all of the homework assignments that follow an activity. Look through the homework and choose the assignment or assignments that best meet the needs of your students. Homework can also be used to reinforce an activity that was previously covered. For example, several sessions or weeks after students first do Stuttering Interviews—Activity 30, assign Stuttering Interviews homework so that students continue to practice talking openly about stuttering. Throughout the therapy process, assign homework from different speech tool activities so that students are constantly practicing what they have already learned. Homework is a good way to “bring the clinic into the real world” by encouraging students to practice skills outside of the therapy room with a variety of people (Yaruss & Reardon, 2003, p. 38).

Some activities, such as 20 Questions—Activity 40, do not have specific homework assignments because these activities may be used to practice any of the four speech tools covered in the book. In this case you may use the reproducible homework form located in Appendix A to write your own assignments, or you may also assign homework from a previous lesson. This allows students to use and practice skills taught earlier in the therapy process.

Most important, be sure to review homework assignments in speech class with students before the assignments are taken home. Children should clearly understand what is expected of them before leaving speech class; this helps to avoid unnecessary frustration.

Working with Parents

It is typically viewed as ideal to consider parents an integral and essential part of speech therapy. This book offers numerous homework assignments that offer parents and other caregivers opportunities to become involved in their child’s therapy. For more information on counseling parents and engaging parents in the therapy process, see Dell (2000), Gregory and Gregory (1999), Hill (2003), Manning (2000), Ramig (1993), and Starkweather and Givens-Ackerman (1997). Workshops and conferences held by organizations such as the Stuttering Foundation of America, FRIENDS: The National Association of Young People Who Stutter, and the National Stuttering Association often focus on parent counseling and working with families (see Appendix E for contact information).