

## **International Stuttering Awareness Day:**

On October 22nd International Stuttering Awareness Day will be recognized by People who Stutter and their parents and the general public around the world. This year three themes have been proposed:

- o International Stuttering Awareness Day---Do Something different today: be yourself!
- o Prevention is better than Treatment: Early Intervention Helps!
- o People who Stutter inspire other People who Stutter

Please email me by June 30th at [msugarman1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:msugarman1@sbcglobal.net) and tell me your preference. Out of 14 votes: I have tallied two themes with 5 votes and one theme with 4 votes. So, please---to those who have not voted, please do.

## **10 Recommendations:**

An email has been sent to all member associations (and to Board and Advisory Board members as well) containing the 10 Recommendations package. This package includes:

- o An *Executive Summary* (Draft 6), added to assist those for whom English is a second language.
- o A draft of "*Future ISA 10 Recommendations*" (the text of the 10 Recommendations themselves has not been significantly changed from Draft 5)
- o A "*Further Information Package*" (the text of this package has not been significantly changed from Draft 5)
- o A three page *ISA Questionnaire* (17 questions, with responses requested to Joseph Lukong (ISA Secretary) by June 28, 2010).

## **ISA Dues (Membership Fees):**

I want to express my concern that only 10 Member Associations have paid their membership fees (dues) to the ISA, in spite of follow up efforts by Board and Advisory Board members. I realize that there are small associations that simply cannot afford to pay anything at this time. However, there are quite a few associations that can and should help us out. This is a concern.

## **ISA Website**

Do you have the "know-how" to work on a web site? We are expanding the group that maintains and reviews the design of the ISA website. Keith Boss has volunteered to help, and we are looking for others who have the time and the skills. Please let me know at [msugarman1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:msugarman1@sbcglobal.net).

## **Sad news:**

Catherine Otto Montgomery passed away on May 27 after a long battle with cancer. She has been Executive Director of the American Institute of Stuttering. She is a Board Recognized Specialist in Fluency Disorders, and has been a practicing speech therapist for more than 30 years.

## **9<sup>th</sup> World Congress for People Who Stutter in Argentina:**

It is time to start planning for your trip to Argentina in May 2011! The dates of the 9<sup>th</sup> World Congress for People Who Stutter are May 18-21, 2011, with the ISA Membership Meeting likely to be scheduled on Tuesday, May 17, 2011. The Argentina Stuttering Association is in the process of setting up its web site (in Spanish with English translations) – see <http://www.citargentina.com.ar>. Stay tuned for updates.

## **Discussion idea for this month:**

Monthly I try to introduce you to ideas for your association to discuss—the ISA does not endorse one particular theory or research. This article (below) is for your discussion. It was written by Nina Ghiselli, Psy.D., a psychologist who stutters. She wrote the article for The California Psychologist (which is the magazine for the California Psychological Association) .

# Ten Tips When Counseling Clients Who Stutter

According to the National Stuttering Association, there are three million people in the United States who stutter, yet many people do not understand stuttering or know how to best communicate with someone who stutters. People who stutter (PWS), similar to other individuals with disabilities, are often times marginalized and discriminated against by society. This trend has been reflected in the field of psychology- which has pathologized people who stutter. There have been a number of psychoanalysts who promoted the idea that people who stutter have sadistic and/or anal-retentive personality types, marked by torturing their listeners with their speech patterns and by "constipation of the mouth" versus the often quipped "diarrhea of the mouth," respectively (Wilkinson, 2001). While multicultural psychology has offered alternatives to this deficit-based diagnosing of people with differences, disability has taken a back seat to many of the advances in race and ethnicity. "With this history, it is no surprise that speech therapists and people who stutter are sometimes weary of referring or self-referring for psychotherapy. It is essential, therefore, that therapists become more culturally competent when working with people who stutter. According to Rhoda OIkin's (in press) concept of *Disability Affirmative Therapy*, therapists without disabilities should consider therapy with a person with a disability as cross cultural therapy. As with other disabilities, stuttering should not be focused on too little or too much. People who stutter have suffered in therapy with psychologists who have not been knowledgeable about stuttering, the stuttering community, and associated resources. This article offers 10 tips to remember when counseling a person who stutters that will help to develop a culturally appropriate therapeutic style for people who stutter.

