

From 2 to 82:

Enjoyment and Easier Speech in Stuttering Therapy

Stephen Groner, MS, CCC-SLP



Disclosure

While I'll be sharing a broad range of evidence-based approaches with you today, I'll only be sharing materials from my "Fluency School Stuttering Toolbox," for which I receive compensation (discount code at the end).



SLP STEPHEN

I'm Stephen Groner, MS, CCC-SLP, aka "SLP Stephen"

I'm a speech-language pathologist and pretty easily-speaking person who stutters and I own a private practice in Lancaster, PA USA that specializes in helping people who stutter and clutter speak as easily and enjoyably as they can.



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Our Rip-Roarin' Roadmap

- 8:00 am: Introduction and Important Stuttering Specs
- 8:20 am: How to Assess Stuttering Easily and Awesomely
- 9:10 am: How to Choose Goals Your Clients Actually Like
- 9:30 am: 30-minute break ☺
- 10:00 am: How to Treat Preschool Stuttering
- 11:30 pm: 1.5 hour Lunch break
- 1:00 pm: How to Treat School-Age Stuttering and Up
- 2:45 pm: Q&A
- 3:00 pm: Fin

I'm Stephen Groner, MS, CCC-SLP, aka "SLP Stephen"

I also share my stuttering knowledge and tips online as "SLP Stephen" to try to make stuttering therapy simpler and less scary, so you can start treating stuttering with confidence and...dare I say it...like a BOSS.☺



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Are you READYYYYYY???

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An Introduction About Me



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An Introduction About Me

Somehow, I fell through the cracks of school speech therapy.



An Introduction About Me

I started stuttering when I was three.



An Introduction About Me

By 12 years old, in sixth grade, I was struggling to speak all day, every day.



An Introduction About Me

I first knew something was wrong when I was five...



An Introduction About Me

For the rest of middle school and almost all of high school, my life was filled with panic, running, fighting, humiliation, and shame when it came to speaking:

- Being mocked at the lunch table
- Being physically sick before class presentations
- Substituting every third word for one easier to say
- Not speaking up when I had something good to say
- Feeling afraid, uncertain about the future, and very, very alone

An Introduction About Me



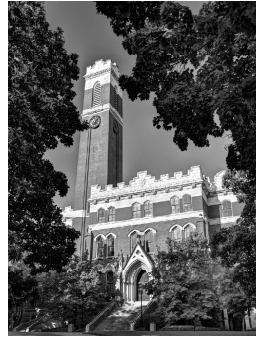
When I was 17 years old, I'd had enough and I went to our best friend, Google...



An Introduction About Me



I went off to college at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN.



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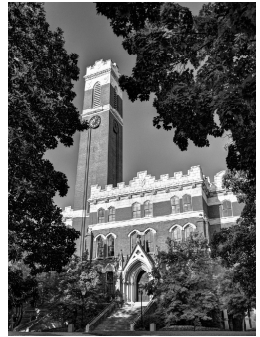
I found a 2-week-long, intensive fluency shaping stuttering therapy program in Norfolk, VA.



An Introduction About Me



And couldn't quite shake the feeling I wanted to become an SLP, to give back for the gift that I'd been given.



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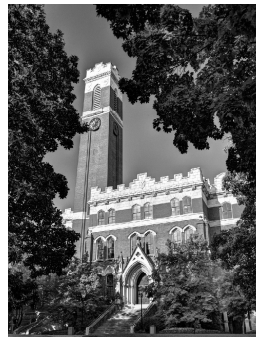
And it, was, life. changing.



An Introduction About Me



So, I got involved with the Conture, Walden, and Jones lab and stayed for graduate school, where I met an amazing stuttering professor and clinician, Dr. Ellen Kelly.



An Introduction About Me



Now, even though I'd been speaking a whole lot more easily for multiple years now, I still suffered a lot from my stuttering.



An Introduction About Me



When I graduated, I went to work in the SNFs for two years and, while I enjoyed the work, I didn't get to work with many patients who stuttered.



An Introduction About Me



Why? Because even though I could speak a whole lot more easily, I was still deathly afraid of letting anyone know I stuttered.



An Introduction About Me



Then I got a job in an outpatient clinic for a large hospital chain. Because of my love for stuttering, I grew their fluency caseload from 0 to many and started toying with the idea of starting my own private practice.



