

Treating Cluttering

PWC present a challenge to the experience and acumen of many clinicians due to the multifaceted, variable and enigmatic nature of cluttering. Therapy goals address the symptoms of each client and focus on speech rate reduction, improvement of fluency, prosody, clarity and precision of speech, the ability to monitor one's speech, as well as the awareness of the listener's feedback to the client's fast and/or unclear speech. Therapy goals may also include facilitating improved language organization, narrative development, and conversational skills. Lasting therapy outcomes for PWC are dependent upon incorporation of counseling, transfer and maintenance activities.

There has been sustained growth in the number of participants in the Yahoo cluttering group, an active online self-help group open to anyone interested in cluttering. Consumers share their real communication disorder and the impact it can have upon their daily life. They also share ideas for improving overall communication.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cluttering>

Research in Cluttering

More research around the world, especially in under-represented countries, is needed. The ICA is trying to fill in these gaps by encouraging research which promotes public and professional awareness, an understanding of the nature of cluttering, and advances in evidence-based treatment approaches. This research will be necessary to ultimately define cluttering with precision, identify it as a unique classification, and treat it with empirically supported methodologies.

For More Information

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THE
INTERNATIONAL
CLUTTERING
ASSOCIATION



**The
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Association**

<http://associations.missouristate.edu/ICA>

The International Cluttering Association

The International Cluttering Association (ICA) is a not-for-profit organization in support of people with cluttering (PWC), their clinicians, family members, community, and researchers interested in this unique fluency disorder. It hopes to build on the strength of international cooperation and communication. The ICA's mission is to increase awareness of cluttering among the public, speech and language therapists, researchers, and other health professionals. It also seeks to forge international partnerships, create committees, and generate support for research and clinical practice. It recognizes the importance of including those who clutter in increasing awareness of cluttering and creating self-help groups. It actively uses a website for coordinating the above activities:

(<http://associations.missouristate.edu/ICA>).



What is Cluttering?

The current working definition of cluttering (St. Louis, Myers, Bakker, & Raphael, 2007), which is widely accepted internationally, is "... a fluency disorder characterized by a rate that is perceived to be abnormally rapid, irregular or both for the speaker (although measured syllable rates may not exceed normal limits). These rate abnormalities further are manifest in one or more of the following symptoms: an excessive number of disfluencies, the majority of which are not typical of people who stutter; the frequent placement of pauses and use of prosodic patterns that do not conform to syntactic and semantic constraints; and inappropriate (usually excessive) degrees of coarticulation among sounds, especially in multisyllabic words."

*The definition does not express all symptoms that PWC may experience. Perhaps most frequently, cluttering co-exists with stuttering, although this is not the case for some PWC. Often co-existing with cluttering are problems with awareness of one's own speech (monitoring skills) as well as listener reactions. Expression may appear impulsive and out of control evidencing difficulties in staying on topic, and fitting in with ongoing interactions (pragmatic skills).

Co-Existing Conditions

Possible co-existing disorders include: difficulties with language formulation, inadequate organization of thought processes, sound-specific articulation disorders, speech motor discoordination, attention deficit hyperactive disorders (ADHD) and/or other learning disabilities, auditory processing disorders, Asperger's syndrome, and apraxia.

Who Treats Cluttering?

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs), especially those who specialize in fluency disorders, are more familiar with cluttering than other professionals. The best treatment outcomes are achieved when cluttering is addressed by a professional team which may include (depending upon individual needs) SLPs, psychologists, educators, audiologists and medical doctors. Central to the treatment of cluttering is family support.