

IN THE LOOP

JANUARY 2024 EDITION

WELCOME FROM THE NEW CHAIR

Greetings Membership!

I hope you all enjoyed the holiday season with your nearest and dearest. For those of you that do not know me, I was Vice Chair of the board in 2023 and have transitioned to Chair in 2024. Serving as your Chair is an opportunity I greatly value and I look forward to supporting the continued efforts of the executive board, all BCS-SCFs, those pursuing specialty certification, and the stuttering community.

As we embark on 2024, I would like to take a moment to honor the wonderful contributions of several executive board members that have completed their time on the board. A special thanks to **Elyse Lambeth**, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF, who served two terms on the Board, most recently as Chair. Elyse worked thoughtfully to pave the way for the board's recent name change. **Brooke Leiman Edwards**, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF completed two terms on the board, most recently as Certification Coordinator. In addition, **Reuben Schuff** completed his time as Consumer Representative. I am grateful I had the chance to collaborate with these 3 wonderful individuals. Their efforts greatly impacted many of the board's accomplishments in the past several years.

I am thrilled to announce that after much hard work, in the form of meetings, discussions, and surveys, ASHA's *Committee on Clinical Specialty Certification* has approved the board's formal name change to **The American Board of Stuttering, Cluttering, and Fluency Disorders (ABSCF)**. All board-certified specialists should now use the credentials *Board Certified Specialist-Stuttering, Cluttering, and Fluency Disorders (BCS-SCF)*. In addition, the board will be collaborating with a professional to assist in developing a new logo. More to come on this soon.

In the next few months, the board will be sponsoring some exciting **Roundtable** discussions which we hope you will attend. The **Roundtables** provide a forum where stuttering specialists, interested SLPs, and students can explore a variety of meaningful topics related to our clinical work.

- On **January 23 at 7:30 PM, EST**, Glenn Weybright and I will facilitate a Roundtable discussion on the topic **"Advocating in the Community for People Who Stutter."**
- On **February 22, at 7:00 PM EST**, the Roundtable discussion will focus on the topic **"Exploring Highest Standards in Stuttering Therapy."** Glenn Weybright will host and Carl Herder, Laura Johnson, and I will facilitate an interactive discussion.
- The March Roundtable discussion is scheduled for **March 10 at 4:00PM EST** with Vivian Siskin and Samantha Wasilus who will discuss research findings from their recent investigation of **"Atypical Disfluencies."**

In addition, be on the lookout for information regarding our annual online conference, which will be held on June 9 and 10, from 12:30 – 5:30 PM each day. The conference will offer up to 1.0 CEUs at a reasonable cost. We hope to see you then!

I'm excited to serve as your new chair and look forward to connecting with many of you throughout the coming year.

Best Regards,

Rob

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

If you are interested in assisting the ABSCF with any of our current projects, please contact us via our website www.stutteringspecialists.org or email us at info@stutteringspecialists.org.

NEW BOARD-CERTIFIED SPECIALISTS

The Board is extremely pleased to announce that **Jeanne Avitto, M.A., CCC-SLP** is a new Board-Certified Specialist – Stuttering, Cluttering, and Fluency. Congratulations!



Jeanne Avitto is a speech-language pathologist in the New York City Department of Education where she provides speech and language services to high school students. Jeanne is often working within the schools with teachers and professional staff to understand the unique needs of adolescents with fluency disorders. She provides annual stuttering workshops for other SLPs in the schools as well as monthly clinical support for stuttering and cluttering. She supervises graduate students in the evaluation and treatment of adolescents in the high school setting. Prior to working in the schools, Jeanne worked as a clinical externship supervisor at a university where she learned the unique needs of people who stutter and began her mentorship experience. In addition to her clinical practice, Jeanne is the mother of three children and is actively involved in her community.

BOARD NEWS

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Matt Krause, MHS, CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF has joined the ABSCF as Treasurer.



