

MODIFICATION THROUGH PLAYING

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The classic stuttering modification (SM) therapy approach was developed by Charles Van Riper. In the beginning it was meant to be a treatment for stuttering adults. Later on the method has also been used in children's therapy, although often combined with the elements of the method of shaping fluent speech. C. Dell and P. Schneider have described putting the SM into practice with children.

The stages of Van Riper's therapy are motivation, identification, desensitization, variation, approximation and stabilization. We cannot go through these stages with children like we do it in adult's speech therapy, but we pursue the same goals and use methods suitable for children in order to reach them.

Identification (I) - in this stage children learn to know the core behaviors, secondary behaviors and attitudes that go along with their stuttering.

Desensitization (D) helps drain away the negative emotions, the fears, and the anxieties associated with the act of stuttering.

Modification of stuttering behavior (M) - changing hard stuttering to easier or fluent stuttering
The three most common strategies for altering the stuttering are:

Stabilization (S) - the child uses the new stuttering controls in more and more situations of daily life.

1. Children typically do not have an intrinsic motivation to change their speech, therefore it is important to make therapy enjoyable and rewarding. Using games in therapy helps to create and hold the motivation.
2. The presumption of conducting a successful therapy is to have a great contact with the child and the child's trust toward the speech therapist. With games fit for the certain age it is possible to hold a positive relationship in therapy and to grow trust.
3. While devising the plans for therapy, in addition to the child's age, also his/her cognitive level and the ability for work have to be taken into consideration. With games it is possible to achieve goals that would be inaccessible with regular practice, children focus better in a game. The aim of the action is always more understandable in the game. The practice is much more unapparent while playing and that is how it is possible to gain a sufficient capacity of practice.
4. It is beneficial for the child to develop a positive attitude toward himself/herself as a communicator. The child needs to approach communicating without fear and apprehension, and to experience successful speaking situations. Brutten and De Nil have found that 7-year-old children who stutter have more negative communicative attitudes, than non-stuttering children of the same age. In a game children open up easier, it is simpler to talk about and to understand their experiences and feelings about stuttering.
5. The method of modifying stuttering presumes a high awareness from the child and the ability to face and accept his/her stuttering. Often the stuttering has caused the child many negative experiences, which in turn is the base for avoiding uncomfortable subjects and exercises. A game is nice, it is exciting and while playing the feelings of discomfort and reluctance are easily forgot. That makes it easier to overcome more difficult challenges in therapy.

6. The games are usually based on changing turns, the players are acting and talking in the game in turns. That allows the speech therapist to frequently model the technique of speech that is being learnt.
7. With children, to transfer what has been learnt in therapy to everyday situations, is often a problem. A game is a natural activity for the child. It is fun to teach the games played in speech therapy to siblings and parents. The skills and knowledge that have been gained while playing fix better and allow a new sort of easier speech and easier stutter “to be brought out of the speech therapy cabinet”.
8. A game demands the child to obey a list of standards, demands and rules. The skill to coordinate the content of the game and predicting or resolving conflicts is necessary. A game can be considered to being an odd and strict school of shaping the skill of communication. A good skill of communication helps the stuttering child to manage easier in the society. Also, teasing is usually not an impossible problem to overcome for a child with good skills of communication.

Van Riper stresses the importance of making speech a pleasant experience. A game is the best opportunity for it.

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Bingo (rabbit- snake- lock)
I D M

Pseudostuttering is used in stuttering modification for identification, desensitization and acquiring speech techniques.

The dice game Bingo helps a child to discover different forms of stuttering, which are later a prerequisite for better speech motorics management also in the case of actual stuttering.

Pseudostuttering is similar to actual stuttering, but a person is usually able to control it. The feeling of control, hearing and observing one's and other's stuttering reduces the child's fear of stuttering.

There are children whose stuttering is linked to strong feelings and causes strong negative communicative attitudes. For these children, pseudostuttering can be vexing. The game of bingo creates excitement, the player who gets the chance to win is the one who gets to stutter the most or who rolls a rabbit (repetition), a snake (delay) or a lock (blocking).