**1. Use Person First Language** The community of people who stutter prefers person first language, which is reflected in this article. Avoid using labels, such as "Stutterer," or "stuttering child." Person first language is consistent with the *APA Guidelines on Non-Handicapping Language* (1992) and implies that you are seeing the person first and not the disability. You can imagine how discouraging it can be for people who stutter to have others respond to how they are talking instead of what they are saying.

**2. Remember that Stuttering is a BrainBased Speech Impairment** Stuttering has mistakenly been associated with anxiety or nervousness. It is a difference or impairment in the brain that is neurologically based and genetically linked (Kang et al, 2010). Findings from researchers like Gerald McGuire show that brain-imaging scans of PWS have less activity in the speech processing areas of the left hemisphere. This is why when people sing or do impressions, they do not stutter because these may be done by a different part of the brain. 6 *The California Psychologist* • May/June 2010

**3. Exercise Culturally Sensitive Etiquette** Remember that one primary focus for therapy is expression of emotion and thought processes and *not* judgement about how these are communicated. Although everyone who stutters is different, the following will help to build rapport when talking to a person who stutters: • *Do not complete sentences.* Therapists may feel tempted to guess how a person who stutters will complete their sentence. This isn't helpful to the client who stutters, may lead to miscommunication, and implies impatience. Instead be curious about how the PWS will complete their sentence. • *Maintain eye contact.* There is a tendency for listeners and the PWS to look away in the midst of a stutter. This can suggest that the listener is embarrassed by their stuttering. Maintaining soft eye contact can be supportive and unique in the PWS daily life experience. • *Understand fluency shaping skill in the*

*client*. Often PWS have been taught fluency shaping tools such as taking deep breaths, pausing before a word, and prolonging. It may be helpful for the therapist to inquire about possible fluency shaping skills so that the therapist is better able to understand the speaking style of the PWS. Otherwise, therapists may interpret these techniques from a psychological perspective, when PWS are really managing their stuttering.

**4. Be Authentic in Building Rapport** In order to build rapport with people who stutter, some therapists share that they sometimes stutter too or have English as a second language. This can make the person who stutters feel like they are not being understood or that they are being patronized. Some people will also share what they know about stuttering, which is usually from short news reports or segments on TV talk shows. For example, nearly all PWS have been victims of a news segment or talk show when a stranger they just met interrupts them in the midst of a speech block to tell them about the latest miracle treatment they saw on the Oprah Winfrey show. This same experience should not be part of therapy and these kinds of suggestions should be made only when prompted by the client and when the therapeutic relationship has been established.

**5. Talk About Stuttering and Assess Its Impact on One's Life** Although it can be difficult for a person who does not stutter to discuss it, it is appropriate to bring up the fact that the person stutters and to ask about it. This can be done similar to how people talk about race and ethnicity in therapy. A therapist can assess the client's experiences, feelings, and thoughts about stuttering in order to assess how much or how little stuttering impacts the issues the client would like assistance with. Stuttering may not be an issue at all and if the therapist assumes that it is, there is a risk of damaging rapport and the therapeutic relationship.

**6. Consider Resources from the Self-Help Community/ Movement (USA)** There are various national and local organizations that hold support groups, conferences and other venues to talk about the experience of people who stutter. The therapist should ask if the client is involved with the self-help movement and have these resources on hand in case the client would be interested. Many times PWS have never met another PWS and meeting others who stutter can be a validating experience, decrease isolation and be an opportunity to learn coping skills. Resources at the local and national level include: • National Stuttering Association (NSA) [www.nsastutter.org](http://www.nsastutter.org): The NSA has local meetings in many areas and a yearly convention for PWS, families and professionals working with them. • The National Association of Young People who Stutter (FRIENDS) [www.friendswhostutter.org](http://www.friendswhostutter.org): FRIENDS offers a seasonal newsletter for parents and their children who stutter along with workshops and a yearly convention. • Passing Twice: An Informal Network of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons Who Stutter *Sc Their Friends* ([www.passingtwice.com](http://www.passingtwice.com)): Passing Twice's goal is to reflect the parallel "between homosexuality/ bisexuality and stuttering." • StutterTalk. com: StutterTalk. com is a podcast hosted by Peter Reitzes and Eric Jackson who both stutter and identify with the self-help movement.

