

Cluttering and How to Treat It

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Is This Person Cluttering?

- Speech Sample Analysis
- What to look for
 - Sometimes sounds too fast
 - Problems with intelligibility
 - Exhibits at least one of these characteristics
 - Excessive linguistic nonfluencies
 - Excessive collapsing or deletion of syllables
 - Abnormal pauses syllable stress, or rhythm

Disclosures

- I have no Relevant Financial Relationships or Relevant Non-Financial Relationships to disclose.

Variability

(Scaler Scott & Ward, 2013)

- Like stuttering, cluttering can be variable, occurring in some contexts and not others
- Usually occurs in naturalistic conversation, especially those of high interest
- May only occur in some people in high stakes settings (presentations, interviews, etc.)
- May or may not occur during oral reading

Cluttering Definition

Cluttering is a fluency disorder wherein segments of conversation in the speaker's native language typically are perceived as too fast overall, too irregular, or both. The segments of rapid and/or irregular speech rate must further be accompanied by one or more of the following: (a) excessive "normal" disfluencies; (b) excessive collapsing or deletion of syllables; and (c) abnormal pauses, syllable stress, or speech rhythm.

St. Louis & Shulte, 2011, pp 241-242

Core Cluttering Symptoms

(Scaler Scott & Ward, 2013)

- 5 Features
 - Speech rate (objective measure)
 - Does speech rate sound abnormally rapid or jerky
 - Speech rhythm and unusual pausing
 - Excessive collapsing/deletion of syllables
 - Normal disfluencies

Goal: Self-Regulation

- The ultimate goal of therapy is the ability to recognize when a communication breakdown might occur or is occurring and to make the needed changes to improve effective communication.
- This is achieved through a process of self-regulation.

Therapy Concepts

(Scaler Scott & Ward, 2013)

- Fragile Rate
 - Everybody has different rates they can do different motor tasks. If you go too fast FOR YOUR SYSTEM everything falls apart.
 - Establish the fragile rate for each speaker's system--the point where fluency and intelligibility break down
- Tongue-Twister Words
 - mindfulness

Tools for Modifying Cluttering

- Pausing
- Over-emphasizing
- Maintaining a steady volume

First Things First

- Rate control can quickly establish fluency and improve intelligibility; however, change will not be lasting unless the client understands what happens during cluttering and why it matters.
- You must first help the client understand what cluttering is and the impact it can have on communication.
- Connect therapy to client goals.

It's all in the timing: When and How

(Scaler Scott & Ward, 2013)

- Reactive Speech Management
- Proactive Speech Management

Principles of Therapy

(Scaler Scott & Ward, 2013)

- Functional activities
- Contextualized prompts
- Naturalistic consequences
- Intrinsic motivation

Guide on the Side

- Your job as the SLP is to be the Guide on the Side rather than the Sage on the Stage.
- Support the client through a process of meaningful discovery based on what the client values that includes
 - Awareness of cluttering
 - Awareness of how and why to change speech
 - Ability to make the necessary changes
 - Ability to sustain change over time

Concomitant Speech Disorders

- Cluttering frequently co-occurs with stuttering.
 - Reducing cluttering can often reduce stuttering
 - However, it may still be necessary to treat aspects of both disorders
- Other speech & language disorders
- Developmental disabilities

Resources

- Scaler Scott, K. "Cluttering: Another Look." The Stuttering Foundation
- Scaler Scott, K. and Ward, D. (2013) Managing Cluttering: A comprehensive guidebook of interventions. Pro-Ed
- International Cluttering Association.
<http://www.asocations.missouristate.edu/ICA>