

# Speaking of Cluttering

## What Listeners Need to Know! Working Definition of Cluttering:



### Signs of Cluttering

- Cluttering is a fluency disorder wherein segments of conversation in the speaker's native language typically are perceived as too fast overall, too irregular, or both. The segments of rapid and/or irregular speech rate must further be accompanied by one or more of the following: a. excessive "normal" disfluencies, b. excessive collapsing or deletion of syllables; and/or c. abnormal pauses, syllable stress, or speech

\*Fast speech overall OR jerky speech overall

OR both

\*Lots of non-stuttered disfluencies

\*Not smooth pauses in conversation

\*Collapsing syllables in longer words

\*Difficulty staying on topic

\*Decreased self-awareness

\*Impulsive expression

### What to do when speaking with someone who clutters

1. Don't treat them like something is "wrong" with them. Treat them like everyone else.
2. If you don't understand, politely ask for clarification.
3. Understand that it isn't their fault and don't get frustrated at them.
4. No teasing: It's just not OK to tease others.

### Top 3 things NOT to say to a person who clutters

#### Slow Down

We hear this all the time, and it can be annoying.

#### Speak Clearly

Most of the time, we think our speech IS clear. We do try to speak clearly.

#### Think about what you are saying

We know what we want to say. It gets "jumbled up" sometimes.



## No, it's not stuttering

Some people who clutter **ALSO** stutter, but they are not the same thing!

Stuttering has excessive tension during repetitions and disfluencies. Cluttering doesn't

Cluttering does not.

## Facts about Cluttering

1. We don't know the cause, as yet.
2. Therapy can help make talking clearer.
3. It is nobody's fault when someone clutters.
4. It's not just about talking too fast. Lots of people talk fast but don't clutter.

## Speech Therapy can help, but...

"There is no 'easy fix' and there is no 'switch.'"

"I just can't turn 'it' on and off."

-Mackenzie, age 12

"Speech therapy gives you tools to 'handle speech' for yourself."



## Resources about Cluttering

International Cluttering Association  
<http://associations.missouristate.edu/ICA/>

Stuttering Home Page: Information about Cluttering  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/comdis/kuster/related.html>