



Re-imagining Stammering Therapy & Research

Metaphoric stammers & embodied
speakers: connecting clinical,
cultural & creative practice

Sam Simpson

Feb 2021

What does the social model & neurodiversity mean for stammering therapy and future research?



Implications of the Social Model & Neurodiversity

- Disability viewed as a human rights issue
- Direct challenge to the medical model & institutions within which most SLTs have been trained and work
- Calls into question:
 - Principles upon which therapy is based
 - Roles of therapist/client
 - Language
 - Range of therapies offered
 - Types, forms and aims of research into stammering



Richter
(2019,
p.73-74)

“If speech language pathology is the intervention that stuttering activists seek from the government, medicine and private sphere, **there is at least a conversation to be had about its medical necessity** [...] The stutter itself is only a negative bodily development if making people occasionally wait an extra two to ten minutes is a pathological emergency. This is all just to say, **the burden should be on speech pathologists to prove their legitimacy** on something more than merely auditory aesthetics.”

Call for action

- Ethical responsibility
- Locating therapy discourse within wider disability/neurodiversity discourse
- Call for broader focus of therapy to address roles that self-identity, society and social stigma play
- Drive to enrich and enhance professional accounts
- Co-authoring therapy knowledge


Therapy informed by the social model & neurodiversity



- Facilitating cultural competence
- Stigma/self-stigma; dynamics of avoidance
- Exploring feelings associated with stammering/discrimination/trauma
- New, 'thicker', affirming narratives around stammering
- Finding own unique stammering aesthetic
- Disclosure and self-advocacy
- Community

A large orange circle on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

Therapy informed by the social model & neurodiversity

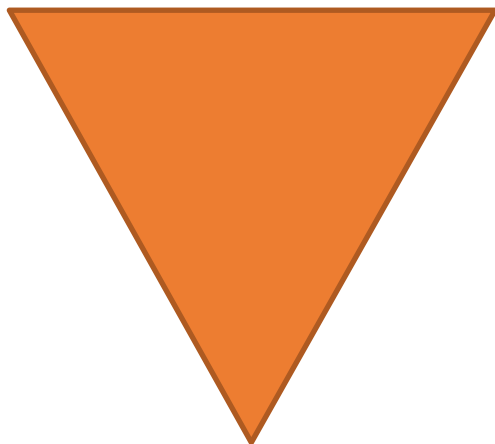
- Public information and education programmes
 - Reducing barriers – creating a stammer-friendly environment and culture
 - Campaigning
 - Lobbying
 - Representation
 - Cultural change
 - Celebration of stammering and difference
- 
- Three yellow curved lines of varying lengths and orientations in the bottom right corner.

Speak-more-fluently

- Fluency shaping
- Speech re-structuring

Stammer-more-fluently

- Reducing avoidance & negative attitudes
- Modifying stammering



Stammer-more-proudly

- Cultural competence
- Unique stammering aesthetic
- Stammering gain
- Creating stammer-friendly environments
- Legitimate & respected speech variation

Stuttering: How to 'overcome' the narrative NYC Stutters (2020)

“We want to affirm, especially for the young people out there, that it is okay to stutter. We believe that not only is it okay to stutter, but people who stutter should be empowered to speak however is most comfortable for them – even if that speaking style contains pauses, repetitions, and blocks.”




Future vision

- Educators to integrate the diversity agenda into speech and language therapy training to enable future therapists to consider the philosophical underpinnings of their role and approach
- Forums for therapists to examine their underlying values, role and scope of practice
- Meaningful collaboration to rethink the scope, focus and role of future stammering therapy for CYP & adults
- Open, public debate about social and ethical implications of research in the fields of neuroscience and genetics
- Research into what matters for people who stammer
- Balanced investment of funding
- Accessible research findings & conferences

A large orange circle is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

**Yaruss &
Quesal
(2004)**

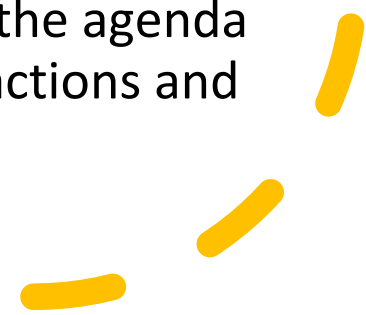
“Still it appears to us that the answer will be forthcoming if we as a field are serious about engaging in a partnership between researchers and the population of people who stutter, for people who stutter can provide the most meaningful metric for determining whether a treatment is viable.”

Three yellow curved lines are located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

A large orange circle is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

Boyle (2019)

“It is critical for professionals to realise that people with lived experience are best situated to drive the effort for changing how our society thinks about stuttering. Professionals bring resources and credibility to the table which can be very important for public attitude change, and they can play a supportive role to improve social conditions. However, people who stammer themselves are best positioned to promote the agenda of their community in terms of actions and policies that effect their lives.”

Three yellow brushstroke-like lines are located in the bottom right corner of the slide.



Sam Simpson

e: sam@redefiningstammering.co.uk

w: www.redefiningstammering.co.uk

twitter: @redefinestammer