



# STUTTERING: A STEP-BY-STEP VIDEO BASED APPROACH “STUTTER SQUAD”

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# ABOUT MYSELF...

Dear Oral Roberts

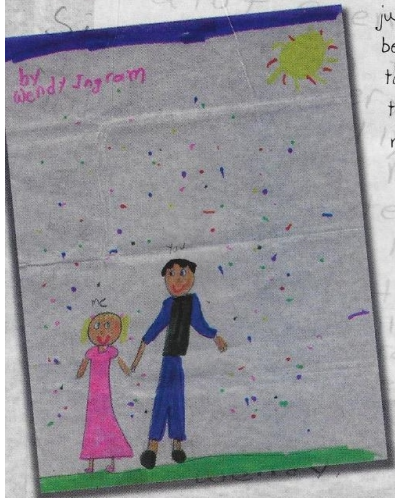

## A Testimony of Childlike Faith

Dear Oral Roberts,


Hi my name is Wendy. I'm 8 years old in the 3 grade. A few years ago I use to stutter SO BAD! Sometimes in the big places with a lot of people. I did not want to talk. I got really neavrous and I would not talk. But then I got tired of not talking so I just let it all out. But then when I talked a lot I had to go to speech class at school. But then Kids started to tease me alot even my two older sisters even teased me. But I prayed every night And guess what, I hardly even stutter. I guess God really helped me. I just wanted to let you know because my mom told me you used to stutter. Well I'm really happy that you can read my letter. It makes me happy.

Wendy Ingram

by Wendy Ingram



Our Friend,  
Wendy



# INTRODUCTION TO STUTTERING

- Between 75% and 80% of all children who begin stuttering will stop within 12 to 24 months without speech therapy (Stuttering Foundation, 2020).
- Approximately 95% of children who stutter do so before the age of 5 years (Yairi & Ambrose 2005, as cited by ASHA, 2020).
- It has been found that most school-based SLPs do not feel competent in treating stuttering (Tellis, Bressler, & Emerick, 2008)
- “Thus, a more comprehensive approach to treatment might address increased fluency as well as other goals. Examples of these other goals include increasing acceptance of stuttering and of being a person who stutters, reducing secondary behaviors, minimizing avoidance, improving communication skills, increasing self-confidence, managing bullying effectively, and, ultimately, minimizing the adverse impact of stuttering on the child’s life” (Yaruss, Coleman, & Quesal, 2012).



# COMPONENTS OF STUTTERING THERAPY

- Fluency Enhancing/Stuttering Modification
  - Easy Onset
  - Light Contact
  - Pull-Out
- Building Resilience
  - Objectively talking and learning about stuttering
  - Feelings and attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs
  - Approaching fears/minimize avoidance



# WHY RESILIENCE?

- “As children who stutter may be more vulnerable to adversity, some may benefit **from targeted support to build their resilience**, in order to enhance their ability to **overcome challenges and thrive**” (Caughter & Crofts, 2018).
- Overcoming the challenge does not necessarily equate to becoming fluent! Rather resilience is the ability to “bounce back” from adversity (Caughter & Crofts, 2018).



# THE GREAT NEWS!

- The skills involved in resilient thinking can be learned by anyone, which can be a powerful and positive message for speech and language therapists, children who stutter, and their parents (Caughter & Crofts, 2018).
- Rather than a set of traits or characteristics, resilience is a *dynamic process* (Craig, Blumgart, & Tran, 2011).
- The purpose of **Stutter Squad** was to create a program to aide that process of building resilience for a child who stutters.



# SCHOOL BASED RESILIENCE PROGRAMS AND TARGETS

- The Canadian school-based resilience program titled “RIRO” (Reaching In Reaching Out) is based upon extensive research indicating that from as young as 2 and 3 years old, children are already mimicking the thinking and coping styles around them. Thus, RIRO was designed to influence younger children’s evolving thinking styles during this important window of opportunity (Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1995, as cited in Caughter & Crofts, 2018).
- Included in RIRO’s resiliency skills are *Causal Analysis* and *Reaching Out*.



