

Stuttering Therapy: Moving from Past to Present Perspectives

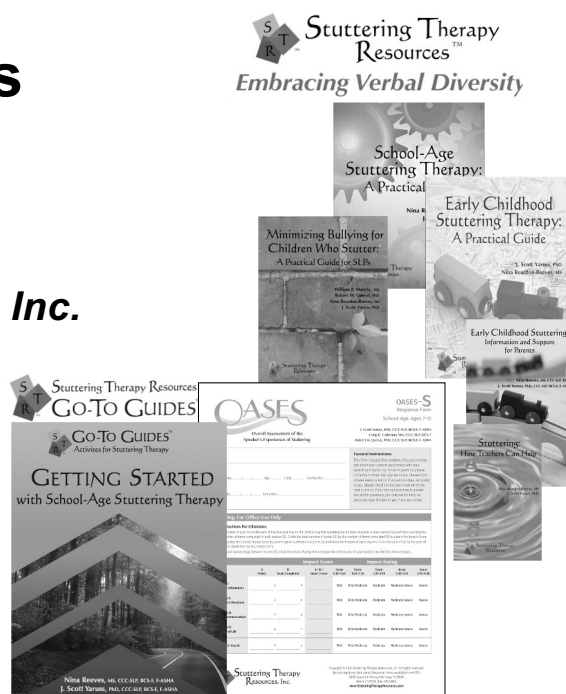
BASPA Virtual 1hour
October 10, 2025

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Today's Disclosures

- **Financial**
 - **Speaker's Stipend**
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HOUSEKEEPING---



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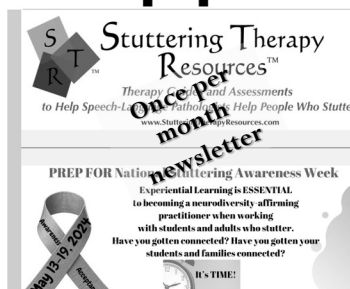
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Agenda & Objectives

20: What is stuttering? No, really?
20: Difference between fluency and communication
20: How SLPs can align therapy practices for meaningful change

1. Describe the difference between effective communication and observable fluency
2. List 2 current changes in narratives surrounding stuttering as verbal diversity
3. Summarize three SLP roles in neurodiversity-affirming stuttering therapy

SETTING THINGS UP...



