
Australian Speak Easy
Association

Stuttering Recovery

Workbook

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1. PREFACE

PLEASE NOTE:

THE INTENTION OF THIS WORKBOOK IS TO PROVIDE A TOOL TO BE USED DURING MAINTENANCE AND TRANSFER ACTIVITIES. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO OFFER TREATMENT OF ANY KIND BUT SHOULD BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THERAPY AND TREATMENT PROGRAMMES.

Long-term elimination of stuttering is very difficult. However, a substantial reduction or total elimination of stuttering in the majority of instances is possible by using a sound technique, a management plan, significant work and effort, and a huge amount of bravery and commitment.

It also requires that people who stutter cease identifying the stuttering behaviour as who they are but rather change their perspective on their stuttering to view it as just one of their many behaviours, although certainly one they don't like and want to change. One must learn to change what it means to them when they stutter.

It should be noted that the outcome from stuttering treatment will not always be complete fluency or a total freedom from stuttering. Rather for the majority of those treated, the long term goal should be the elimination of the fear, shame, embarrassment and avoidance around stuttering and moving on to achieve a standard of oral communication that is powerful and effective in your life in the majority of speaking situation.

As a result of that attitude combined with your treatment technique, perceptions and beliefs around speaking situations can change bringing improved self-esteem and confidence when speaking which results in improved fluency with only occasional reminders of previous struggles.

For those golfers out there if you have the EXPECTATION that you'll play like Tiger Woods it's most likely you'll be continually disappointed. However, if you have the INTENTION to play the best golf game you can using the techniques and resources available to you at the time, you'll enjoy your golf and be more successful. Freedom from stuttering therefore does not mean scoring the ABC newsreader spot on national television but may include reaching a level of speaking that's pleasing and acceptable to you.

Very successful people usually have one thing in common. Whether their success is in sport, the arts, business, academia, whatever, they have a vision, goals and a plan describing how they'll achieve their dreams. Success in overcoming stuttering is no different. People who don't have clearly identified, written goals often drift where life takes them only to find out it wasn't where they wanted to go. This is often referred to as the "Cheshire Cat Syndrome":

In the wonderful book Alice in Wonderland, when Alice asked the Cheshire Cat which road she should take, he asked her where she wanted to go.

"I really don't know. I suppose it doesn't really matter," she replied.

"Well, then I suppose it doesn't matter what road you take," he aptly remarked.

If you have a dream to change your stuttering behaviour, what will help achieve that is a plan with clearly defined long-term, medium, short-term and "baby" goals. Freedom from stuttering is something you need to work on daily, not once a week or fortnightly at support group

This workbook provides a valuable tool to use while you work on your stuttering. Your starting point doesn't matter so much. It could be straight after an intensive course, module of therapy or you could have just decided that now is the time to work hard and do everything you know and can find, to improve

your communication skills. It is important however that you have a strong foundation for your recovery. This will consist of a strong speaking technique.

Overcoming your stuttering alone is very difficult if not impossible. You are urged to seek out support and encouragement wherever you can find it. If you live in a remote location, the internet via chat rooms and your telephone will be an important source of support.

Above all stop dreaming, hoping, wishing and waiting for someone to "cure" you. It's not going to happen! Be empowered to take control of your mind, your thoughts, feelings and emotions, and take action!

2. Recovery Workbook Details

Six week Support and Action Plan (after you have finished this book, download another copy from the Speak Easy website and keep on going).



Course/Treatment Date: _____



Course/Treatment Location: _____



Speech Pathologist/Course Instructor: _____



Name of your Ally/Speech Buddy: _____

Contact Telephone Nos.: _____



Support Group Details: _____

SELF-ANALYSIS...

3. Self-Analysis (Swot) Exercise – Why Am I Taking Action?

Think about what you feel your strengths are, and what you consider others see as your strengths. Write them down here...

How do you think these strengths can be used in your recovery?

Everybody has weaknesses, if you are aware of them, you can focus on how to reduce them. What would you consider to be weaknesses that may hinder your progress?

What opportunities are available to you to be successful in your recovery plan? What new opportunities will become available to you as a result of your new speaking personality?