Matt Krause has been a speech-language pathologist for over 25 years and has been a Board-Certified Specialist in Fluency for just over eight years. In addition to private practice, Matt is an adjunct professor and clinical supervisor at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He is also a partner with Phonica, LLC which is an app that facilitates extra-clinical activities for clients and therapists. He is also director of Camp Iceberg at Mizzou, which is a week-long camp for school-age kids and tweens who stutter. Matt is also a person who stutters and is a proud member of the stuttering community. In his free time, Matt enjoys running, reading, fixing things, and spending time with his family at piano recitals, soccer games, or traveling on vacation.

Samantha Wasilus, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF, has joined the ABSCF as Advocacy and Education Co-chair.

Samantha Wasilus is a speech language pathologist at the Sisskin Stuttering Center in Mclean, Virginia and Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland. She earned her master's degree in Speech Pathology at the University of Maryland-College Park, as well as her bachelors in Psychology and Hearing and Speech Sciences. Samantha has taught the Fluency Disorders course at The George Washington University and has led trainings on Avoidance Reduction Therapy for Stuttering (ARTS®), both nationally and internationally. Samantha has worked with stutterers across the lifespan and specializes in group therapy for adults. She is passionate about increasing support to generalist school-based therapists and founded a stuttering community practice for Prince George's County. Her clinical research projects include investigation and therapy for atypical disfluencies, more specifically final part-word repetitions. Samantha lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband Alex, who is a stutterer, daughter Lia, who recently started stuttering, and dog Ethan.



Chris Anderson has joined the ABSCF as the Consumer Representative.



Christopher Anderson is a person who stutters. This fall, he self-published his first book titled *Every Waking Moment: The Journey to Take Back My Life From the Trauma and Stigma of Stuttering* which chronicles his through-life experience of stuttering and how he learned to live collaboratively with his stutter. He also serves as a subject matter expert on national security for the US Government in Washington, D.C., where he lives with his wife and four-year-old son who also stutters. For more, see everywakingmoment.blog.

NAME CHANGE

After a journey of over a year with many meetings, discussions, and surveys, we are excited to announce that ASHA's Committee on Clinical Specialty Certification has approved the request to formally change the name of our board to ***The American Board of Stuttering, Cluttering, and Fluency Disorders*** (ABSCF)! Board-certified specialists will now utilize ***BCS-SCF*** rather than BCS-F to denote specialty status.

We appreciated your engagement and support, and hope you felt seen in this process. Board-certified specialists are an amazing and dedicated community. The executive board will work diligently to update our website and resources to reflect the name change. At the same time, we will build the recognition and reach of The American Board of Stuttering, Cluttering, and Fluency Disorders in the coming year within the broader stuttering community. We look forward to your partnership.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Since May of 2020, the ABSCF has sponsored a roundtable discussion most months that have covered topics relevant to the board certification process. These meetings are designed for applicants for BCS-SCF, individuals who are considering applying for BCS-SCF, current or potential mentors, and people with fluency disorders from the community with an interest in the process. These meetings have been well-attended, and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

For the October 2023 Roundtable, board members Rob Reichardt and Laura Johnson facilitated a discussion about preschool stuttering. After a brief overview of what makes this age group unique, attendees shared their insights and experience by responding to the following prompts:

- *When would you recommend doing an evaluation and treatment for preschoolers?*
- *What would you consider to be “best practice” for preschool evaluations?*
- *What are some of the more well-known preschool protocols for stuttering?*
- *What are some of the commonalities between preschool protocols?*
- *What is going well for you in your clinical practice for this age range?*

Attendees ranged from long-time experts in the field of stuttering to those in the process of applying for board certification. There were several common themes, including the value of the client/clinician/family therapeutic relationship, understanding ways to support a child in the near- and long-term, and creating a space for open communication about stuttering.

