

How the “Stages of Change” Can Help Us Understand and Support Adolescents’ Readiness to Manage Stuttering

Naomi H. Rodgers, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
Dept. of Special Education & Communication Disorders
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Collaboration

University of Iowa
Stuttering Research Lab

University of Rhode Island
Cancer Prevention Research Center



Therapy with Adolescents and Young Adults Who Stutter
Reframing “motivation” as “readiness to change”

Stuttering Therapy with Adolescents: A Clinical Challenge

- ▶ Period of immense social development (e.g., Haller et al., 2014; Galván, 2017; Steinberg, 2014)
- ▶ Noncompliance and relapse (Craig & Hancock, 1995)
- ▶ Making long-term change is HARD
- ▶ What needs to change, and who gets to decide?

What’s “Motivation” Got to Do With it?

- ▶ Lack of engagement in goal setting and therapeutic activities
- ▶ Stuttering therapy is action-oriented (e.g., Baxter et al., 2015; Van Riper, 1972; Williams, 1961)
- ▶ We often assume clients are ready to do the work when they show up...but what if they’re not?
- ▶ Reframing “motivation” as “readiness to change”
- ▶ EVERYONE has the potential to change

Understanding How We Change: The “Stages of Change” Model

► Change readiness is viewed as a temporal progression through a series of stages that is predicted by shifts in cognition

Prochaska & DiClemente (1992)

Cognition Predicts Change Readiness

Decisional Balance	Conflict resolution that results from considering the pros + cons of making a change and its consequences
Situational Self-Efficacy	Confidence in one's ability to sustain a behavior change in difficult situations or following failure

Redding et al. (2006)
Lipschitz et al. (2018)
Nofcross et al. (2011)
Gentzel et al. (2006)

Applying the “Stages of Change” Stuttering Management Among Adolescents Who Stutter

Does the model fit this new population?

Purpose

- ▶ We propose that a key factor in increasing “motivation” and the likelihood of long-lasting communication change is matching therapy tools and a client’s readiness to use them
- ▶ The first step in testing this hypothesis was to develop and test the validity of new measures to assess the core constructs of teens’ readiness to manage stuttering
 - ▶ Stage of change
 - ▶ Decisional balance
 - ▶ Situational self-efficacy
- ▶ Next steps: create computerized tailored interventions (CTI) that match therapy techniques to a client’s current stage (Levesque et al., 2012)

Methods

1. Interviewed adolescents who stutter and stuttering specialists

Stage of Change	“What would a teen be doing if they were managing stuttering?”
Decisional Balance	“What are the pros and cons of managing stuttering?”
Situational Self-Efficacy	“What are speaking situations in which stuttering is difficult to manage?”
2. Qualitatively analyzed the interviews to develop scale items
3. Administered the scales to 286 13-21 year-olds who stutter
4. Assessed model fit

Stages of Change Scale

“The best way to help with stuttering is to:

1. Learn and use speech strategies or techniques for speaking more fluently and/or stuttering with less tension and struggle.
2. Change negative thoughts and feelings about stuttering; and
3. Say what you want to say without avoiding sounds, words, or situations.

“It’s important to pay attention to all three of these things because just focusing on one may not be enough to make long-lasting changes in the way you talk. For any of these things to become automatic, you will need help and regular practice for up to one year or more.

“Thinking about the three things above, how ready are you right now to do something about your stuttering?”

PreCont.	I am not thinking about doing any of these things in the next 6 months.	5.6%
Cont.	I am thinking about doing one or more of these things in the next 6 months.	11.2%
Prep.	I am planning to do one or more of these things in the next month.	11.2%
Action	I have been doing one or more of these things for LESS than 6 months.	14.3%
Maint.	I have been doing one or more of these things for MORE than 6 months.	57.8%

"Thinking of these three ways to manage your stuttering one by one..."

