

# Preparing Students who Stutter for Life after School

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## **ABSTRACT**

All students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) must have a documented plan for transitioning to life after graduation, known as an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP). ITPs must be integrated into the students' IEPs by their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. The postsecondary goals included in students' ITPs should be designed to ensure that they are successful in their pursuit of continued education or training, employment, and independent living/community integration. Despite the vital role postsecondary transition planning plays in the life of a student who stutters (SWS), no studies to date have documented best practice guidelines or even current practices in ITP development for SWS. This gap in the literature is surprising given that many SWS struggle to achieve the same level of postsecondary outcomes as their peers who do not stutter. They often do not reach similar levels of educational attainment and limit their participation in educational settings, experience limitations and discrimination in employment settings (Bricker-Katz et al., 2013; Gerlach et al., 2018), and disengage from social interaction (Bricker-Katz et al., 2009; Klompass & Ross, 2004). These behaviors can result in isolation, spurring widespread adverse effects on quality of life (e.g., Craig et al., 2009; Klompass & Ross, 2004; Koedoot et al., 2011). The objectives of this project are to determine how school-based speech-language pathologists (SLPs) are currently developing ITPs for SWS, develop a transition checklist and clinical discussion guide designed to guide the ITP process with SWS, and create and distribute a recorded webinar to pre-service SLPs educating them on best practices for transition planning for SWS. Our rationale is that such resources will maximize school-based pre-service and in-service SLPs' ability to effectively support SWS, in turn maximizing quality of life outcomes for this at-risk population.

This project squarely aligns with the National Stuttering Association's (NSA) mission focusing on support, education, advocacy, and research. The research team aims to support and educate pre- and in-service SLPs, SWS, and their parents in making the transition to life after high school as successful as possible. Self-advocacy is essential in employment, education/training, and independent living settings and is therefore a primary focus of this project. The proposed clinical research project will help bridge gaps in school-based services for young people who stutter transitioning to the "real world."