On **January 23rd, from 7:30 pm – 8:30 PM EST**, there will be a Roundtable discussion on ***Advocating in the Community for People who Stutter***. The meeting will begin with a review of Board initiatives and accomplishments in 2023, plans for 2024, and introduction of our three new Board members. We will also ask attendees to share how they have advocated for those who stutter in the past year, and we will be soliciting speaker/topic ideas for our June 2024 Summer Conference. The meeting will be hosted by Glenn Weybright and led by our new Board chair, Rob Reichardt.

In the **February 22nd Roundtable (7:00 PM EST)**, ***“Exploring Highest Standards of Care”***, we will have an interactive discussion regarding what it means to provide the highest level of care for our clients. We will explore values and principles in therapy and how these relate to the mission of the American Board of Stuttering, Cluttering, and Fluency Disorders. This Roundtable will be facilitated by Carl Herder, Laura Johnson, and Rob Reichardt.

On **March 10, at 4:00 PM EST**, the Board will host a Roundtable discussion with Vivian Siskin and Samantha Wasilus to review their research findings from their investigation of ***“Atypical Disfluencies.”*** The discussion will be facilitated by Glenn Weybright.

In April 2024, The ABSCF will host a Roundtable discussion on ***Counseling Adolescents and Adults who Stutter***.

ASHA 2023

Board members Ryan Pollard and Kim Sabourin attended ASHA this year in Boston where they hosted a happy hour at the Omni Hotel. Several board-certified specialists turned out as well as

some candidates. This event was a great opportunity to connect (and re-connect) with some of our amazing stuttering specialists.

Ryan led a 2-hour masterclass on *Addressing the Needs of Children and Adolescents with Communication Disorders*. This course was developed by SIG 20 – Counseling and offered some practical suggestions for engaging children and adolescents in deeper discussions and explorations of the impact and experiences with stuttering, which can be applied to all communication disorders. Some of the topics covered included helping young clients discuss and move through the coping and change process, Solution Focused Therapy, and Motivational Interviewing techniques.

‘MEET THE BOARD’ Q & A

Each Newsletter will include an interview with a board member to help our membership get to know us. In this issue, we interviewed **Risa Battino, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF**, our **Social Media Director**.

1. What is your role on the Board and how are you upholding its mission?

I am the social media director on the board. In my role, I strive to keep the membership informed about upcoming events that the board is offering and invite members to weigh in on updates/changes the board is discussing. I am excited to share events that allow members and future members to learn from each other, learn more about the board certification process and connect with the stuttering community.

2. Why did you choose to become a Stuttering Specialist?

I began working with people who stutter during my undergraduate time at the University of Maryland. I was lucky to have a teacher and supervisor who was passionate about stuttering and that passion was contagious. As I continued through my graduate experience and early career, it became clear that this passion was shared by far fewer SLPs than I had initially thought. I watched colleagues shy away from working with people who stutter and had clinical supervisors who knew little about the subject teaching me techniques that did not always make sense for each individual.

I ended up taking on more of these clients and doing independent learning to further my knowledge and improve my skills in this area. As I attended more conferences and talks related to stuttering, I began to meet a group of people who had a similar passion and were just as excited to work with people who stutter. I spent time talking to SLPs who were already board certified or were working toward certification. They introduced me to others and directed me toward resources and experiences that only enhanced my knowledge. Over the years, I have learned a lot from them and wanted to have a more active role in the community. The relationships I built as I went through the board certification process only solidified my desire to continue my learning and serve this population.

Additionally, the more time I spent talking to professionals and people who stutter, the more I learned about the lack of support and expertise available to many. Continuing my education and pursuing board certification was a way that I could contribute in a small way to providing support to those who stutter and educating others about stuttering.

3. In your experience, how has Board Certification enhanced your career and/or therapy practice?

In going through the process of applying for board certification, I enhanced my learning and skills a

ton. That has only continued after becoming Board Certified. I have had the opportunity to meet many like-minded individuals and have learned from discussions at board meetings and conferences. I have enjoyed participating in and presenting at the annual June conference and roundtable discussions put on by the board.