An Introduction About Me



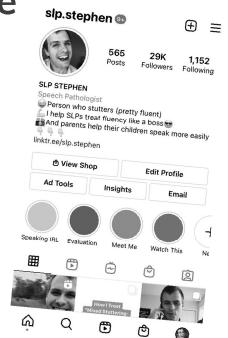
In therapy with Dr. Kelly and throughout my grad program, I became comfortable self-advertising or disclosing my stutter to other people.



An Introduction About Me



I started my Instagram® account, @slp.stephen, and began sharing my experiences and knowledge as a PWS and SLP. I remember one moment very clearly...



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A 15+ year SLP veteran was asking me about therapy for her 4th grader who stuttered. She said, "So far, I've told him to 'slow down' and 'think about what he wants to say.' What else should I be doing?"



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And a TON of people loved it. I wanted just **practical, applicable tips and techniques in easy-to-understand language** for the harried SLP.



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And I almost **JUMPED THROUGH** my phone, you guys. Those are two of the big things we tell parents **NOT** to tell their child who stutters! I wondered how many SLPs in the trenches had been failed when it came to stuttering know-how.



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I'd started seeing private clients on the side, got requests to make a Fluency School for cluttering too, and I realized I needed to make a change.



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So I put all my knowledge, from clinical and personal experience and from the literature into a stuttering digital materials bundle I called, **The Fluency School Stuttering Toolbox**.



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I'd gotten into speech pathology to help people who stutter, right? So I quit my safe, 9-5 job at the hospital and struck out on my own (that was four months before Covid hit).



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Now, I see solely clients who stutter and clutter, share my fluency knowledge in my own unique, fun way online, and help SLPs feel confident about treating fluency disorders.



An Introduction About Me



My oldest daughter is four and she started **stuttering at 16 months** (sound/syllable repetitions with tension).

I put into play all the preschool techniques we'll go through today and, while her stuttering has come and gone a few times, she speaks very easily now and loves to talk.



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Recently, I've been incorporating new attention techniques in my stuttering therapy and found that **defusing the "fight-or-flight"** response is key to reducing the suffering of stuttering.



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So, what lessons can we learn from my story?

An Introduction About Me



I love talking now more than I ever have and I've found the most important goal to me is simply that I would enjoy speaking.



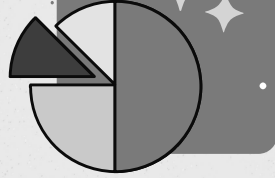
An Introduction About Me



So, what lessons can we learn from my story?

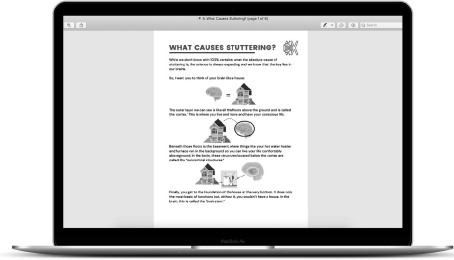
- Early intervention is key. The "wait and see" approach was no good for me.
- Physical speech fluency isn't the only worthwhile goal in speech therapy.
- Self-advertising can feel traumatic and terrifying, but it's ultimately freeing and fantastic.
- Genes matter 🤖

Some Updated Stuttering Stats

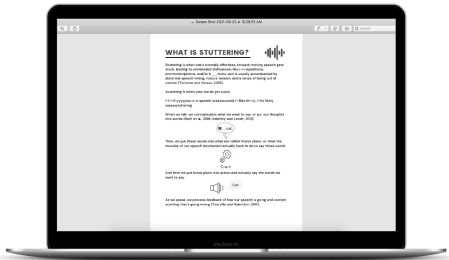


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Some Updated Stuttering Stats



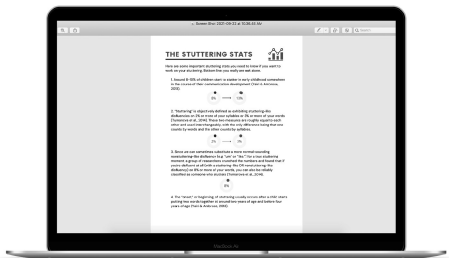
Some Updated Stuttering Stats



So, how can we help?

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Some Updated Stuttering Stats



Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering

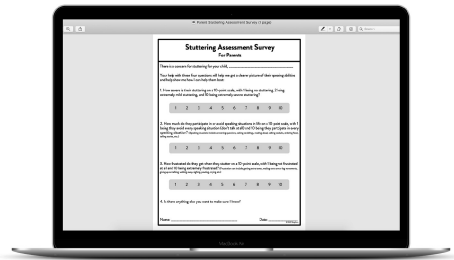


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Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



Now, how to we take all this and write great goals?