**7. Consider Multiple Identities:** People come to therapy with multiple identities. PWS represent different ethnic and cultural groups, sexual minorities, genders, and other disability groups. It is important to consider this information in the therapeutic interventions that you choose. For example, assuming that every client will feel embraced by a stuttering self-help group may not be true. In many groups, men outnumber women, additional secondary disabilities may not be discussed, and there may be a lack of racial or cultural diversity. Discussing this reality with the client will be important to support them in their identity formation as a person of multiple identities and to help find the appropriate outlet to fit all of these.

**8. Acknowledge Discrimination and What Rights the Person Who Stutters Has** People who stutter often encounter discrimination or prejudice in their daily interactions. This can include everything from being hung up on when you call 411 for a phone number, being asked if you forgot your name when you stutter on it, or not getting a job because the person interviewing a PWS assumes that they won't be able to interact with the public. If these issues are brought to therapy, it is important that the therapist is able to process them appropriately. Additionally, it is important that therapists have a basic understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and is able to inform the client when their civil rights may have been violated.

**9. Promote Positive Identity and Self-Acceptance** The way that the individual with a disability functions in the world is invalidated by the mainstream as are their consequent experiences. This framework can result in internalized ableism and related elements of self-esteem, locus of control and learned helplessness. By exploring the view of the PWS and how society affects their experiences, social constructs can begin to be challenged.

**10. Seek Consultation** It is not possible to refer people who stutter only to those therapists specializing in stuttering. These therapists are few and far between. Additionally, the PWS is likely going to therapy for issues other than their stuttering. It is therefore important that a therapist working with a client who stutters seek consultation with psychotherapists or speech and language pathologists who are more knowledgeable about stuttering.

References Kang, C., Rjazuddin, S., Mundorff, J., Krasnewich, D., Friedman, P., Mullikin, J. C., Drayna, D. (2010). Mutations in the lysosomal enzyme-targeting pathway and persistent stuttering *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2010 0; NEJMoa0902630. OSkiti, R. (press) Disability-affirmative therapy. In I. Marim & M, Stebnicki, (Eds.), *Professional Counselors' Desk Reference*. New York, NY: Springer. Wilkinson, Margaiet (2001). Hss mother-tongue: From stuttering to separation, a case history. *The Journal of Analytical Psychology*, Vol 46 (2), Apr 2001. pp 257-273. Nina Ghiselli, PsyD is director of disability services and an adjunct instructor for Alliant International University and a psychologist in private practice. Additionally she is co-leader of the East Bay Chapter of the National Stuttering Association.

**Nina Ghiselli, Psy.D., Psy19027**

Gert Reunes sent me the lyrics to a proposed CD to be recorded in July '10. I wanted to share with you.

## **BLS-band – Talking to you**

Sven Van Damme Bart Van Leuven Tonny Van Keer Sarah De Graeve

The phone that rings  
a message it brings  
Say, say, say hello  
Where do I go?

Talking to you  
makes me feel like I can do  
everything (what's) on my mind

But now I'm stuck in a word  
that nobody heard  
Standing alone in the night

Everybody chatting around  
I'm not making a sound  
gi gi gi gi give me a beer  
or get me out of here

Talking to you  
makes me feel like I can do  
everything (what's) on my mind

But now I'm stuck in a word  
that nobody heard  
Standing alone in the night

Do you believe in more?  
Do you believe in more?  
Can you believe in more?  
Can you imagine how it feels?

The phone that rings  
someone who comes in  
I'm not afraid anymore  
when you knock on my door

Take care.

Michael Sugarman, ISA Chair