# SCHOOL BASED RESILIENCE PROGRAMS AND TARGETS

- Another school-based resilience program is “PRP” (Penn Resilience Program) in the United States. PRP is one of the most widely researched resilience programs aimed to improve psychological well-being and promote resilience in school-aged children. (Caughter & Crofts, 2018).
- Included in PRP’s resiliency skills are *Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Mental Agility, Optimism, and Strength of Character* (PRP; Positive Psychology Center, 2018).





Based on the indicated  
resiliency research,  
**Stutter Squad** was  
created to target the  
following categories....

# RESILIENCE COMPONENTS

- **Causal Analysis**: “The ability to analyze and and accurately decide what caused the problem we are facing” (RIRO; Pearson & Kordich Hall, 2006).
- **Self- awareness**: “The ability to pay attention to your thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and psychological reactions” (PRP; Positive Psychology Center, 2018).
- **Self-regulation**: “The ability to change one’s thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and physiology in the service of a desired outcome” (PRP; Positive Psychology Center, 2018).
- **Mental Agility**: “The ability to look at situations from multiple perspectives and to think creatively and flexibly” (PRP; Positive Psychology Center, 2018).
- **Optimism**: “The ability to notice and expect the positive, to focus on what you can control and take purposeful action” (PRP; Positive Psychology Center, 2018).
- **Reaching Out**: “The ability to take on new opportunities that life presents. To be able to take risks, try new activities and to realize that mistakes are part of the learning.” (RIRO; Pearson & Kordich Hall, 2006).
- **Strength of Character**: “The ability to use one’s strengths to engage authentically, overcome challenges , and create a life aligned with one’s values. (PRP; Positive Psychology Center, 2018).



# STUTTER SQUAD PROGRAM

## Causal Analysis:

- “Learning About Stuttering”: Part 2

## Self-awareness:

- “Feelings and Attitudes” : Part 3

## Self-Regulation:

- “Self-Talk, Cognitive Distortions, Affirmations”: Part 4

## Mental Agility

- “Becoming Friends with Your Stutter”: Part 5

## Optimism

- “Stages of Change”: Part 6

## Reaching Out

- “Approaching Our Fears”: Part 7

## Strength of Character

- “Core Beliefs about Stuttering”: Part 8



# STUTTER SQUAD PART 2 - “LEARNING ABOUT STUTTERING”

- **Causal Analysis**: “The ability to analyze and accurately decide what caused the problem we are facing” (RIRO; Pearson & Kordich Hall, 2006).
- Learning about and understanding stuttering allows the child to objectify what has been mysterious and scary; is the beginning of desensitization (Guitar, 2014).



# “LEARNING ABOUT STUTTERING” VIDEO LESSONS

- **Stuttering 101:** “Core Behaviors” (part-word repetition, prolongation, block) and “Secondary Behaviors” (escape and avoidance).
- **Stuttering Facts:** General facts about stuttering (example: people all over the world stutter) and stuttering statistics (example: more boys than girls stutter in a ratio of about 4:1).
- **Brain Differences:** Scientific findings on the anatomical brain differences of PWS compared to non-stutterers (example: PWS are shown to have more activity on the right side of their brain when speaking as opposed to the left side).
- **Stuttering and Temperament:** Explain to the child what temperament is and provide a review of evidence on temperament (PWS tend to have a more sensitive temperament than those who do not stutter).
- **Stuttering and Classical Conditioning:** Explain to the child the learning process of classical conditioning and how it manifests in stuttering.



Classical conditioning is a learning process that occurs when 2 different/unrelated items are repeatedly paired together.

What does it look like in stuttering

## Classical Conditioning



Having a sensitive temperament can contribute to the onset of stuttering and can also contribute to why someone continues to stutter.

## Temperament



# STUTTER SQUAD PART 3 - “FEELINGS AND ATTITUDES”

- **Self- awareness:** “The ability to pay attention to your thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and psychological reactions” (PRP; Positive Psychology Center, 2018).
- Children who stutter can learn to develop and increase their emotional literacy by being supported to identify their thoughts and feelings around stuttering and develop the vocabulary to express these emotions. (Caughter & Crofts, 2018).
- In his sample handout “Understanding Stuttering”, Barry Guitar states to the client who stutters “You may not really know what you do or how you feel when you stutter. Because it’s unpleasant, you have probably attempted to hide it from yourself as well as from others” (2014).
- A simple and doable goal for the SLP would be to help the child identify how he is feeling rather than trying to *fix* his feelings.