In my practice, I have found that the board certification has given me more credibility and respect as an expert in the area of stuttering. Though my colleagues in my immediate work environment always came to me to learn more about stuttering, I have had more people from the greater hospital system I work in recognize this specialty and seek information. I am more confident in providing in-services and talks to professionals across speech pathology as well as other medical disciplines and have helped to co-author information used in a quick guide to new physicians in the medical school associated with my clinic.

After achieving board certification, I was afforded the opportunity to teach at the graduate level and have enjoyed inspiring the next generation of SLPs to seek opportunities to work with people who stutter. Additionally, in private practice, I regularly receive calls from individuals or school districts looking for a specialist who can perform an evaluation, support school-based staff as they work with students who stutter, or who are seeking outside therapy from a specialist.

4. Aside from stuttering, what else are you passionate about?

I love spending time with my husband and 2-year old son, Liam. I enjoy outdoor activities including skiing and hiking, and try to travel to new destinations whenever I can. In my career, I enjoy teaching the next generation of SLPs and working with children with Autism.

BOARD-CERTIFIED SPECIALIST IN THE SPOTLIGHT

In this newsletter, we highlighted one of our many members who has been doing exciting, interesting, and impactful work with clients and in the stuttering community.



From Chamonix Olsen M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF:

Hello my friends!

I'm so grateful to belong to this community of like-minded colleagues who are passionate, care deeply, and help others improve their lives. Although there are differences among us, we are all helpers who love to see our clients thrive and that bonds us together as a professional community. Thank you for all that you do.

Over the past few months, I've been focused on my clients; my main priority being through my private practice *Hope for Stuttering Speech Therapy* that I started in 2012. I also had the joy of reconnecting with so many colleagues and meeting some new ones at ASHA in Boston this year. I even bumped into an old client who is now a speech therapist and professor. After learning and exploring so much from other fields in the past decade, it was fun to feel, in person, the sense of community and belonging within my beloved field of speech-language pathology.

Because of my own journey, I've gained much experience in other areas that I've integrated from the areas of brain neuroplasticity, trauma therapy, somatics, Emotional Freedom Technique, various nervous system regulation tools, Internal Family Systems and Parts work, and the list goes on! This has been exciting and is a passion of mine, changing and developing as a clinician in order to meet my client's needs in innovative ways. This summer I'm running a one-week therapy retreat for adults and older teens who stutter here in Connecticut that integrates many of these newer pieces.

I also had the honor to present to speech therapists in Washington D.C. over Zoom with another colleague Margaret Wagle. It was a healing and special moment going outside of my specialty area to present "Being my dad's SLP" with Margaret where we presented on esophageal cancer, research, and the SLPs role. Both of us lost our fathers to esophageal cancer, a particularly cruel and often missed diagnosis until it's too late. My dad died in July of 2020, and we each had to step into the SLP role with our dads as neither were given the speech/swallowing services they so very much needed. Watching my dad choke and have swallowing issues, advocating for him, then watching him starve, then slowly die was a brutal experience. He was the most joyful person in my life who had a joke for everyone! He was a huge support for me as I went through a very long hard journey myself in life. Losing him broke my heart. Through his death, like so many other very hard things in my life, I have grown tremendously as a person, my faith has grown, and I've grown as a clinician.

We are therapists, but we are also people. Our hard life experiences can make us better clinicians, more relatable, and real, if we allow them to. We've all seen the research that the client clinician relationship, is well, almost everything. When you grow as a human, you become a better clinician. Your life experiences and all of your cumulative experiences with your clients can greatly impact your therapy for good.