1. How ready are you right now to get help to **learn and use speech techniques for speaking more fluently or stuttering with less tension and struggle?**

PreCont.	I am not thinking about doing this in the next 6 months.	13.0%
Cont.	I am thinking about doing this in the next 6 months.	13.0%
Prep.	I am planning to do this in the next month.	15.4%
Action	I have been doing this for LESS than 6 months.	11.1%
Maint.	I have been doing this for MORE than 6 months.	47.5%

2. How ready are you right now to **change your negative thoughts and feelings about stuttering?**

PreCont.	I am not thinking about doing this in the next 6 months.	8.0%
Cont.	I am thinking about doing this in the next 6 months.	13.0%
Prep.	I am planning to do this in the next month.	15.4%
Action	I have been doing this for LESS than 6 months.	16.1%
Maint.	I have been doing this for MORE than 6 months.	47.5%

3. How ready are you right now to **say what you want to say without avoiding sounds, words, or situations?**

PreCont.	I am not thinking about doing this in the next 6 months.	9.9%
Cont.	I am thinking about doing this in the next 6 months.	13.6%
Prep.	I am planning to do this in the next month.	19.1%
Action	I have been doing this for LESS than 6 months.	16.7%
Maint.	I have been doing this for MORE than 6 months.	46.7%

Decisional Balance Scale

"When thinking about making a change to your stuttering, how important is it to you if...?"

PROS	Factor loading	CONS	Factor loading
you would feel better about yourself	.85	your speech would sound and feel weird and unnatural to you	.76
you would talk more	.81	you would lose part of who you are if you stuttered differently	.76
you would feel calmer	.77	other people would disapprove of you trying to change the way you speak	.75
you could just be yourself	.76	you wouldn't feel like yourself if you stuttered differently	.72
you would feel a sense of accomplishment	.74	your speech would sound weird and unnatural to other people	.72
you would worry less about talking	.72	you would be disappointed in yourself if you change the way you speak just to make other people happy	.64
you wouldn't feel like stuttering runs your life	.71	you may miss out on other activities to spend time working on your stuttering	.52
people would treat you just like any other person	.69	you might not be able to change the way you speak	.45

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all important Extremely important

Situational Self-Efficacy Scale

"How sure are you that you can do something about stuttering when...?"

CHALLENGING SITUATIONS	Factor loading
you are talking in front of a group of people	.86
you are talking to a teacher	.78
you are ordering in a restaurant	.77
you are being interviewed for a job	.76
you are telling a story	.74
you are meeting new people	.74
you are introducing yourself	.74
it is a hard talking day	.71
you are feeling stressed out	.70
you are calling someone on the phone	.70
you are afraid you are going to stutter	.69

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all sure Extremely sure

Summary of Main Findings

▶ The 5-factor model fit our data; first empirical evidence that the Stages of Change is a valid framework for characterizing behavior change progress in stuttering management among adolescents



▶ “Stuttering management” is comprised of:

1. Strategies for speaking more fluently/stuttering with less tension
2. Changing negative thoughts/feelings about stuttering
3. Speaking without avoidance

▶ In our sample, stage placement for overall stuttering management was best predicted by decisional balance (specifically, the weight of the **pros**)

Clinical Application

How can we help adolescents get ready to make a change to stuttering?

Using Motivational Interviewing to Facilitate Change Talk

▶ A style of interpersonal interaction that facilitates the client’s readiness to change and compliance with therapy participation

▶ Rooted in the clinician’s ability to **listen** and skill in initiating and maintaining a direct, constructive, and neutral discussion about behavior change and how it can be achieved

Behrman (2006)
Pollock & Miller (1995)

Using Motivational Interviewing to Facilitate Change Talk

- ▶ **COLLABORATIVE**
 - ▶ Not the same as "patient centered" approach, but instead focusing on specific behavior change that is needed
- ▶ **EVOCATIVE**
 - ▶ Focusing on "what's right with you" to activate resources for achieving personal goals
- ▶ **HONORS CLIENT AUTONOMY**
 - ▶ Requires detachment and recognition that people make choices about their own lives

Rohitnick et al. (2008)

Eliciting a Plan for Change

- ▶ The changes I want to make are...
- ▶ The most important reasons why I want to make these are...
- ▶ The steps I plan to take in changing are...
- ▶ The ways other people can help me are...
- ▶ I will know that my plan is working if...
- ▶ Some things that could interfere with my plan are...
- ▶ What I will do if my plan isn't working...

Behrman (2006)