SELF-ANALYSIS...

What are my limiting beliefs that I'll need to overcome for this recovery plan to be followed through and be effective long-term?

What am I going to do about these limiting beliefs?

Describe a day in my life without stuttering: how would I think, feel and behave?

Visualise what I want to achieve as far as my speaking personality; think in terms of eloquence, free expression, enjoyment as well as a level of fluency.

YOUR GOALS...

4. Setting SMART Goals

If you've just completed an intensive course or series of consultations you have just started on your road to freedom from stuttering. You've just taken the first step in what could be a long but very rewarding journey.

Now is the time to have a think about your recovery and the goals that you would like to attain with your speech.

When setting goals, the following rule may help...goals should be SMART...

Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timely

List the goals you would like to achieve with your speech:

Long-term Goals (2-5 years):

Medium-term Goals (6 months-2 years):

Short-term Goals (1 week-6 months):

Baby Goals (what I'm going to do tomorrow):

These goals are perhaps the most important and if achieved will motivate you to keep going! They'll be defined in the bulk of your plan, day by day.

YOUR GOALS...

5. Feeling the Fear and Do it Anyway

Your technique now allows you to face your greatest fears with all the tools required to do the job. However, just as important as learning the technique is your ability to recognise what you most fear and to start facing those fears in everyday life. This may be uncomfortable for you for a while, but whatever feels uncomfortable in the beginning is usually a source of enjoyment in time. Overcoming these fears is the key to your progress.

A great book to read is “Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway” by Dr Susan Jeffers. What do you consider the priorities that you need to focus on and how will you go about improving these?

- Quality Conversations (getting used to holding conversations)
.....
- Quick Conversations (overcoming fear of approaching strangers)
.....
- Reading Aloud
.....
- Using technique in all situations particularly at work
.....
- Public Speaking
.....
- Telephone conversations
.....
- Involving family and friends in your recovery
.....
- Speaking with people of authority
.....
- Debating and structured argument
.....
- Voluntary Stuttering – stuttering on purpose reduces the urge to hide your stutter by trying to be fluent. Done properly it is a great tool to reduce the fear and anxiety that “someone might find out”!
.....
-

Once you have identified the areas of your speech you wish to work on and how you will go about working on these, start writing an “achievement diary” to keep a record of your progress at facing these fears.

As with learning to ride a bike, you will fall off from time to time. That doesn’t mean that you can’t ride a bike. It just means that you need to get back on and try again using better technique and focus.

6. Self/Speech Pathologist/Ally/Coach Relationship

Please note: “Ally” in this manual means your speech pathologist, instructor, coach, friend or speech buddy. Ideally one of your allies could be another recovering stutterer; someone who shares your dream and is equally committed.

Your ally will be there to support and encourage you as well as providing guidance. However, it comes back to what you want out of your recovery. You will have to take responsibility of how you choose to use this support. In time, it is vital for long-term improvement that you become your own monitor and encourager. Give yourself PERMISSION to do what’s required.

What do you expect from your ally?

Discuss with your ally your expectations and your goals. Work together to make these goals possible. If, at any time, you are in doubt as to what direction you are headed, get together with your ally and work out whether your current strategy is sufficient for you. If it’s not, then work together to form a new strategy. Sharing a task will make it easier and will hold you accountable to your ally as well as yourself.

What does your ally expect of you?

WEEK-BY-WEEK GOALS...

7. Daily "Baby Goals"

Use the weekly chart to set baby goals for each day. These are best done last thing at night. Be sure to set goals that are realistic and achievable. There's nothing so de-motivating as never achieving your goal. If you don't achieve your goals on a day, say 10 phone calls, next day reduce it to 5 calls. Once you reach a level you can achieve easily, the motivation and confidence gained from goal achievement will spur you on to set higher goals.

Examples of baby goals are:

1. Read aloud for 10 minutes exaggerating one or more aspects of your technique (define aspects).
2. Phone ally exaggerating one or more aspects of your technique (define aspects).
3. Make 10 calls to freefall 1300 numbers.

