PREFACE

Becoming an Effective Clinician for People Who Stutter: What Do You Need to Know?

Stuttering is a disorder that can have a profound effect on a speaker's ability to communicate effectively and participate in educational, vocational, and social activities.[1–6] Unfortunately, numerous studies over many years have documented the fact that many speech-language pathologists are not comfortable working with individuals who stutter.[7–9] The result is that many people who stutter receive inadequate treatment, and this, in turn, may leave them feeling less able to overcome the challenges associated with their communication difficulties.[10–13]

Fortunately, there is much that can be done to change this situation; clinicians *can* develop the skills they need to effectively treat individuals who stutter.[14] Although the field's documentation of stuttering treatment efficacy is far from adequate, it is clear that effective treatment can help people increase their speech fluency and minimize the adverse impact of stuttering for people who live with this potentially debilitating disorder.[15–19] Helping clinicians work toward this critical outcome is the goal of this issue of *Seminars in Speech and Language*.

Specifically, this issue provides clinicians with background knowledge they need to help people of all ages who stutter to overcome the burden of stuttering. The issue is presented in two sections. The first focuses on helping clinicians develop a better understanding of the stuttering disorder and what can be accomplished through treatment; the second provides more specific detail about stuttering treatment

for preschool children and their families, school-aged children, and adolescents and adults.

Note that the goal of the first section is not to describe theories of stuttering, but rather to help clinicians develop a better awareness of the experiences and perspectives of individuals who stutter—and, just as importantly, to help clinicians understand the valuable role they can play in the therapeutic process. Thus, in the first article, Manning discusses the nature of clinically meaningful change in stuttering treatment and reviews the factors that contribute to successful intervention. In the second article, Quesal emphasizes the importance of the clinician's role in successful treatment by highlighting the necessity for clinicians to develop a deeper sense of empathy for individuals who stutter. In the third article, Healey explores one of the many reasons such empathy is needed—that is, the negative reactions that listeners commonly exhibit in response to stuttered speech. Finally, the first section concludes with an article by Bernstein Ratner discusses current research about stuttering, for effective evaluation and treatment strategies should always be based upon current scientific knowledge.

The second section then builds upon this foundation by providing suggestions for how clinicians can provide effective treatment for individuals in different age groups who stutter. Specifically, Millard and Cook review a parent-and-child treatment program for preschool children who stutter; Yaruss describes a comprehensive set of treatment strategies for school-aged children; and Blomgren discussed

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treatment for adolescents and adults who stutter. The issue concludes with a synopsis and synthesis, which highlights key "take-home" messages that readers can use to support their ongoing professional development as they become effective clinicians for people who stutter.

Of course, a single issue of a journal cannot hope to provide all of the information clinicians need to become superior clinicians for a given disorder. It can, however, provide a solid foundation about the disorder and point clinicians along the path they can follow to become more effective practitioners. It is hoped that readers of this issue will find an invitation to follow such a path and that, by studying the information presented herein, they will find themselves better equipped to help individuals who stutter.

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Guest Editor

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