# “FEELINGS AND ATTITUDES” VIDEO LESSONS

- Feelings BEFORE stuttering: Examples include “*fear*”, “*dread*”, and “*secretive*.”
- Feelings DURING stuttering: Examples include “*panic*”, “*shame*”, and “*trapped*.”
- Feelings AFTER stuttering: Examples include “*guilt*”, “*embarrassment*”, and “*misunderstood/lonely*.”





# STUTTER SQUAD PART 4 - “NEGATIVE SELF TALK”

- **Self-regulation:** “The ability to change one’s thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and physiology in the service of a desired outcome” (PRP; Positive Psychology Center, 2018).
- “Helping children to identify common thinking traps that they typically fall into can help to increase their awareness of thinking processes, such as all or nothing thinking (e.g., “I always stutter when I read out loud” or “I never do well”) or mental filters, where the negative details of a situation are magnified while the positive aspects are filtered out or discounted. As children become more adept at identifying their automatic thoughts and common thinking patterns, they can begin to challenge their thinking, for example, through questioning how helpful, realistic, accurate, or kind a thought is and starting to generate alternative explanations and shifting perspectives (known as cognitive reframing)” (Caughter & Crofts, 2018).



# “SELF TALK, COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS, AND AFFIRMATIONS” VIDEO LESSONS

## **A. Subtypes of Negative Self Talk (Bourne, 1990)**

1. The Worrier
2. The Critic
3. The Victim
4. The Perfectionist

## **B. Cognitive Distortions**

1. All or Nothing
2. Mental Filter
3. Jumping to Conclusions
4. Emotional Reasoning
5. Labeling:
6. Overgeneralizing
7. Catastrophizing
8. Shoulds/Shouldn'ts
9. Personalization
10. Compare/Despair
11. Critical Self

## **C. Affirmations**



# “SELF TALK, COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS, AND AFFIRMATIONS” VIDEO LESSONS

## **Subtypes of Negative Self Talk (Bourne, 1990)**

1. **The Worrier:** Typically anxious. Engages in “What if” thinking: “What if I stutter when I say my name?”
2. **The Critic:** Low self-esteem. Condemns and compares self to others. “I can’t believe I just stuttered again; I’m so pathetic.”
3. **The Victim:** Sad and hopeless. “It’s just too hard to change.”
4. **The Perfectionist:** Stressed. Puts pressure on self: “I should be fluent.”



# COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

1. **All or Nothing**: thinking in extremes such as only "good" or only "bad". Example: "My speech is only good if I am 100% fluent."
2. **Mental Filter**: focusing only on negatives while ignoring positives. Example: Focusing only on when you stutter while ignoring when you are fluent or when you are brave.
3. **Jumping to Conclusions**: expecting bad things to happen without much real evidence. (Divided into 2 categories: Mind Reading and Fortune Telling).
  - A. **Mind Reading**: assuming you know what someone else is thinking. Example: "I bet he is thinking that I'm weird".
  - B. **Fortune Telling**: assuming you know exactly what will happen in the future; typically negative. Example: "I bet I will stutter when the teacher calls on me".
4. **Emotional Reasoning**: Interpreting a situation based only on our feelings not on facts. Example: "I feel embarrassed so people must be thinking I'm weird".



# COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS CONT'D

5. **Labeling**: attaching labels to ourselves or our speech. Example: "I am my stutter" and "My speech is bad."
6. **Overgeneralizing**: taking one example and generalizing it to an overall pattern. Example: "I stuttered on an "a" sound now I will probably stutter on all words that begin with "a."
7. **Catastrophizing**: predicting something to be a disaster or catastrophe, when in reality, it may just be somewhat unpleasant. Example: "If I stutter in front of my friend she wont want to be my friend anymore and she will tell everyone at school that I stutter."
8. **Shoulds/Shouldn'ts**: Telling ourselves we "should" or "shouldn't" do or be a certain way. Example: "I should speak fluently."



# COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS CONT'D

## 9. Personalization:

- A. Giving yourself blame or credit over events you had little to no control over. Example: "I'm proud of myself when I am fluent" and "I'm mad at myself when I stutter."
- B. Believing everything other people say/do is about you (or about your stuttering). Example: "She hung up on me because I stuttered"(When in reality she couldn't hear you or thought you had hung up).

## 10. Compare/Despair: Comparing how you feel on the inside with how another person appears on the outside. Example: "I'm so embarrassed of my stuttering... Susie is so lucky that she doesn't stutter; she seems happy all the time. It must be nice to have nothing to be embarrassed about..."

## 11. Critical Self: thinking mean/critical thoughts towards yourself especially when you stutter. Example: After you stutter telling yourself "I can't believe you just stuttered again! What's wrong with you?!"



# AFFIRMATIONS

- Short term pain for long term gain
- I am stronger than I think
- I will learn from this experience
- I accept myself as I am
- I am good enough
- People are not against me, they're for themselves
- Step by step
- One minute at a time
- One breath at a time
- Smile
- It's not their job to like me... its mine
- My strength is stronger than my fear
- I'm different but not less than
- This is uncomfortable, but I can handle it
- I am safe and this will pass
- I am loved
- I survived this before, I can do it again
- I will just let the tension pass through my body
- By relaxing through these feelings, I learn to face my fears
- I can feel nervous and still get through this
- Feeling nervous is OK: it tells me to use a coping strategy
- I will be glad/proud that I did it
- By facing my fears, I can overcome them
- I will just do the best I can



# STUTTER SQUAD PART 5 - “BECOMING FRIENDS WITH YOUR STUTTER”

- **Mental Agility:** “The ability to look at situations from multiple perspectives and to think creatively and flexibly” (PRP; Positive Psychology Center, 2018).
- (Acceptance) “It also does not mean that one approves of or is happy with one ’s difficulties. Instead, acceptance involves recognizing a problem for what it is, being willing to experience it, and finding newer or more adaptive ways of addressing it. Thus, acceptance should not be viewed as an alternative to change; it is a critical part of the process of change.” (Yaruss, Coleman, & Quesal, 2012).





# STUTTER SQUAD PART 5 - “BECOMING FRIENDS WITH YOUR STUTTER”

## 1. **Speech Tools/Desensitization Activities**

- A. Easy Onset
- B. Light Contact
- C. Pull-out
- D. Cancellation
- E. Pseudo Stuttering

## 2. **Benefits of Tolerating/ Accepting:**

- Less stuttering
- Less tension
- Saying what you want to say
- Less dread



# STUTTER SQUAD PART 6 - “STAGES OF CHANGE”

- **Optimism:** “The ability to notice and expect the positive, to focus on what you can control and take purposeful action” (PRP; Positive Psychology Center, 2018).
- An environment of positivity can nurture the growth of realistic optimism by helping children to understand that there are no magic solutions but that they can change and control their behavior and, subsequently, the outcome of events. (Caughter & Crofts, 2018).
- In this section of the program, we review the Stages of Change and the child determines what stage they are currently in and where they want to be to achieve their goals.



# JAMES O PROCHASKA: TRANSTHEORETICAL MODEL OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE (TTM)

## Stages of Change

1. **Pre-Contemplation**: Doesn't want to change.
  - Stuttering example: “I don't want to change my stuttering or how I feel about it” or “I could never change”
  - In order for someone to move out of this stage there is typically a breaking point.
  - Activities include: Listing why the child doesn't want to address stuttering.



# JAMES O PROCHASKA: TRANSTHEORETICAL MODEL OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE (TTM)

## 2. **Contemplation**: Considering changing.

- Stuttering example: “Maybe I could change my stuttering or how I feel about it” and “It would be nice to not avoid saying my name”
- In order to move out of this stage the person needs to focus on how changing could benefit their life and what they want out of life.
- Activities include: Listing why child wants to address stuttering, what would he do if he wasn't afraid of stuttering, make a vision board, etc.



