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Perspectives on therapeutic progress: 11-14 year-olds' reflections

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Abstract

Purpose: This qualitative analysis aimed to understand therapy outcomes from the viewpoint of children who have completed an intensive ten-day stuttering therapy program. There have been reports of quantitative outcomes of stuttering therapy (e.g., changes in stuttering frequency, changes in OASES scores), but there is a gap in the literature regarding children's views on therapeutic progress when provided with open-ended prompts.

Methods: Seven children who stutter (mean age = 12;1, range 11;10-14;3), 6 males and 1 female, were prompted to answer the questions "what is going well?" and "what are small signs of progress?". These questions were answered on the first day of therapy and the last day of therapy (day 10) during individual face-to-face Solution Focused Brief Therapy (de Shazer, 1985) interviews with a skilled clinician. The responses were then phenomenologically analysed to uncover primary categories and subcategories.

Results: Phenomenological analysis revealed that communication abilities, adaptive affective/cognitive status, and adequate social support were the three primary categories that children attributed to "what is going well" at both day 1 and day 10. Changes in communication, adaptive affective/cognitive status, and relaxed bodily state were the three primary categories related to "what are small signs of progress" at both day 1 and day 10.

Conclusions: This insight into how children view their own competency and understand the steps needed to make positive changes is meaningful for clinicians working with children in this age group who stutter in order to inform clinical decision making and guide therapeutic activities. The results implicate the importance of helping children 1) realize positive aspects of the situation and 2) provide specific, detailed accounts of their goals so that goal-directed therapeutic progress can take place.

Keywords: Intensive therapy outcomes; Children who stutter; Qualitative analysis; Self-report

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