If blocking hasn't occurred in a child's case and the speech therapist does not think it is necessary to introduce blocking to them, the lock sign may be replaced by a sign that lets the child choose which form of pseudostuttering to use.

Instructions

Game parts: playing fields, tokens, dice (sides: rabbit 2x, worm 2x, lock 1x, blank)

The players choose their playing fields. In turns, the dice is rolled. According to the image on the dice, a player must choose a word from their playing field using pseudostuttering (rabbit= repetition, snake =prolongation, lock=blocking). If a player rolls a blank, they skip their turn. A token is placed on the pronounced word. The first player to fill their playing field with tokens is the winner.

The game is suitable for most children 5 years old and up.



The slide

M

The game is intended for cancellation and pull-out speech techniques for children 4 years old and up. The game uses voluntary stuttering (pseudostuttering) to practice speech techniques

Instructions

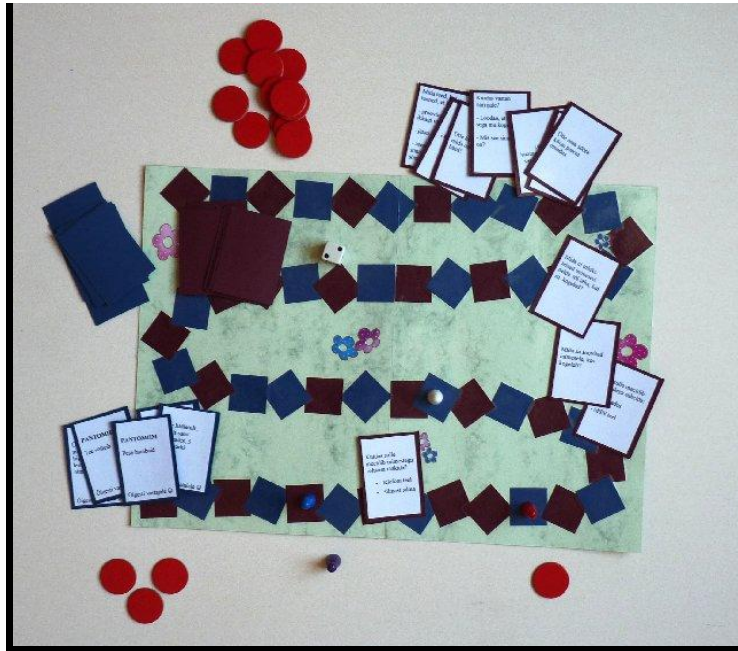
Game parts: a slide, game pieces (animals and people), playing fields, bag

In turns, the players take game pieces from the bag. If the game piece's color matches the player's color circle on their playing field, they can slide the living being (e.g. a bear) down the slide. If not, the piece is put back in the bag.

If the cancellation technique is being practiced, the beginning of the word must be repeated while climbing the slide's steps, the word is finished when the top is reached, a pause is made and the piece is moved slowly down the slide, while softly pronouncing the word.

If the pull-out technique is being practiced, a hard stuttering (a repetition, a prolongation or a block) must be made at the beginning of the word (while climbing the steps) and then the word is slowly pronounced while sliding down.

The player who fills their playing field first is the winner.



**Do or answer
D S**

This game can be used in the stabilization stage. If you remove the cards with questions that haven't been used in therapy so far, the game can be used throughout the therapy. Exercises meant to develop speech motorics have to be completed in the game and there are questions and answers that are meant to able previously acquired speech techniques, etc. The game helps to increase children's awareness and acceptance of stuttering, develop a positive self-image and practice problem solving skills. The game helps make speech therapy lessons more diverse and fun and increase children's motivation to participate in therapy.

Instructions

Game parts: game table, question and answer cards (60+60), token (30), dice (1-3 dots), game pieces

The dice is rolled in turns and according to the number indicated, the player moves on the game table. If a player lands on a purple square, the player will pick a question card, read it out loud and answer it. If the player cannot answer it, any of the other players can help him/her. If a player helps someone, they can move another step (this does not give the right to pick another card) and the player who was unable to answer can stay on the same round/square. If a player cannot or refuses to complete a task, they have to take a step back. When a task is completed, the player who offers the right answer, receives a token. One token gives a player the opportunity to buy their way out of a question or task they do not wish to answer or complete (after that, the token is removed from the game). Three tokens give a player the opportunity to buy an extra move.