It also helps to define a focus for each assignment (ie a particular aspect of your technique, eye contact, smiling). An example might be to buy a stamp at the Post Office using a smile and great eye contact. Be sure to phone your ally regularly, note the time and any problems you experienced during the call and what you could have done better as well as what you did well. The following day work on that aspect of your speech that you feel could be improved.

Structured group contacts (or assignments) with an ally - contacts are simply creating a speaking opportunity in which you'll use and exaggerate particular aspects of your speaking technique; a transference activity. The advantage of doing contacts with an observer is that you get feedback on every contact you do, but bear in mind that these are in addition to and thus should not replace contacts you do by yourself

Contacts (assignments) without an ally - without the assistance of an ally, you should at least make ten contacts each day that are not related to your work or normal daily activities. These contacts can be in person or via phone. Remember that avoidance is the fuel that maintains the stuttering behaviour, so be brave, face the fear and approach the situation with the attitude, "no matter what happens, I'll handle it".

An assignment might be to ring five free call 1300 numbers asking to speak to yourself if for example you have problems saying your own name. If the first 2-3 aren't all that successful keep going until the fear level drops a little to a level that you can focus more on technique. Success will then come. Another example might be to introduce yourself to five people in your office block or do two disclosures in shops. A disclosure is simply walking into a shop and introduce yourself as a person who stutters who is working at overcoming their fear of stuttering. This may sound like a strange thing to do but it has been proven to assist greatly in reducing the fear of stuttering.

8. Support Group

If one is available it is highly recommend that you attend a support group in your local area. They exist in all capital cities and some regional centres.

Before you attend decide on what you want to focus on at the meeting and the questions and issues you want to raise. The people there have probably experienced the particular issue themselves and can offer suggestions and support.

Set goals you want to achieve at support group in your daily goal sheet and make a note of what went well and not so well. This will help you set goals for the next meeting. The social side of support groups is of value but should be a secondary consideration to the primary purpose of working on your speech!

WEEK-BY-WEEK GOALS...

9. Weekly Planning Programme

9.1. Week 1

What are your speaking goals for the week?

Day / Date	What are my assignments for today and focus "Baby Goals"	What I did well	What I could have done better
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

How did you go this week? Did you achieve your speaking goals? If not, what can you do differently next week?

END OF WEEK – CONGRATULATIONS – KEEP IT UP!

WEEK-BY-WEEK GOALS...

9.2. Week 2

What are your speaking goals for the week?

Day / Date	What are my assignments for today and focus "Baby Goals"	What I did well	What I could have done better
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

How did you go this week? Did you achieve your speaking goals? If not, what can you do differently next week?

END OF WEEK – CONGRATULATIONS – KEEP IT UP!

WEEK-BY-WEEK GOALS...

9.3. Focus for Next Week

>>> Expand your comfort zone <<<

Now that you have made progress with the basics, it's time to start to challenge your beliefs and perceptions around your speaking abilities. Start to think about what aspects of your life in which you wish to grow, where you want to better yourself and what is holding you back from doing this.

Bear in mind that expanding your comfort zone is not a comfortable experience!! Every time you do something new, it will feel a little (or a lot) uncomfortable. This is natural and it happens to everybody in almost every walk of life. The good news is though, that if you do face your fears and challenge your comforts, then one day you will be able to look back and wonder (and probably laugh at) just what it was you were so scared of.

How do you plan to expand your comfort zone... give a few examples...

What other things could you do to expand your comfort zone? Discuss these ideas with your ally.

WEEK-BY-WEEK GOALS...

9.4. Week 3

What are your speaking goals for the week? The time has come to seriously expand your comfort zone. Set more challenging speaking assignments and approach them with clear intentions rather than unreasonable expectations.

Day / Date	What are my assignments for today and focus "Baby Goals"	What I did well	What I could have done better
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

How did you go this week? Did you achieve your speaking goals? If not, what can you do differently next week?

END OF WEEK – CONGRATULATIONS – KEEP IT UP!

WEEK-BY-WEEK GOALS...

