



Speech and Language Therapy Cluttering Information



Cluttering is a way that some people talk. Cluttering impacts a person's use of language, pronunciation of words, and the fluency of their speech.

The main features of cluttering are:

- Talking with a variable speech rate. Speech may be fast all the time or may have 'bursts' of fast talking.
- Merging words together. It might sound as if words are "running into each other". For example, 'a hundred and twenty five' might become "huntwenfi". This may sound like 'mumbling'.
- Missing parts of words or putting the parts of the word in the wrong order. For example:
 - "Computer" → "pu'er"
 - "Dinosaur" → "Di'saur"
 - "Celebrate" → "Cebrelate"
- Using a lot of filler words such as "like", "um", and "well".
- Pausing at unexpected times and having a different 'rhythm' to speech compared to people who do not clutter.
- Repeating parts of their sentence. For example, "I'm gonna... I'm gonna... I'm gonna go to the shop".
- 'Editing' their sentence as they are talking. For example, "I was driving...no, walking home."

Cluttered speech is often difficult for listeners to understand.

People who clutter may also:

- Be unaware that their talking is not clear.
- Add sounds into words. For example, "amburulance" instead of "ambulance".
- Make speech sound mistakes, for example, saying "lellow" instead of "yellow".
- Have difficulties with their word order and sentence structure.
- Find it hard to think of the word they wanted to say (word-finding difficulties).
- Struggle with re-telling a story.
- Have a stammer, though not all people who clutter also stammer.

www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk

The content of this document is the property of swyt and is supplied in confidence.

No part of this document or its content shall be reproduced, published or disclosed to a third party without prior written permission of swyt

With **all of us** in mind.

People who clutter report that they experience:

- Racing thoughts and difficulty organising and expressing their thoughts.
- Regularly being asked to repeat themselves. This can feel frustrating.
- Limited awareness of whether or not their speech is clear. Discuss with them whether it would be helpful to give prompts to let them know when their speech is unclear.
- Difficulties slowing down their speech rate, even when they are asked to do so.
- Words or ideas coming out differently than they expected.
- Negative responses to their speech which can impact their confidence and self-esteem.

Cluttering therapy can involve:

- Learning to recognise the signs that someone has not understood you.
- Developing strategies for speaking more clearly, which may involve:
 - Slowing your rate of speech
 - Pausing more frequently
 - Practising saying all the sounds in each word very clearly
- Exploring how to respond to negative reactions or comments.
- Learning what to do when someone misunderstands you.