Some examples of questions:

- It is easier to talk to: mother/principal
 - Who can you talk to about your stuttering?
 - What helps you speak more easily?
 - What do you answer a bully
- I hope my stuttering doesn't bother you.
That's none of your business.

Some examples of tasks:

- Name three zoo animals silently and only moving your lips.
- Name three car maker silently and only moving your lips.
- Imitate the sound of a vacuum cleaner so that the others would guess what it is.

The game is suitable for children 9 years old and up.



Soft and hard toys



I D M

The comparison between tense and easy stuttering/light pronunciation is used in the methodology of stuttering modification. This helps to learn to relax muscle tension and to pronounce words more softly.

The game „Soft and hard toys“ can be played as a lottery or a memory game. Words must be pronounced according to the „softness or hardness“ of the objects indicated in the pictures. The game can be used during the identification or modification stage of stuttering or for desensitization.

Instructions 1

The cards are placed on the table backwards. Players take two cards in turns and pronounce the names of the objects shown on the cards with either a strong, tense stutter or a light stutter (soft pronunciation) according to the material of the objects. The player who finds two of the same toy gets to keep the cards. If the cards are different, they have to be put back in their original place backwards. The player who collects the most pairs is the winner.

Instructions 2

The cards are placed on the table backwards. Players take cards in turns and pronounce the names of the objects shown on the cards with either a strong, tense stutter or a light stutter (soft pronunciation) according to the material of the objects. The cards remain on the table with the picture side up. If a player finds a matching toy for a card already turned the right side up, they can keep the cards, but not before pronouncing the two words accordingly. The player who collects the most pairs is the winner.

A lottery game based on the same principle is suitable for younger players.

A player must find matching toys to fit the chosen playing field and name the animal's name accordingly with a soft or hard stuttering.



Drag it M

The game is equally suitable for practicing fluency shaping and stuttering modification methods. Using the stuttering modification method, the game helps practice easier stuttering/easier pronunciation in the modification stage, which is a prerequisite for correct use of speech techniques.

The child must pronounce words smoothly until they reach the right spot while dragging their finger. The distances depend on the length of the words.

Instructions

Game parts: playing fields, picture cards, bag

Each player chooses their playing field. The picture cards are placed on the table face down. In turns, the players try to find pictures that fit their playing field by shape. If a picture fits, the player has to carefully drag it with their finger to its right spot, while pronouncing the word. The pronunciation must be smooth, not syllabified and no sounds may be stretched. The player who collects all the matching pictures on their playing field, is the winner.

To add excitement or to raise the level of difficulty, pictures may be chosen from the bag by feel.

Pictures: Couleurs/Djeco



The turtle race

M

The game can be used to practice soft pronunciation (light stuttering according to Ch. Van Riper) in the stage of modification, which is an important skill during subsequent speech techniques. The same game can be used in fluency- shaping methodology to practice decelerated pronunciation.

The game includes two card decks of easier words (shorter and containing less occlusives) and harder words (multisyllable and starting with occlusives), which the speech therapist can choose between according to the child's needs and skills.

If the child's eagerness to win results in difficulty to pronounce a word and moving the turtle forwards smoothly at the same time (e.g. the child moves the turtle too fast or pronounces the word by syllables), an agreement can be made that the turtle will be moved by another player while the first pronounces their word softly. The slower a player pronounces their word, the further the turtle moves during one move.

Hopefully, at least in the case of some children, this game can be used to increase proprioceptive awareness, which requires high awareness level and good concentration and is therefore somewhat difficult to apply in therapy with pre-school children.

Instructions

Game parts: turtles, running tracks, 2 sets of pictures

Players choose a turtle and a running track. Pictures are placed on the table face down.

In turns, players pick a picture and pronounce the word as slowly as possible while moving their turtle forwards until the word is over. The turn moves to the next player. The turtles „stay to rest“ where the word ended and continue moving with the next word. The turtle who reaches the finish first is the winner.