9.5. Week 4

What are your speaking goals for the week? What situations have you entered that have given you some problems? Think about the situations that are giving you the most problems and set yourself a strategy for overcoming these problems. Ask your ally how to approach the situation differently, seek help from other people, eg at support group, on their own experiences with similar situations.

Day / Date	What are my assignments for today and focus "Baby Goals"	What I did well	What I could have done better
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

How did you go this week? Did you achieve your speaking goals? If not, what can you do differently next week?

END OF WEEK – CONGRATULATIONS – KEEP IT UP!

WEEK-BY-WEEK GOALS...

9.6. Focus for Next Week - Public Speaking Clubs

During week five, find a Toastmasters or Rostrum club in your local area. Make enquiries as to when and where it is on and who you need to contact to attend your first meeting. Don't let yourself think that you are 'not ready' to join a public speaking club yet...you are more than ready...and the longer you leave it the less ready you'll be! It's time to lift the stakes a level and move on.

The skills you have developed and practiced will stand you in good stead to perform well at a public speaking club. Remember that as well as being a platform to practice your public speaking skills, these clubs are designed to help people overcome their fears, so all the people there are very understanding and encouraging.

Your first few meetings might not go as planned (there is a good chance you will feel a level of fear during the evening, and possibly you will let technique slip up a bit) but this is great training for you to learn how to deal with stresses in everyday situations. Lets' face it, if you can overcome your fear of standing up and speaking in front of a group of people, and go on to become a good public speaker through developing these skills, then you're well on the way to dramatically improving your speaking skills.

Most clubs will allow you to speak and take part in the night's events when you are ready, so don't be put off by the fear of having to give a speech on your first night! You will have many weeks to prepare a full speech for the club. In the meantime, just enjoy the fact that you are there and pat yourself on the back for having made the effort to go along in the first place.

Details of Public Speaking Club

Name of Club.....

Contact Person.....Number.....

Times of Meetings.....

Venue.....

.....



Tip! On your first night at the club, it is a good idea to reveal that you are a recovering stutterer and that the reason you are attending is to help you to overcome your fears of speaking in public. You will not be alone in having fears (that's why most people are there) and by being honest about your stutter, you remove a lot of the pressures from yourself.

WEEK-BY-WEEK GOALS...

9.7. Week 5

What are your speaking goals for the week?

Day / Date	What are my assignments for today and focus "Baby Goals"	What I did well	What I could have done better
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

How did you go this week? Did you achieve your speaking goals? If not, what can you do differently next week?

END OF WEEK – CONGRATULATIONS – KEEP IT UP!

WEEK-BY-WEEK GOALS...

9.8. Week 6

What are your speaking goals for the week?

Day / Date	What are my assignments for today and focus "Baby Goals"	What I did well	What I could have done better
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

How did you go this week? Did you achieve your speaking goals? If not, what can you do differently next week?

END OF WEEK – CONGRATULATIONS – KEEP IT UP!

SETTING YOUR OWN GOALS...

10. After Week 6 Review

You are now six weeks into your stuttering elimination program. It's time to look at your progress and see how you are going and identify areas that you feel you have succeeded and areas you still can enhance.

Answer the following questions. Be honest with your comments, it is only for your own benefit.

Are you still feeling positive about your recovery? Describe.

Are you comfortable using your technique?

How would you rate your improvement? Score yourself out of 10 and why (10 being excellent).

Look back at your original speaking goals? Are you any closer to achieving them? What do you feel you still need to do to achieve them. Is it time to download another six-week programme and continue with your recovery?

Organise to meet your ally in person to discuss your progress. Write a summary of what you discussed down here.

SETTING YOUR OWN GOALS...

11. Periodising Your Goals

Goals are things we set ourselves when we want to achieve something big in our lives. As mentioned earlier in this work book, goals must be challenging but at the same time realistic. In addition to this, however, goals should be categorised and periodised to give you a sense of perspective and focus. This means setting out your goals in sequence; taking your long-term ambitions and breaking them down to medium and short term targets.

