

Final Thoughts

The stuttering modification and fluency-enhancing skills described in the *Speak Freely* materials offer students the means to stutter more easily and speak more fluently. These strategies give children a variety of options for successfully managing their speech.

At first, these methods require changes in speech that sound quite unnatural. While skills are ultimately shaped into a more natural sounding speech pattern, they will always involve some sort of speech change. This means that whenever students use their strategies, their speech is going to feel and sound somewhat different from what they are accustomed to. Therefore, even though these skills can lead to improved fluency, students may initially be reluctant to use them.

Clinicians need to discuss this issue with students during early therapy sessions. If students understand, from the beginning, that some speech change is necessary in order for them to achieve long term success, they are more likely to take an active role in therapy and acclimate to changes in their speech (Reardon-Reeves & Yaruss, 2004).

Students should be reminded that they are not expected to use their strategies all the time. Furthermore, they must understand that their speech skills won't always work. Even well-developed skills will break down under certain conditions, and we need to help students learn to effectively manage these episodes.

Finally, remember that teaching these stuttering modification and fluency-enhancing strategies is only one component of what should be a multi-dimensional approach to therapy. We must incorporate additional activities that address other dimensions, and modify our instruction in order to meet the needs of each individual child. Doing so will enable us to appropriately guide our students as they become effective communicators with strong, reliable, and flexible skills that help them speak freely.

A/V Resource for **Final Thoughts**

Audio File

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