**LET'S CALL THIS
EMERGING!**

*GRACE, PATIENCE, AND
PERSISTENCE* 😎



THE NITTY GRITTY – TRUE TALK

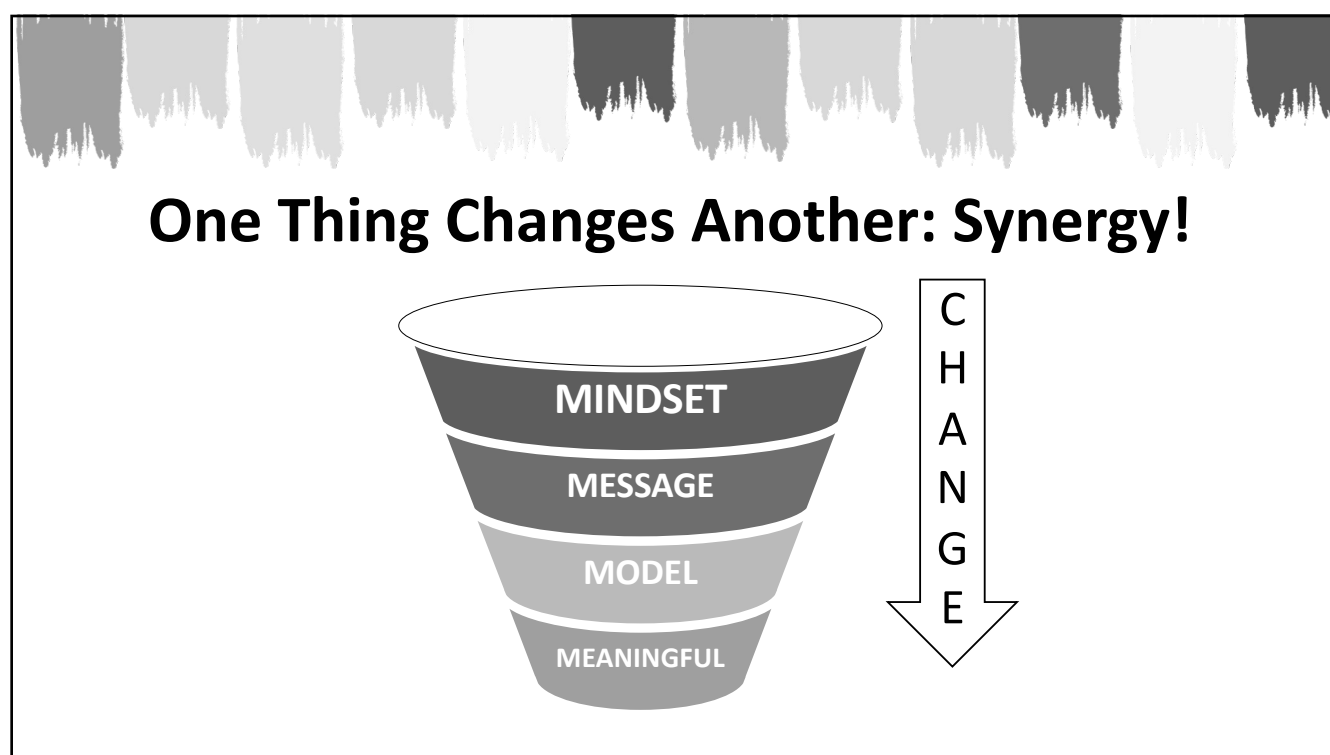
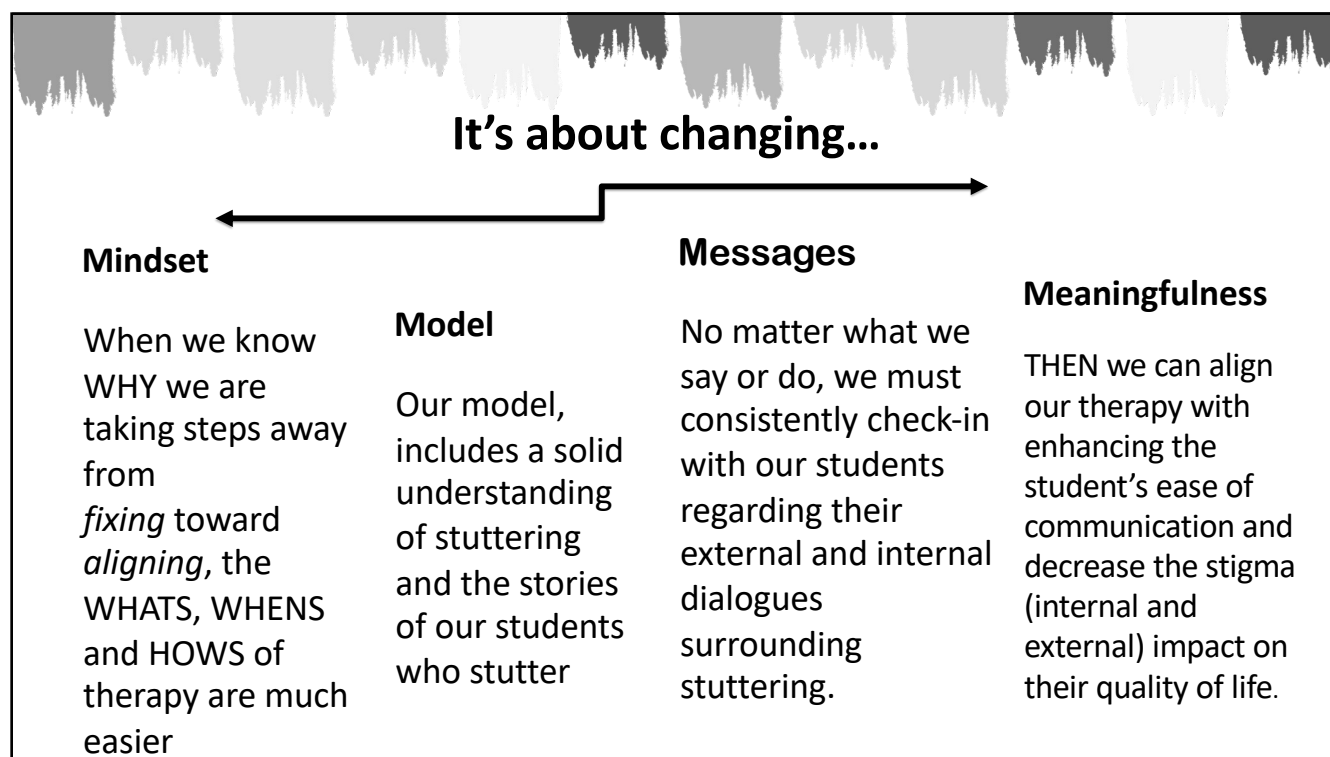
Or as I call it,
“taking one for the team”

