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Breaking the Silence of a Communication Disorder

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## Disclosure Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Relationship</th>
<th>Non-Financial Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) MLF Speech Therapy</td>
<td>1) National Stuttering Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am the owner and receive a salary.</td>
<td>I have been a member and speak at annual conventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Speech Pathology.com - I receive an honorarium for speaking.</td>
<td>2) Marilee L. Fini</td>
</tr>
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<td>I have faced challenges of stuttering.</td>
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OBJECTIVES:

1. Describe feelings that clients and their families experience, related to a communication disorder.
2. Explain basic counseling skills to use with clients and family.
3. Describe how to implement strategies for breaking the silence of a communication disorder.
MY STORY~
BREAKING THE SILENCE
### Silence in Children

- 2 year old girl blowing bubbles with her mother
- One thing is missing ~ WORDS
- The SILENCE makes her mother sad
- 4th grader would love to join in the discussion in class
- Decides to be SILENT
- Afraid that he will not say his /r/ sound correctly and students will laugh

### Silence in Teens

- Young adult wants to grab lunch at his favorite fast food restaurant
- Afraid of drive-thru due to his stuttering
- Decides on SILENCE and goes home to eat
Silence in Adults

“In an attempt to conceal the fact that I have an accent, I would sometimes use short, easy words that I knew I could pronounce well. Other times, I would speak as little as possible.”

(client with foreign accent)

Silence in Elderly

• An older woman arrives in the dining room of her assisted living facility, she becomes silent
• She doesn’t like to talk because her voice is so quiet due to Parkinson’s Disease.
• Prior to having Parkinson’s, her family couldn’t get her to stop talking at the dinner table!
IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION DISORDERS ON PARTICIPATION

- Even though there were differences in communication disorders, individuals had similar experiences in terms of participating in situations involving communication.


VIDEO CLIP – Being Silent
Feelings Related to the Disorder.....

Feelings of the Family

DENIAL  ANGER
SHOCK  GUILT
ANXIETY  DEPRESSION

GRIEF

“Grief over what was, should have been, or could have been---as well as what must change in the future---is a natural response to loss that is somewhat prescribed by society” (p. 212)


Dealing with Grief

1. “Accepting the reality”
2. “Understanding the changes”
3. “Developing new goals & expectations”
4. “Creating a new relationship”

“For the stroke patient, silence can be a refuge from embarrassment and failure. Only until the patient opens his or her mouth to speak, do the word finding problems, struggled attempts to program utterances or slurred speech rear their ugly heads. Silence allows the patient to avoid confronting the disability” (p. 125).
Role of Counseling

What is counseling?
According to Dr. DiLollo (2008), counseling is when client and clinician come together to figure out solutions to the client’s problems.

According to Luterman (2008), “The goal of counseling is to help the person make good decisions for themselves. Counseling creates a safety net for expressing their feelings.”


**Scope of Practice**

“Counseling individuals, families, coworkers, educators, and other persons in the community regarding acceptance, adaptation, and decision making about communication and swallowing” (ASHA, 2007).


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**When to refer.....**

To determine if a client needs a referral to a mental health provider, it is important to analyze if the symptoms that you are seeing are occurring frequently and becoming part of the client’s general behavior (Donaher & Scott, 2014).

“Attending Behaviors”

1. Silent Listening – allows the client to talk without getting in his/her way
2. Verbal Following- verbally repeating back what you are hearing
3. Nonverbal Communication- eye contact, physical closeness, posture


“Open Invitations to Talk”

“The ‘open invitation’ communicates the clinician’s respect for these issues and his desire for the client to take those first risky steps of personal revelation”
(Shames, 2006, p. 44).

Examples:
“Tell me why you came here today”
“Tell me about ___”

“Minimal Encouragers to Talk”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Verbal Tactics</th>
<th>Verbal Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>“I see”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head nodding</td>
<td>“Uh-huh”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>“Yes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Tell me more”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Shames, 2006, p. 47)


Other Techniques...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflective Listening</th>
<th>Summarizing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>“It sounds like you...”</td>
<td>“So let me see if I got this right...”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“You’re wondering if...”</td>
<td>“Let me see if I understand this so far...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“So you feel...”</td>
<td>“So you been saying... Is that correct?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Please say more...”</td>
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Building Therapeutic Relationships

Therapeutic Relationship - “Refers to those characteristics of the clinician-client liaison that promotes change” (Zebrowski, 2007, p.26).

According to Lambert and Barley (2001), “Common factors such as empathy, warmth and the therapeutic relationship have been shown to correlate more highly with client outcome than specialized treatment interventions” (p. 357).


Strategies for Breaking the Silence
#1) Educating

- Educating communication partners about the needs of the disorder and decreasing environmental factors such as noise may help with participation
- Talking to the client about communication barriers and figuring out ways to address it may be a first step


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#2) ACKNOWLEDGING

**Why acknowledge?**
- Allows openness and honesty
- Reduces stress/anxiety of the listener and speaker

**How to acknowledge when talking to others?**
- Email or written
- Verbally by the speaker or family member
- Non-verbal gestures

**GOAL:**
Client will verbally acknowledge his or her communication disorder when making a phone call to a store in 3 consecutive sessions.
“Sometimes I stutter, so I need a few minutes. I would appreciate your patience.”

“My speech is not always clear, please ask me to repeat if you don’t understand.”

“My family member has difficulty expressing their thoughts. I would appreciate if you would give him a few minutes.

“I have difficulty understanding, please say directions 2x”

#3) Getting EXCITED about talking

- Brainstorm topics client wants to talk about
- Allow client time to “just talk”
- Verbally praise client for communicating
- Assure client his/her message is important regardless of how it comes out
What’s working in your speech?
(HANDOUTS, p. 3)

- Clear voice
- Articulate skills are clear
- Enthusiastic voice
- They are funny

VIDEO CLIP – Overcoming Being Silent
Mailing List/Feedback Form
p. 4 of Appendix

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Questions...

When we help our clients break the SILENCE of a communication disorder, we open a whole new world!