

The Stages of Confident Speaking related to Intervention Goals

Stage	Characterised by:	Intervention Goals
1	No communication nor participation	For the child to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel unpressured and look forward to sessions with keyworker • Stay with and watch, as keyworker demonstrates game or activity
2	Cooperation but no communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in keyworker's choice of activity and co-operate with requests/ suggestions pertaining to the execution of that activity
3	Communication through visual, non-vocal means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use gesture intentionally, in order to communicate • Take turns with the keyworker
4	Use of non-verbal sound with keyworker in a specific setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make audible sounds using musical instruments and body parts • Make vocal sounds in keyworker's presence (laughter, environmental noises or letter sounds)
5*	Speech within earshot of keyworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak at normal volume when alone or with immediate family, and allow keyworker to enter room while still speaking**
6	Use of single words with keyworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce single words at normal volume** and with appropriate eye-contact in structured situation
7	Connected speech with keyworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce sentences at normal volume** and with appropriate eye-contact in structured situation
8**	Connected speech with a range of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate speech with keyworker • Speak with a selected group of people without keyworker present
9**	Connected speech in a range of settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to selected people in a variety of familiar surroundings without keyworker present • Speak in unplanned situations
10***	Free communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak in any setting <i>within earshot of others</i> (e.g. contribute spontaneously to classroom discussion) • Speak to strangers

* Direct work can often start at this stage, provided there is an appropriate conversational partner (usually a parent) who is able to participate.

**A very quiet voice is perfectly acceptable initially and will increase in volume as child gains confidence. Whispering should never be set as a target, nor accepted when target is quiet voice.

***Stages 8 and 9 are covered in tandem

****Children who have lived with selective mutism for several years often find aspects of Stage 10 *easier* than Stages 8 and 9. Strangers in neutral settings do not know the SM child's 'secret' as one 13 year old described her past history, and therefore place no pressure on the child in terms of expectation.

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