Checking our Mindset

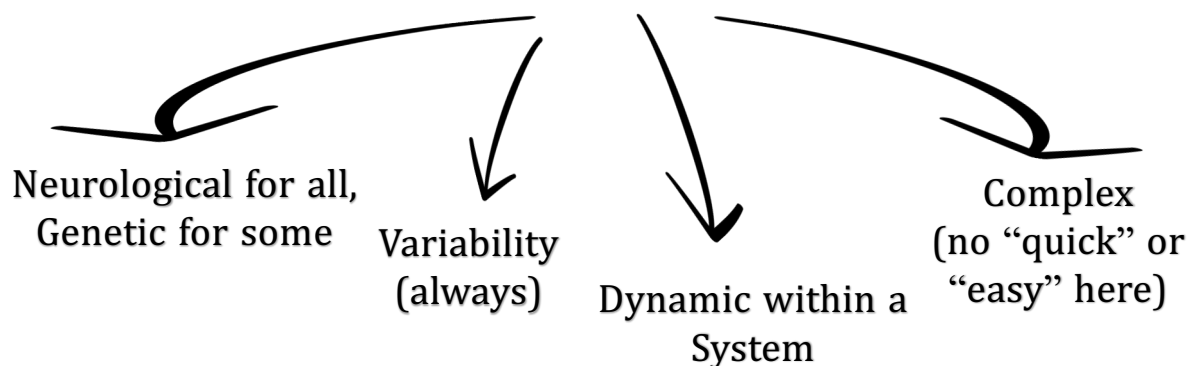
Let's start here

For decades, people have **said** "It's okay to stutter"

- Do you ***believe*** this?
- Has society ***embraced*** this?
- Has *your therapy* **shown** that it is okay to stutter?



What is Stuttering, Really?



Expanding Each ICF Section

Function: ****Feeling of “stuckness” by speaker. **Some** of these moments are observable/surface speech behaviors

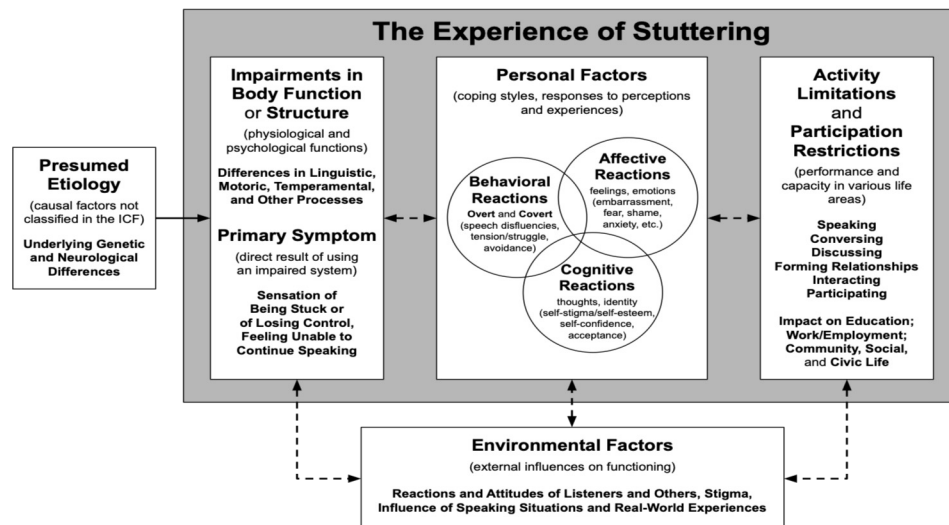
Reactions:

- *child’s behaviors in reaction to stutters,
- *child’s thoughts about self and communication,
- *child’s feelings about self and stuttering

