

# CLUTTERING: WHAT IS IT?

Cluttering is a disorder of speech and language, frequently misinterpreted and identified as stuttering. People who clutter are sometimes unaware of or unconcerned about their diagnosis, and may not seek the help of a specialist.

Cluttering is characterized by a fast and/or irregular speech rate, disfluencies, revisions and restarts, missing or rearranged syllables, repetition of words and/or phrases, and other symptoms such as articulation errors and attention deficit. Quite often cluttering co-occurs with other difficulties like: stuttering, speech sound errors ADHD, ADD or learning disabilities, especially with difficulty in reading or writing.

*You know, know, I wasn't... you know... finally, in this, you know... in library. I went with him, you know... to... to the cema. Nice .. you know... this film. Action... tion was great.*

What does he mean? I don't understand any of this...

## MEETING A FRIEND

Can you repeat that? I didn't understand what you said.

*The pressor said that tmorrow is the dline for submitting our final papers. Who does not turn in by tomorrow has a crection. He said that the... you know... deadline cannot be extended.*

## A PHONE CALL

Cluttering is a communication disorder in which a speaker may have a high rate of unintelligible speech in different situations, making it difficult for the listener to understand the message (Myers & St. Louis, 1992; Van Zaalen & Reichel, 2015). Symptoms in this definition are consistent with the Lowest Common Denominator (LCD) definition (St. Louis & Schulte, 2011). According to the LCD definition, the speaker's language is typically perceived as too fast overall, too irregular, or both. This must 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 rhythm.

### Myths:

1. Cluttering is just like stuttering.
2. People who clutter are unintelligent and lazy.
3. People who clutter don't realize that their speech sounds different.
4. Cluttering is not treatable, therapy is useless.

### Facts:

1. Cluttering is a phenomenon still not fully recognized or understood.
2. Fast speech by itself is not cluttering.
3. Cluttering therapy can improve intelligibility of speech in certain situations.
4. The person who clutters is not to blame for how he or she speaks.

*In my previous company, I worked in this... in this... marking...marketing, but basically I dealt with this, in this... you know... but really I was assigned to service... I mean, to implement customer service.*

She talks a lot, but I don't know what she wants to say. If she doesn't do something about this, I can't see her working here.

## THE JOB INTERVIEW

You have a lot of experience, but working in our team requires good communication skills. Would you be willing to work on yours?

Please take a look at the sales figures for the last quarter. Our market share has increased as well as our profitability. Most importantly - our customers appreciate the high quality of our service.

Thank you very much for preparing your presentation so professionally.

## IT WORKS!

I am glad I gave her a chance and she followed my suggestion.

Diagnosis and therapy: Cluttering therapy can significantly improve clarity of speech. Treatment begins with a comprehensive assessment by an SLT or SLP. The goals of speech therapy are primarily: increasing awareness of one's own speech, reducing the number of disfluencies, and improving speech clarity and organization. The diagnosis and therapy of cluttering is carried out by speech therapists specializing in the treatment of fluency disorders.

Recommended websites:

[www.icacluttering.com](http://www.icacluttering.com)  
[www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)

### References:

Myers, F.L., & St. Louis, K.O. (1992). *Cluttering: A Clinical Perspective*. Far Publication.  
St. Louis, K.O., & Schulte, K. (2011). Defining cluttering: The lowest common denominator. In D. Ward & K. Scaler Scott (Eds.) *Cluttering: A Handbook of Research, Intervention and Education*, pp. 233-253. Psychology Press.  
Van Zaalen, Y., & Reichel, I. (2015). *Cluttering: Current views on its nature, assessment and treatment*. iUniverse.

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