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Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering

It helps me to conceptualize goals along the "Four F's":

1. Fluency
2. Feelings
3. Familiar People Ratings
4. Functional Impact

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Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



For Preschool-Age Stuttering:

1. Review **evaluation results** with the client and stakeholders
2. Have the client/parent select their **preferred outcome measures**
3. Write **goals** to get them there

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"Micah's stutters get so long and drawn out...I don't want him to struggle for so long." = a Fluency goal and also possibly a Feelings goal

LTG: Micah will exhibit a **50% reduction in longest stuttering duration length** in multiple communication contexts across two progress reporting periods as compared to evaluation in order to improve communication ease and effectiveness at home, school, and in the community.

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"I just want Timmy to stutter less." = a Fluency goal

LTG: Timmy will exhibit a **reduced stuttering severity** as evidenced by a **reduction of his stuttering-like disfluency percentage and/or total disfluency percentage** in multiple communication contexts across two progress reporting periods as compared to evaluation in order to improve communication ease and effectiveness at home, school, and in the community.

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"Micah's stutters are so long and drawn out...I don't want him to struggle for so long."

STG: Caregivers will demonstrate accurate use of **reduced rate and reduced communication demand techniques** independently across three sessions.

STG: Caregivers will demonstrate accurate and **helpful ways of responding to and talking about stuttering** with Micah at least 3x independently.

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"I just want Timmy to stutter less." = a Fluency goal

STG: Timmy and caregivers will demonstrate accurate use of **syllable-timed speech in 80% of utterances independently** and implement a consistent daily Beat Speech practice regimen across one progress reporting period.

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"London gets so frustrated by her stuttering. I also want her frustration to come down from a 9/10 to a 4/10 at least." = a Feelings goal

LTG: London will reduce her parent-reported **communication frustration score from a 9/10 to at least a 4/10** in order to improve communication ease and effectiveness at home, school, and in the community.

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"London gets so frustrated by her stuttering. I also want her frustration to come down from a 9/10 to a 4/10 at least." = a Feelings goal

STG: Caregivers will help create a **personalized plan for building London's emotional self-regulation** from a menu of strategies and report 9/10 fidelity to the plan across one reporting period.

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"I want to 'stutter less often' and measure it with my SLD percentage." = a Fluency goal

LTG: Aaron will exhibit a reduced stuttering severity as evidenced by a **reduction of his stuttering-like disfluency percentage and/or total disfluency percentage** in multiple communication contexts across two progress reporting periods as compared to evaluation in order to improve communication ease and effectiveness at home, school, and in the community.

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



For School-Age Stuttering and up:

1. Review **evaluation results** with the client and stakeholders
2. "Bullseye the Goal Guy:" **Choose and rank goals**
3. Have the client select their **preferred outcome measures**
4. Write **goals** to get them there

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"I want to 'stutter less often' and measure it with my SLD percentage." = a Fluency goal

STG: Aaron will demonstrate accurate use of at least two **preferred fluency-enhancing techniques** with mild verbal clinician cues in 8/10 utterances across multiple communication contexts and one progress reporting period.

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"I want to 'stutter with less struggling' and measure it with how much I enjoy speaking on a 10-point scale." = a Fluency/Feelings goal

LTG: Nora will increase her **self-reported speech enjoyment score** from 2/10 to **at least a 6/10** on a 10-point scale in order to improve communication ease and effectiveness at home, school, and in the community.

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"I want to 'stutter with less struggling' and measure it with how much I enjoy speaking on a 10-point scale." = a Fluency/Feelings goal

STG: Nora will demonstrate accurate use of preferred attention-shifting techniques with mild verbal clinician cues in 4/5 communication contexts across one progress reporting period.

What questions do you have about stuttering stats, assessment, or goal-writing?

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Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"I want to speak up more at school and measure it with how often I say what I want to say on a 10-point scale." = A Functional Impact goal

LTG: Dylan will increase his self-reported rating of how often he "says what he wants to say" in class from 3/10 to at least a 7/10 on a 10-point scale in order to improve communication ease and effectiveness at school.

Easy Assessment: The "Four F's" of Stuttering



"I want to speak up more at school and measure it with how often I say what I want to say on a 10-point scale." = A Functional Impact goal

STG: Dylan will create a personalized stuttering self-advertising script and share it with members of his class 3x independently.