Environment: How others perceive/react to stuttering

Impact: Participation & Activity Limitations

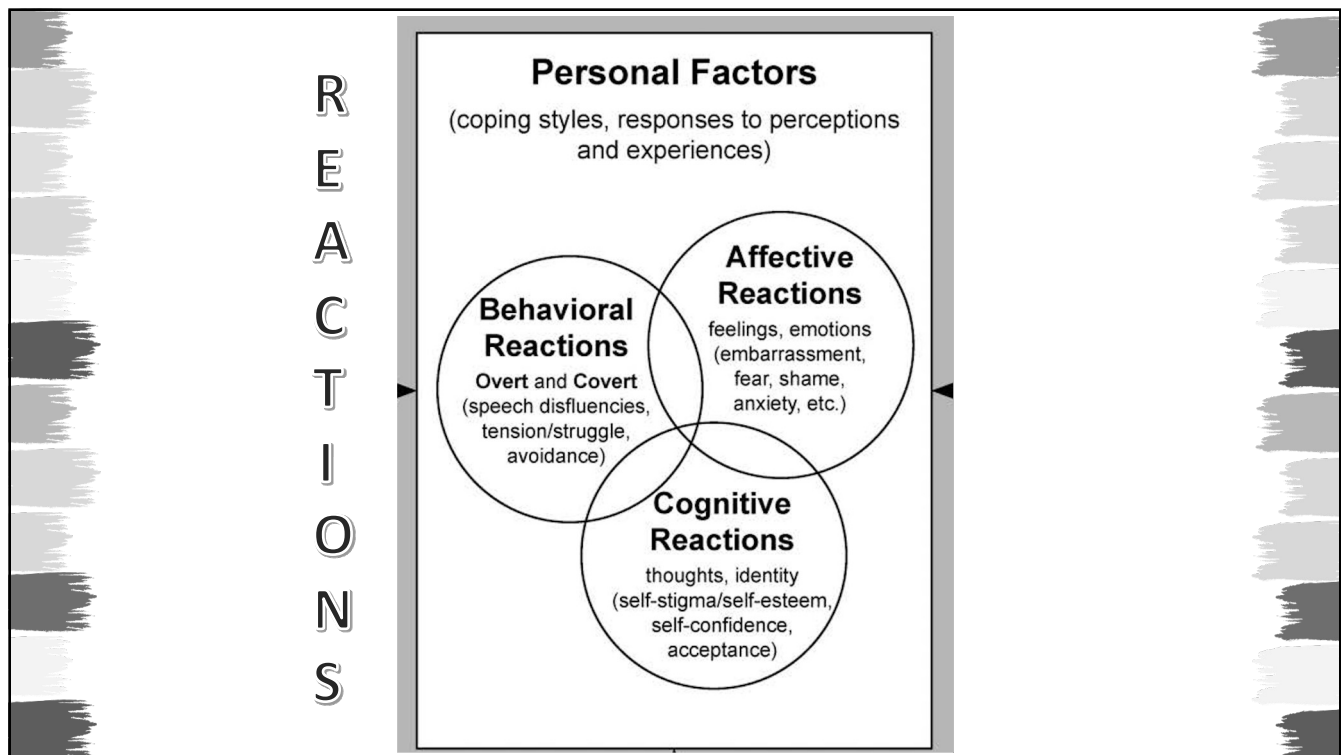
Helping Ourselves and Everyone Understand the Big Picture