I've also been continuing to implement my own beloved daily self-care practices. Who I am is much more than a speech therapist or stuttering specialist. I love to dance! I love to laugh. I get excited to read new books. I gain energy and peace walking on my nearby beach. My quiet time studying the bible and just being with Jesus/God regulates me and creates peace in my life. I lift weights. I love spending time with friends. I have community at church and in bible studies, and I snuggle with my sweet kitty Juliet, who will be 20 years old in May! I take time each day to regulate my nervous system. I pour out to my clients each day because I love and care for them. I pour into me each day because I love and care for me, and I fill up so I then can maintain balance and sustainability and I can give. I can't hold space for a client who's in need if I'm dysregulated and overwhelmed myself. So, I invest in me daily so I can continue to be a clinician,

and the kind of one I want to be. My work and my life have boundaries. I'm in the process of creating help and resources for other SLPs who want more balance and regulation in their lives to prevent burnout and to ensure we are healthy professionals.

My life experiences have shown me what's most important. I have a true love for my clients and for being a stuttering specialist. That is what I've been up to in the last few months! You can always email me at: chamonix@hopeforstuttering.com to share with me what you've been up to! I'd love to hear from you.

OTHER HAPPENINGS

Here are a few upcoming events sponsored by various organizations in the stuttering community.

[Friends One-Day Conference in Atlanta](#)

Saturday, March 9, 2024

Georgia State University

College of Education & Human Development

30 Pryor St. SW, Atlanta, GA 30303

Registration opens soon!

More One-Day Conferences in 2024 to be announced.

No matter where you live, you have Friends. Join us for a one-day workshop filled with support and information for young people who stutter, their families, and professionals (SLPs can earn CEUs, and graduate students are welcome!). The day includes presentations, small discussion groups, panels, and group activities. Children, teens, siblings, parents, and speech-language pathologists attend sessions geared specifically toward their individual needs. Children's programming is activity-based and focuses on feelings about stuttering, increasing confidence, and meeting other kids who stutter, while parents learn how to best support their children, meet other parents of children who stutter, and share experiences and concerns. This programming is facilitated by speech-language pathologists and members of the adult stuttering community. For the most up-to-date information and to register, visit:

friendswhostutter.org/one-day-conferences

[NSA Connects: More About the Language We Use](#)

February 27, 2024 - 8:30PM ET

What are the words we use to describe stuttering? Do we intentionally or unintentionally choose words that convey negativity? Do we use words like "problem, defect, or disorder" when we describe our stuttering? When we do that, we run the risk of negatively influencing our feelings about stuttering. Are PWS and SLPs on the same page when talking about stuttering? Do we cling to the "way we've always done things" or are we looking ahead to make it easier to live with stuttering?

We had a similar session about the language we use last June, and it was so popular, we wanted to revisit this conversation.

Join us for an interactive session on how we can choose to be more mindful of how we talk about stuttering. This session will be moderated by Pamela Mertz, PWS and long-time NSA member, along with Mike Molino, PWS and CCC-SLP, and Ezra Horak, PWS and founder of *Stutterology*.

The My Stutter Project Connects Young People Who Stutter from Around the World!

SAY: The Stuttering Association for the Young is thrilled to announce a new online program open to young people who stutter from all over the world. We are looking for participants to join a worldwide community of young people who stutter! If you know someone who stutters and is between the ages of 8-18, this is for them! The **My Stutter Project** offers a brave space for youth to make friends with others who understand what they're going through. **My Stutter** also provides a creative outlet where participants can share their stories and grow in their ability to effectively and confidently advocate for themselves. This five-month program offers two sessions beginning January 31st and February 2nd. No charge to participate – all that is needed is an internet connection. At this time, sessions will be led in English. Learn more and register for the **My Stutter Project** today by visiting <https://say.org/mystutterproject> or contact Danielle@SAY.org

Enrollment is Open for SAY: DC!

SAY: DC is an inspiring space for young people who stutter to be deeply heard and supported.

Our program helps youth:

- ** Build confidence
- ** Grow communication skills
- ** Nurture friendships with people who know what they're going through.