# JAMES O PROCHASKA: TRANSTHEORETICAL MODEL OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE (TTM)

## 3. **Preparation**: Making a plan to change

- Stuttering example: “I’m ready to start making changes to my stuttering and how I think and feel about it”
- In this stage the person creates goals and a plan on how to achieve them.
- A key here is to make small achievable steps towards the goal.



# JAMES O PROCHASKA: TRANSTHEORETICAL MODEL OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE (TTM)

## 4. **Action**: Changing (doing the plan)

- Stuttering example: “I’m making small steps every day regarding my stuttering and how I think and feel about it”.
- In this stage the person is required to take risks even if it’s uncomfortable knowing that the only way to achieve their goal is through this process.
- Very beneficial to have support groups or other children who stutter to encourage one another.



# JAMES O PROCHASKA: TRANSTHEORETICAL MODEL OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE (TTM)

5. **Maintenance**: Keep practicing change
- Stuttering example: “I’m not giving up in changing; I’m keeping at it consistently”
  - Habits that are changed are becoming more routine.
  - Stay motivated by seeking out more opportunities to practice change etc.



# JAMES O PROCHASKA: TRANSTHEORETICAL MODEL OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE (TTM)

6. **Termination**: I can't imagine being how I used to be.
- Stuttering example: "I can't imagine feeling or thinking how I used to about my stuttering" or "I am proud to be a PWS"
  - Person has experienced benefits of change and does not want to go back to how they were at the beginning of the process.





# STUTTER SQUAD PART 7: APPROACHING OUR FEARS

- **Reaching Out:** “The ability to take on new opportunities that life presents. To be able to take risks, try new activities and to realize that mistakes are part of the learning.” (RIRO; Pearson & Kordich Hall, 2006).
- Children who stutter can work through hierarchies and build up to more challenging activities, for example, making telephone calls, speaking to strangers, experimenting with using a fluency strategy in public, or delivering a presentation (Kelman & Wheeler, 2015).

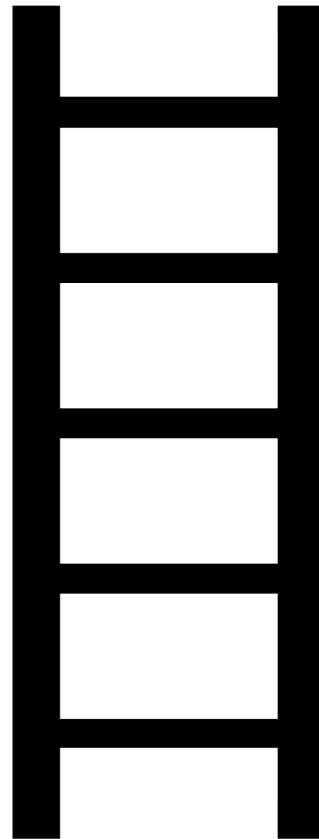


# STUTTER SQUAD PART 7: APPROACHING OUR FEARS

1. **Brave Ladder and Goals:** What would the child do if they did not stutter or if stuttering did not bother them?
2. **Scaling:** How close is the child to achieving his goal NOW? On a scale of 0-10, where do they fall right now?
3. **Small steps:** Examples include practicing speech tools, pseudo stuttering, role-play with SLP, pick affirmations, plan for different outcomes, etc.
4. **Visualization/abdominal breathing:** Visualize being successful and incorporate abdominal breathing to help relax.
5. **Retreat:** Be willing to retreat if a situation is too overwhelming. Retreating does not mean giving up, because retreating has the intent of returning once you feel more ready.



## Brave Ladder



Goal

"I want to raise my hand in class."

Step #4

"Raising my hand in a small group"

Step #3

"Initiating conversation with a side partner."

Step #2

"Ask if I can sit in the front of the class."

Step #1

"Privately informing my teacher of my goal."