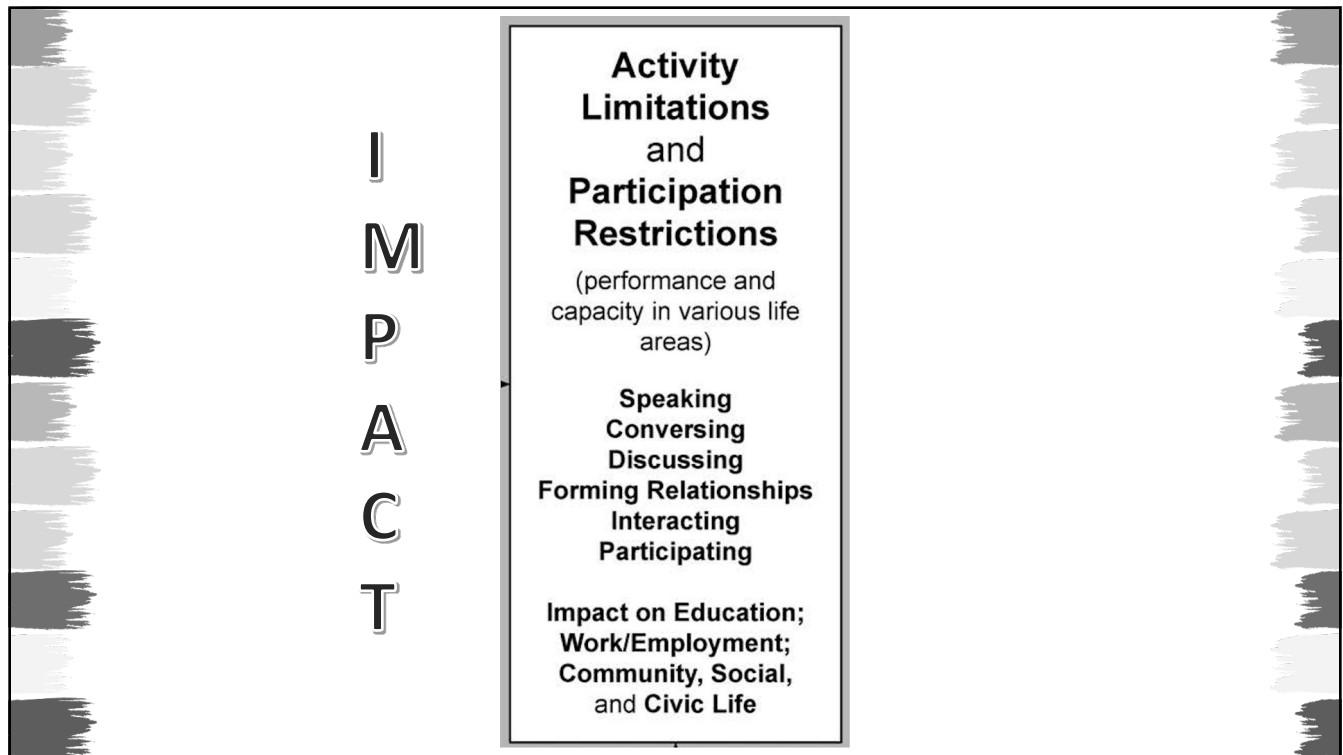


Update of Yaruss and Quesal's (2004) representation of how the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) can be applied to stuttering. Copyright 2019 Seth E. Tichenor and J. Scott Yaruss.

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Impairments in Body Function or Structure
(physiological and psychological functions)
Differences in Linguistic, Motoric, Temperamental, and Other Processes
Primary Symptom
(direct result of using an impaired system)
Sensation of Being Stuck or of Losing Control, Feeling Unable to Continue Speaking





Fluency focus vs. Communication focus



Fluency-Focused vs. Neurodiversity-Affirming Stuttering Therapy

Fluency-Focused

- Is exactly what the name implies
- Leans toward fluency goals, skills, and activities
 - Have you ever noticed the number of times you- and others-use the term “fluency” from referral to dismissal?
- Is based on medical model “pathologizing” of stuttering



Fluency-Focused vs. Stutter-Affirming Stuttering Therapy

Stutter-Affirming

- Understands that people who stutter have neurological differences when producing speech
- Leans toward goals, skills, and activities based on communication and quality of life for those who stutter
 - Do you use “the S word” when Speaking about therapy?
- Is based on social-relational models of acceptance and stutter-affirming practices

Why Stutter-Affirming Therapy?