The game is more successful if the children are players and the speech therapist is the umpire, who keeps an eye on the turtle's natural moving speed and, if necessary, moves the turtle themselves.

The game is suitable for children 4 years old and up.



The house game

I D M

The game can be used during the modification stage for practicing soft, decelerated/ light stuttering. It can also be used for identification or desensitization if the rules are changed by finding a magic word that has to be said using different stuttering etc.

It can also be used for developing fluent speech to practice slow and soft pronunciation.

Instructions

Game parts: pictures, under which a small token can be hidden; tokens

In turns, the players start building their houses. First, they agree upon how many stories the houses have (e.g. 5) and how many windows each story has (e.g. 4).

The pictures are scattered across the table, picture side up. In turns, the players decide what or who is in their house. To do this, the players place their finger on the picture and slowly drag the picture to their house while slowly pronouncing the word in the picture. The pictures form the windows for the house. If the house is completed, they have to guess which is the magic window. One player closes their eyes and the other hides a token under picture on the ground floor. Then, the owner of the house says all the words on the „windows“ of the ground floor, while the word on the magic window is pronounced very slowly or using easy stuttering.

The other player must guess the magic window. If they succeed, they receive the token.

If a child's eagerness to win is so great that the game's goal is not reached (practicing slow pronunciation), the reverse can be applied for the child's house – if the child says the magic word well enough for the speech therapist to understand, the child receives the token.



Soft letters

M

The game is meant to practice pull-out technique using voluntary stuttering. Often, children are not able to use the pull-out technique straight away due to their actual stuttering. The reason for this might be the ability to confront their stuttering. This game helps to increase that ability and later the child will already be able to use the technique in case of their actual stuttering.

Instructions 1

Game parts: soft sponge letters, picture cards

A player takes a letter from the bag and clenches it in their fist. The player clenches their fist while repeating the sound or intentionally blocking it until they find a word in their pictures that begins with the same sound or one that contains it. Once the player has found a word, they slowly unclench their fist while fully pronouncing the word. Pictures that have been used are removed from the game. The first player to have the least or no cards is the winner.

Instructions 2

Game parts: see above

One player takes a letter from the bag and clenches it in their fist so that the other player does not see it. The other player picks a picture from the playing field. The player then begins to pronounce the word, but does not finish (through repetition, prolongation or blocking) until the first player clenches their fist. Slowly, the first player unclenches while the second finishes the word. Once the letter has been revealed, they see if the word in the picture contained that sound. If yes, the player who guessed correctly can cover the picture with the letter, if not, the letter is put back in the bag. The player whose pictures are covered with letter first is the winner.

Both options are suitable for children 6 years old and up.



Guess who's talking!

I D M

In the stage of identification, this game helps to notice stuttering (if needed, also the degree of stuttering e.g. „Was it a big rabbit and how many times did it jump?“)

In the modification stage, the game can also be used to practice easy stuttering.

It can also be used for desensitization. The child can hear a easy stutter/soft pronunciation and is therefore less sensitive about their own stuttering. There are children who are reluctant to use soft pronunciation or light stuttering, because it differs from „regular“ speech. While playing, the child will get used to light pronunciation/soft stuttering and using it will become less vexing.

Instructions 1

Game parts: cards with a picture of an object or an action on one side and a rabbit or a snail on the other side.

The speech therapist begins. She/he holds the card deck so that the child does not see what animal is pictured on the other side. The speech therapist says a word, forms a sentence or a short story using light stuttering (rabbit) or soft pronunciation (snail). During a sentence and a story light repetition or slow pronunciation is used only on a few words. The child must listen and then guess, who told the story. If the answer matches the animal on the card, the child receives the card, if not, the speech therapist gets it. The game can also be played in group therapy. In that case the children take guesses in turns.

Instructions 2

Kaardid on lapsel. The child holds the cards. Tegevus on sama, kuid pildi saab laps, kui logopeed või teine laps arvab vastuse õigesti. The game is played the same way as described above, but if the speech therapist or another child guesses correctly, the card holder gets the card.

The speech therapist gets the card only if the child forgets to use light stuttering or decelerated pronunciation.