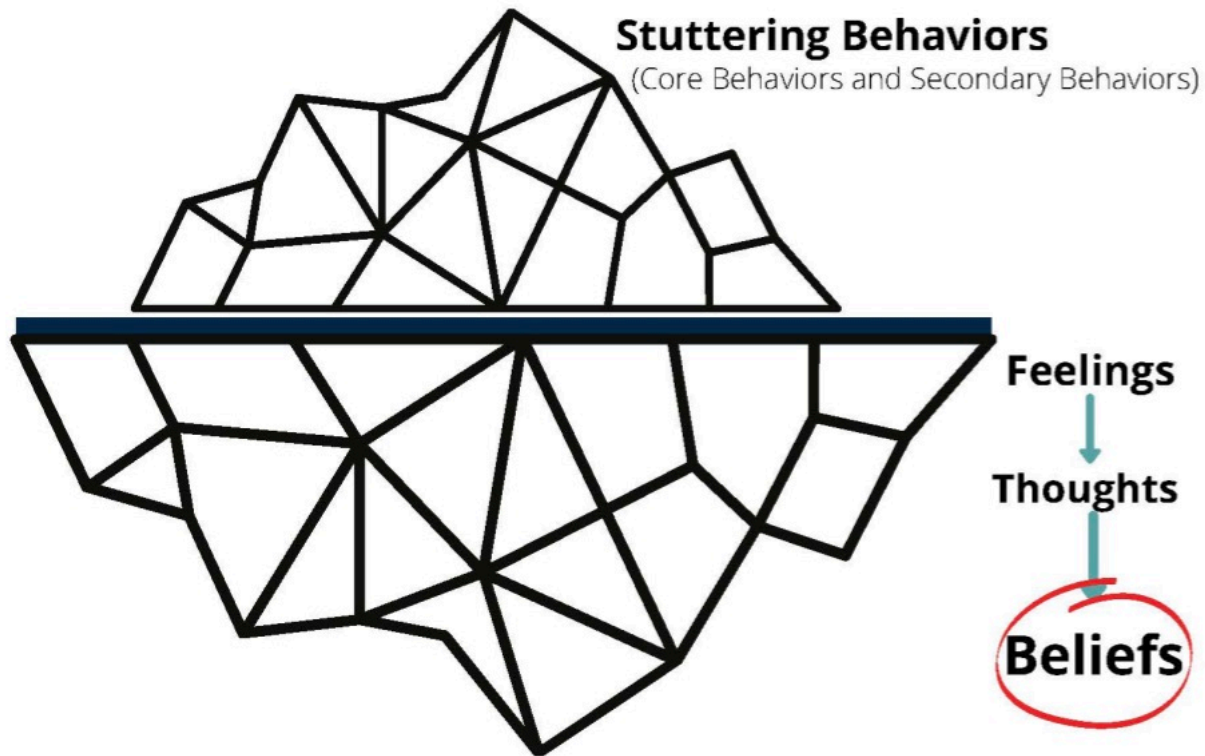


# STUTTER SQUAD PART 8: CORE BELIEFS

- **Strength of Character:** “The ability to use one’s strengths to engage authentically, overcome challenges , and create a life aligned with one’s values. (PRP; Positive Psychology Center, 2018).
- In most cases it’s possible to trace negative thinking back to deeper-lying beliefs or assumptions about ourselves, others, and life in general. While growing up we learned them from our parents, teachers, and peers as well as from the larger society around us. These beliefs are so basic to our thinking that we do not recognize them as beliefs at all- we just take them for granted and assume them to reflect reality. (Bourne 1990).
- An important step in stuttering therapy is to uncover these “core beliefs” and to question their validity.