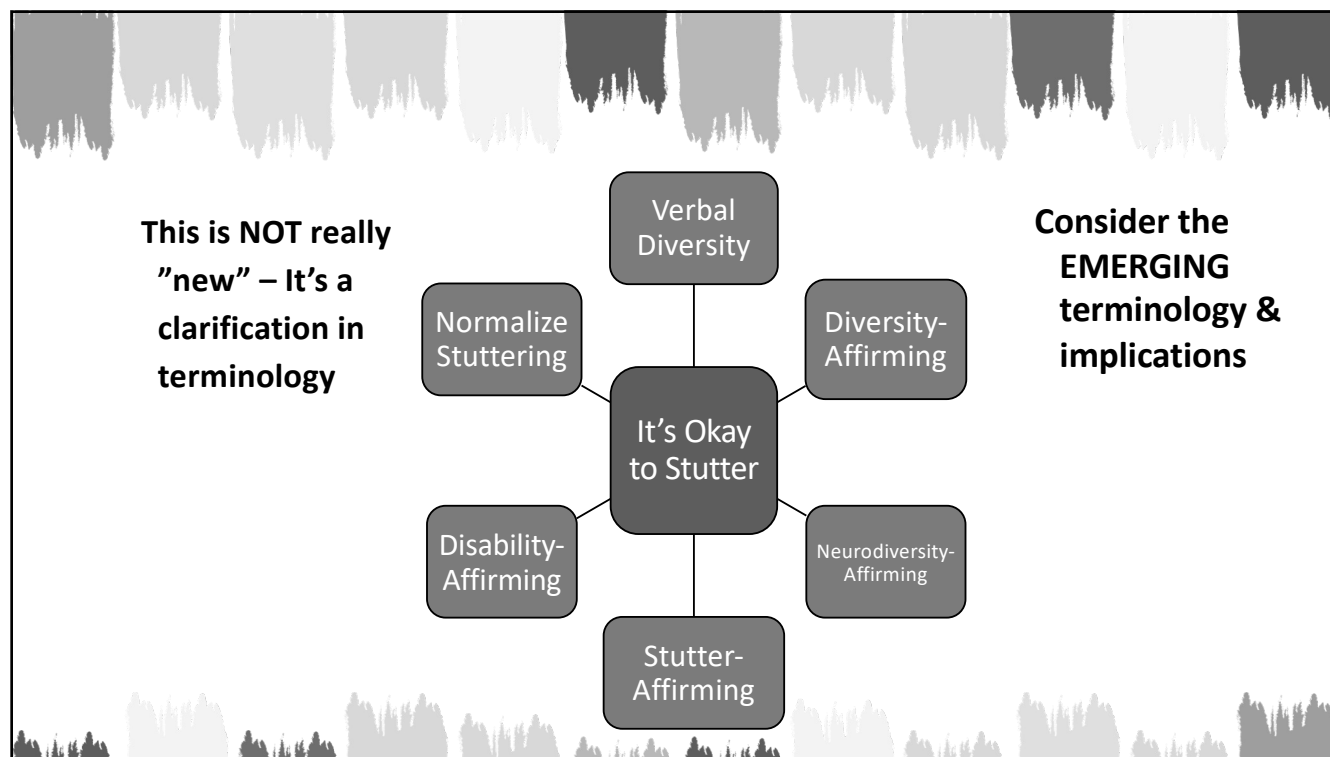
- The more a student tries **not** to stutter, the more likely they are to (struggle and) stutter
- Focusing on **communication** rather than fluency can *decrease struggle* and *increase ease of communication...*

...while also decreasing internalized stigma, and increasing joy and spontaneity in communication

Imagine This...

Stuttering is
Verbal Diversity

-Nina Reeves, 11/6/2020



Clinical Focus

Ableism to Empowerment: Navigating School Structures When Working With Students Who Stutter