"Nobody ever conquered Everest by wishing they were there. The great people who have reached this summit have done so by setting and achieving goals: Every second the goal is to take that next step, every hour it's off reaching a new plateau, every day the aim is to reach a new camp. Their ultimate goal is to reach the top but, unless these smaller goals are achieved, all the wishing in the world won't get them there."

Likewise there is no point sitting down and proclaiming that your ultimate goal is to be the best speaker in the world if you're short and medium term goals do not involve activities to enhance your speaking skills!

11.1. Macrocycles, Mesocycles and Microcycles

Now that you have completed this workbook, you should now be ready to take control of your own challenge to eliminate or significantly reduce your stuttering. During the past six weeks you have probably realized the importance of setting yourself short and medium term goals in order to achieve your long-term goal. Now is your chance to design your own road to recovery and continue putting into place the building blocks that will allow you to reach your destination. Read the following to help you understand the principles of good goal-setting:

Your overall improvement is best served by creating cyclical exercises for yourself. This means redefining your goals every few weeks. For example; becoming more natural-sounding, over-killing the fear of introducing yourself, taking a well-deserved break from the hard work you've put in (yes it is okay to have a rest every so often!), ...the list is endless. Such training cycles should run for approximately 2-3 weeks before commencing a new focus for your speech. These short-term goals are referred to as **microcycles**.

As you complete your microcycles, you should find yourself getting closer to achieving your medium-term goals. These are called **mesocycles** and may include such goals as; being confident at using your technique in all situations, winning the Best Speech award at Toastmasters, having no fear of saying your name, enjoying speaking to your boss, overcoming your fear of doing a presentation at work/school, etc. These mesocycles are only achievable if you have completed the microcycles. These goals should be achievable within 3-12 months from setting them. Once a mesocycle has been achieved it is time to set a new one for the next few months.

Finally, we have the **macrocycle** - the ultimate goal of your training programme. Examples of macrocycles might be, to become an interesting and eloquent speaker, to have no fear of speaking in any situation, to become the best speaker possible, to be at one with myself, etc. Likewise, a macrocycle is only achieved if all the microcycles and mesocycles have been completed successfully. Naturally a macrocycle is a long-term goal and may take many years to achieve, but it is just as important to recognize when you have achieved a macrocycle to set yourself a new goal.

11.2. Examples of Good Goal-Setting:

11.2.1. Microcycles: (week to week goals and activities)

Weeks 1-3: Technique, eye contact, positive body language

Daily: Make 20 telephone calls using an aspect of my technique.
Read aloud to my wife using exaggerated technique.
Talk to workmates using technique (explain to them why!)
Order my lunch at the café with a great smile and eye contact.

SETTING YOUR OWN GOALS...

Weeks 4-7: Technique, positive thinking, free expression, over-killing my name, letting go

Daily: Make 20 telephone calls using strong and positive thoughts.
Read aloud to my wife using exaggerated technique.
Spend 15 mins in front of mirror practising eye contact.
Strike up a conversation while ordering my lunch at the café. Get to know the people.

11.2.2. Mesocycles: (medium/long term goals)

Year 1: To have overcome my fear of introducing myself; to not be scared to use the telephone; help others overcome their stutter.

Year 2: To have become a good public speaker; to have accepted myself fully for who I am; to make my technique sound and feel really natural.

11.2.3. Macrocycle: (the overall goal of your programme)

To be the best speaker I can be; to have absolutely no fear of speaking in any situation.

12. Summary:

Setting goals may seem like a lot of hard work and wasted time. The reality is that if you set aside just a little bit of time for goal-setting to organize your recovery you will actually create **more** time and gain **greater** benefits than if you stumble from day to day without focus.

It's like setting out on a car journey to an unfamiliar destination; by spending a few minutes looking at the road atlas and mapping out your route before you set off, you save yourself the frustration (not to mention the time) that comes with getting lost.

Don't allow yourself to get lost in your recovery. Keep focused. Let yourself reach your final destination with as little frustration and setback as possible.

Set your goals. Stick to your goals. Reflect upon your achievements. Smile.

Overcoming stuttering is a journey and a process rather than a destination.

With a little bit of planning it's easier than you think. Treat it like a sport and have some fun with it!