# STUTTERING AND CORE BELIEFS



# STUTTER SQUAD PART 8: CORE BELIEFS

- A. 15 Negative Core Beliefs
- B. Questioning Core Beliefs
- C. Replacing Core Beliefs with Positive Beliefs
- D. Acknowledging and Challenging Doubt
- E. Affirming the Inherent Value of the Child



# STUTTER SQUAD PART 8: CORE BELIEFS

## NEGATIVE CORE BELIEFS

- I am powerless over my stuttering
- My stutter is wrong
- The most important thing is fluency
- I am the only person who stutters
- People shouldn't have to wait for me to get my words out
- My stutter inconveniences people
- If I stutter, people will think I am not smart
- If people knew I stuttered, they wouldn't like me
- If I can hide my stutter, I should
- It is better to not talk than to stutter
- My stuttering will never change
- Stuttering is failing
- Talking is really difficult
- I cannot cope with moments of stuttering
- I am ashamed of my stutter



# STUTTER SQUAD PART 8: CORE BELIEFS

## QUESTIONING CORE BELIEFS

(AS OUTLINED IN THE ANXIETY AND PHOBIA WORKBOOK, BOURNE, 1990)

1. What is the evidence for this belief?
2. Is this belief ALWAYS true?
3. Does this belief look at the whole picture?
4. Does this belief help me feel good about myself and peaceful?





# STUTTER SQUAD PART 8: CORE BELIEFS

## REPLACING NEGATIVE CORE BELIEFS WITH POSITIVE BELIEFS

Negative Core Beliefs	Positive Core Beliefs
I'm powerless over my stuttering.	I'm in control of HOW I stutter.
	Being open about my stutter gives me power.
My stuttering is wrong.	Stuttering is just stuttering.
	Stuttering is something I can learn to accept.
The most important thing is being fluent.	The most important thing is being myself.
	I have inherent value apart from being fluent.
I'm the only one who stutters.	Many people all over the world stutter.
People shouldn't have to wait for me to get my words out.	I will allow myself to take my time.
	I'm free from impatient expectations.
	I deserve the respect of others.
My stutter inconveniences people.	Patient people will be patient, impatient people will be impatient.
If I stutter, people will think I'm not smart.	I'm free of people's shallow judgements.
	I respect and believe in myself apart from others opinions.



# STUTTER SQUAD PART 8: CORE BELIEFS

## REPLACING NEGATIVE CORE BELIEFS WITH POSITIVE BELIEFS

Negative Core Beliefs	Positive Core Beliefs
If people knew I stuttered, they wouldn't like me.	I'm learning to love myself.
	I'm learning to be myself around others.
If I can hide my stutter, I should.	If I can face my fears, I should.
	I'm learning to stutter a little more openly.
I'm better off not talking.	I have very important things to say.
My stuttering will never change.	I can improve by taking small steps at my own pace.
	The only thing that will never change is my belief in myself!
Stuttering is failing.	Trying to be someone I'm not, is failing.
Talking is really difficult.	Stuttering is challenging but I'm not backing down.
I can't cope with moments of stuttering.	The more I face stuttering, the freer I am from fear.
	I can cope: one moment at a time.
I am ashamed of my stutter.	I can tolerate some shame.



# ACKNOWLEDGING AND CHALLENGING DOUBT

<b>I'm in control of how I stutter...</b>	But what if I get into a really tense block?
<b>I'm in control of how I stutter...</b>	Then I will stop and feel where my tension is and release it.
<b>I'm in control of how I stutter...</b>	But what if I forget to stop and feel where the tension is?
<b>I'm in control of how I stutter...</b>	Then I will just block and determine if I want to use the opportunity to tell someone that I am a PWS.
<b>I'm in control of how I stutter...</b>	But what if I don't want to tell someone that I am a PWS?
<b>I'm in control of how I stutter...</b>	Then I can use that opportunity to practice a cancellation and say the word calmly and with less tension if I choose to do so.
<b>I'm in control of how I stutter...</b>	But what if I don't want to do a cancellation and say it again?
<b>I'm in control of how I stutter...</b>	Then I will use it as an opportunity to stutter and prove to myself that I can successfully encounter a moment of stuttering and face my fears.



# AFFIRMING INHERENT VALUE IN THE CHILD

- Inherent Value: The child's value as a person is inherent: stuttering does not take away the child's value nor can fluency give them value.
- As a PWS, even when I'm fluent, stuttering is inevitable! Because I am a PWS!
- Fluency is not my full-time friend nor is stuttering any longer my full-time enemy.
- The child can learn to be their own hero; to be brave in the face of difficulty and to live authentically.



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