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ABSTRACT

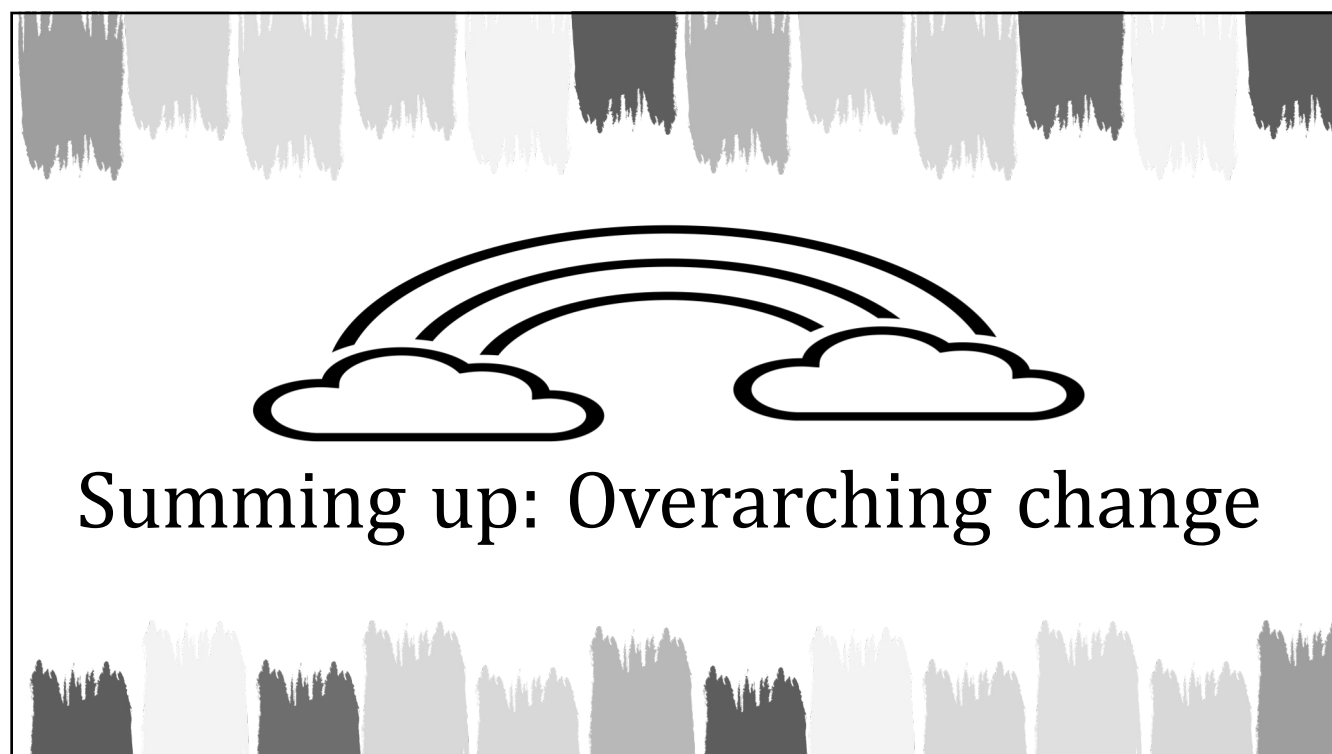
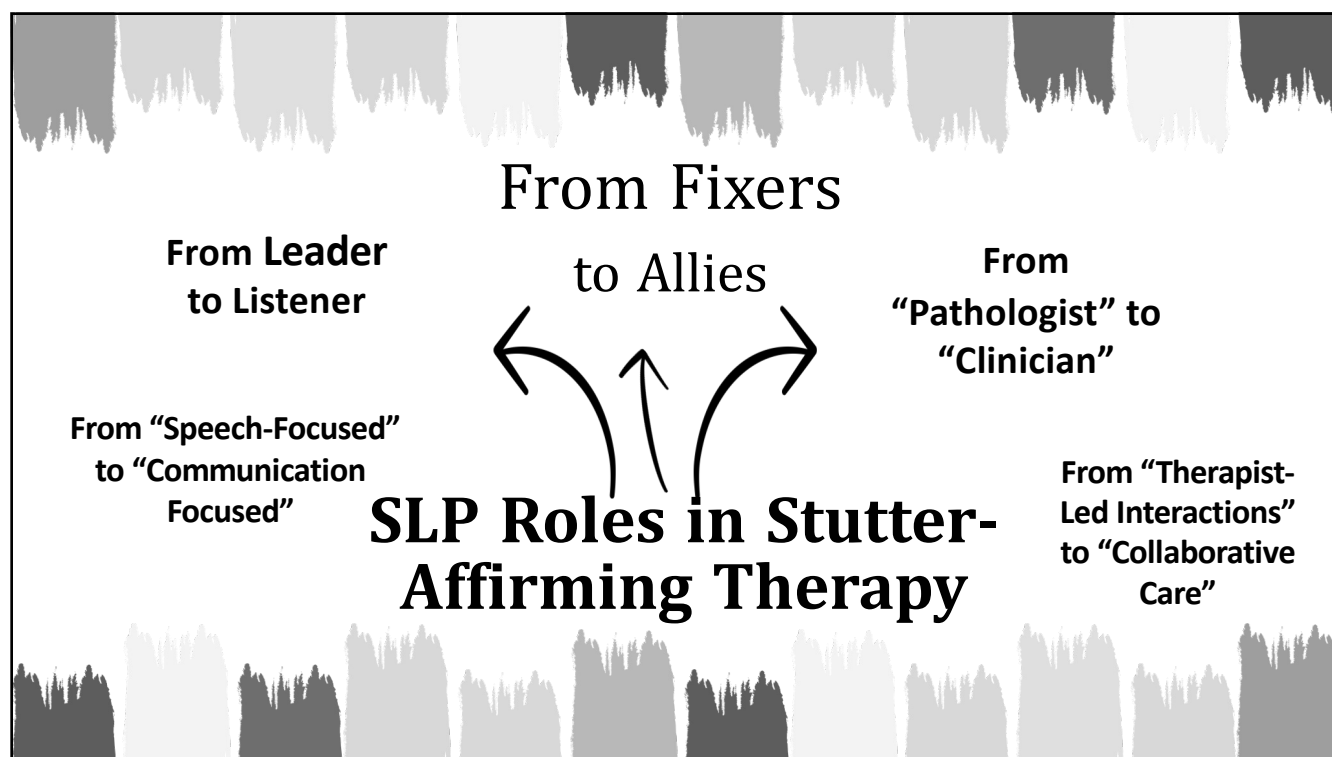
Purpose: School-based speech-language pathologists (SLPs) face uniquely complex, messy guidelines and criteria that can undermine their ability to move toward disability-affirming practices. The purpose of this clinical focus article is to present a contrast between ableist and disability-affirming practices in school-based stuttering therapy while highlighting the critical perspectives of students who stutter. Practical examples of disability-affirming stuttering therapy in public school settings are provided.

