

Evaluation and Treatment of Children who Stutter: A Community-Centered Approach

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- Goal of community-centered care is to treat the child in the context of the larger community so that lack of knowledge, lack of comfort, and false perceptions of stuttering do not become roadblocks in the therapy process.
- The term “community” describes the social or educational context in which a child who stutters communicates with others (Coleman, 2013). As such, a child’s community may include family, neighbors, peers, teachers, coaches, instructors, SLPs, waiters/waitresses, check-out clerks, etc.
- Model has five primary components: Assessment & Consultation, Treatment, Support, Follow-up, and Education.
 - Education: Teaching the child, family, and others in the child’s community about stuttering can lead to improved reactions and perceptions. It can also help children feel empowered to respond to questions, teasing, and/or bullying related to stuttering.
 - Assessment & Consultation: Involves formal and informal components that assess the affective, behavioral, and cognitive components of stuttering. May also need to assess other areas of speech/language for differential diagnosis. Assessment should take place in multiple speaking situations. The entire Community-Centered Stuttering Assessment protocol is available at www.stutteringacademy.com
 - Treatment: Depending on age, treatment may consist of indirect and direct components. Children and family should be heavily involved in the selection of goals.
 - Support: Support is a critical component of treatment, as many children benefit from meeting peers who stutter. Many programs utilize summer camps (www.stutteringu.com) or treatment groups to provide support to children and families.
- Community-centered stuttering therapy builds on traditional speech therapy by extending the treatment circle to include others in the community. In addition, assessment and treatment are built on the belief that input from everyone involved in the child’s life is important. Treatment is not viewed as a short-term prospect, but a life-long journey to successful management. Goals of therapy are structured so that the child not only improves in the treatment room, but is also able to generalize treatment progress to other communication situations within their everyday communities.
- Resources:
 - www.stutteringu.com
 - www.stutteringacademy.com
 - www.westutter.org
 - www.stutteringhelp.org
 - www.stutteringhomepage.com
 - www.friendswhostutter.org
 - www.stuttertalk.com

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Disclosures: The authors are co-directors of Stuttering U. and the Stuttering Academy and receive payment for those roles. Craig Coleman is an author of the Overall Assessment of the Speaker’s Experience of Stuttering and receives royalties through Stuttering Treatment Resources.