Band Three Group Programme of Therapy

**Intensive integrated group therapy, follow up and individual therapy as required for one year for 15 to 19 year olds who stammer**

This banding provides a one-year programme of therapy for young people aged 15 to 19 years who stammer. The programme starts with a two-week intensive course, when the young people attend in a group for 5 to 6 hours every day for two weeks. Activities focus on fluency techniques, confidence building, developing social communication skills and ways to manage the emotional aspects of stammering more successfully. Following the two-week course, regular group follow-up days are arranged throughout the year and additional individual therapy sessions are arranged as necessary.

**Introduction**

This therapy programme integrates speech restructuring, management of speech-related anxiety using cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and solution focused therapy approaches (SFBT), and communication skills awareness training.

Young people and adults often identify improvement in psychological functioning and well-being as their main goal for therapy alongside being able to manage their speech. There is emerging evidence that Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is effective in reducing speech-related social anxiety associated with stammering. This is consistent with findings, recognised by NICE, that CBT is effective in the treatment of many disorders which are either primarily or in part psychological in nature. Menzies et al. (2008) found that a CBT based programme was effective in reducing social anxiety and avoidance in a sample of 10 adults showing clinical levels of social phobia associated with stammering. Therapy focused on fluency control using various techniques has been shown to be effective however long term maintenance of treatment gains varies. In general a combination of fluency based work and psychologically focused work is likely to deliver the best outcomes when stammering is chronic.

**What is provided:**

Band 3 funding covers the following:

- 10 days of intensive, group therapy provided by specialist speech and language therapists at the Michael Palin Centre. This includes a young people’s group and a one-day parents’ group.
- A one-day liaison and observation opportunity at the Centre for each young person’s named local therapist.
- 4 one-day whole-group follow up days at 6 weeks, 4 months, 8 months and 12 months after the course.
- Individual therapy as required during the one year period, where this is requested and where practical for the client (either face-to-face or via Skype). This can be in the form of one day individual top-ups for clients who live further away.
- Liaison with and support of local therapy that clients access in the following year.
- Collection and analysis of data.
Two clinical reports, with one being written immediately after the course and the second at the end of the year.

**Predicted Outcomes:**
That young people attending the group will typically:
- report improved fluency, resulting in greater academic involvement, for example: asking or answering more questions; contributing more in discussions; participating in presentations to larger groups; and
- report improved confidence resulting in increased social inclusion, for example: talking more to friends and family; participating in more social activities; trying new experiences and showing greater independence; and
- report reduced impact of stammering across the domains of communication in everyday life, emotional reactivity to stammering and quality of life.

Individual outcomes vary depending on the needs of each individual. We anticipate the following treatment gains:
- increased ability to manage moments of stammering;
- reduction in the duration of moments of stammering;
- increase in confidence in communicating including starting conversations;
- reduction in the negative impact of stammering on quality of life;
- reduced use of avoidance;
- increased social engagement in higher education and potential employment; and
- improved well-being.

Typically at the end of the year-long programme clients are equipped with the skills they require to manage their stammering more effectively. They are discharged from therapy at this stage.

**How progress is assessed:**
The following assessments are used:
- The Stuttering Severity Instrument-4 (Riley, 2008). This provides a measure of the severity of stammering in a recorded speech sample, taking into account the frequency of stammering (% stammered syllables), the average duration of moments of stammering and the degree to which physical struggle and concomitant features are present. An overall severity score is generated along with percentage stammered syllable scores for each speaking task. Recordings are made in the child’s own environment using Flip cameras provided by the Michael Palin Centre where necessary. Change may be seen in any or all of the domains measured.
- The Overall Assessment of the Speaker's Experience of Stuttering – Teenage (OASES-T) (Yaruss & Quesal 2010). This questionnaire measures the impact of stammering on the individual in terms of their own reactions to stammering, their ability to communicate in everyday situations, and quality of life. Scores range from 1 (Mild) – 5 (Severe).
- A personalised rating scale from 0-10 where 10 = “best hopes” and 0 = “opposite”. This is used to help clients to identify goals and reflect on signs of change.

**Assessment schedule:**
Data is collected at the following points:
- 3 months before the course (where applicable).
- Immediately before the course.
- Immediately after the course.
- 6 weeks after the course.
- 4 months after the course.
- 8 months after the course.
- One year after the course.
Further information about the structure and content of the course, or any aspect of data collection and reporting can be obtained by contacting the Centre directly.

Evidence Base for Band 3 (15-19s intensive programme)
There are three research papers about the young people’s intensive integrated therapy programme at the Michael Palin Centre.


Additional Publications by the Specialist MPC team
Below is a list of the most relevant publications by the specialist team at the Michael Palin Centre about treatment for this age group:


Fry, J. (2002). An investigation into the negative automatic thoughts of adolescents who stutter. MSc project.


“What really made a difference was meeting other people who really know what it is like to stammer.”
Paul (16)

“The ideas made sense and it was much easier to try things out together!”
Emma (17)

“The course was hard work at times, but fun too. I made new friends and my confidence is still growing. Thanks!”
James (17)

“I’ve been less stressed and I’m more on top of things. I allow myself to stammer in front of my friends now, so I’m louder in a small group. I talk to people in shops more because I don’t mind what they think.”
(Agnes, 16)