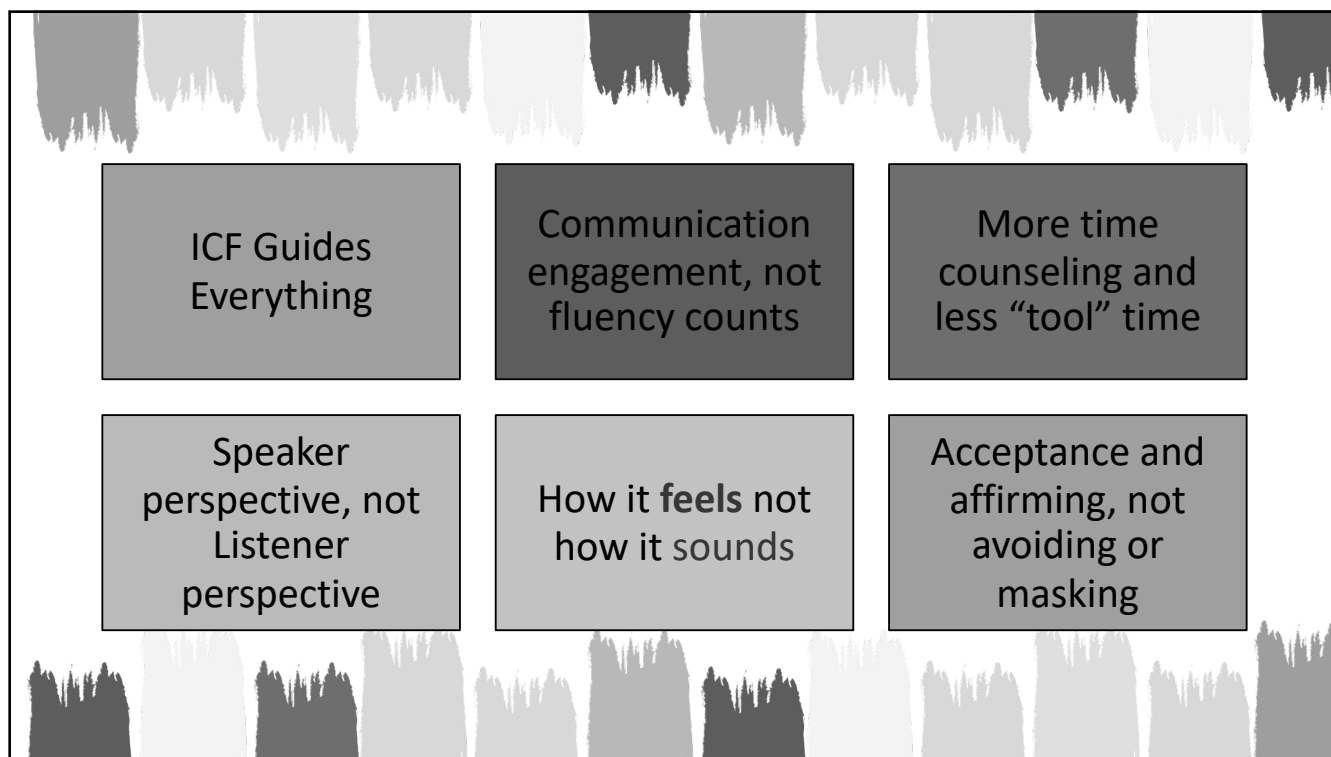
Conclusions: This clinical focus article outlines practical guidelines and specific examples of affirming collaboration, eligibility decisions, goal choice, and accommodations for students who stutter. These discussions demonstrate how SLPs can adopt updated assessment therapy planning and institutional practices to affirm students who stutter while informing school cultures and society about the dignity and value of stuttered voices.

Supplemental Material: <https://doi.org/10.23641/asha.21818028>

Read this Issue NOW!

An entire LSHSS Forum on Ableism/Public Schools...
Stuttering and Autism
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Thank you!

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