Our approach is not only fun and engaging, it helps kids get in touch with their inner strength and sets them up to embrace new challenges and experiences at school and the wider world. For over twenty years, The Stuttering Association for the Young's approach has been based on the belief that each young person has an important story to tell and also holds the ability to share it with the world in a unique and powerful way. We specialize in helping kids find joy and connection, while unlocking their potential to thrive.

Join us!

Enrollment is now OPEN for the 2024 season of our mixed-age, weekly program.

Dates: January 2024 – June 2024

Days and times: Saturdays from 10 am-noon

Location: Near DuPont Circle in the heart of Washington, DC

All of our programs are free of charge. Visit this link to enroll today! <https://t.ly/kxrwK>

Questions? Contact Leigh@SAY.org

Stuttering Foundation of American (SFA)

To celebrate the New Year 2024, click on www.stutteringhelp.org/training and you will find 45 affordable courses for CE opportunities! Our newest course is an audio book **'Effective Counseling in Stuttering Therapy'**: <https://www.stutteringhelp.org/training/effective-counseling-stuttering-therapy>. Listen as your commute to work or at home or work! Another new and timely course is **'Speech Disfluencies in Bilingual Speakers'**:

<https://www.stutteringhelp.org/training/speech-disfluencies-bilingual-speakers>. With Selma Saad Merouwe, SLP, ECSF, of Saint Joseph University, Beirut.

HONORING FOUNDING MEMBERS

The ABSCF would like to honor its founding members and those who were instrumental in starting the Board including: Eugene and Crystal Cooper, Hugo Gregory, Oliver Bloodstein, Glyndon and Jeanna Riley, Dean Williams, Eugene B. Cooper, Walter H. Manning, Nan Bernstein Ratner, C. Woodruff Starkweather, and Jennifer B. Watson. We owe them a huge debt and wanted to acknowledge their tremendous contribution for which we are grateful.

HELP PROMOTE BOARD CERTIFICATION IN FLUENCY DISORDERS

The Board would like to invite all individuals who are creating a Powerpoint Presentation in the area of Fluency Disorders, to include one of the four different slides the Board has created which promote board certification in fluency disorders. In an attempt to increase the number of board-certified specialists in fluency disorders, this is one way for the Board to increase awareness and visibility of the specialty certification, hopefully sparking interest in individuals who might consider looking into the process. These slides can be found here:

<https://www.stutteringspecialists.org/ABFFD-Promo-Slides/>. Thank you for helping to promote specialty certification in fluency disorders!

ABOUT THE AMERICAN BOARD OF FLUENCY AND FLUENCY DISORDERS

The American Board of Fluency and Fluency Disorders was the first clinical specialty program approved by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association in 1998. The idea of a specialty program was driven by the need to give consumers access to professionals with advanced knowledge and skills, and to educate and recognize expert clinicians. The specialty program, initially known as the Specialty Board on Fluency Disorders, came into being through the efforts of both professionals and consumers. It was championed by ASHA's Special Interest Division 4, Fluency and Fluency Disorders, with support from the National Stuttering Association and the Stuttering Foundation of America.

FACEBOOK PAGE

Please visit the ABFFD Facebook page. Send Risa Battino, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-F, Social Media Director (rbattino@gmail.com) information regarding upcoming presentations, publications, events, or accomplishments so that we can keep our members informed!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Please join us for the 2024 American Board of Stuttering, Cluttering, and Fluency Disorders online conference **Stuttering Therapy Across the Lifespan**. The conference will be online on June 9th and 10th from 12:30 to 5:30 PM EST, and up to 1.0 ASHA CEUs are available.

Robert Reichhardt, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF

Chair

Laura Johnson, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF

Vice Chair

Matt Krause, MHS, CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF

Treasurer

Glenn Weybright, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF

Advocacy and Education

Samantha Wasilus, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF

Advocacy and Education

Carl Herder, M.A., CCC BCS-SCF

Certification Coordinators

Kim Sabourin, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF

Certification Coordinators

Tricia Krauss-Lehrman, M.M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF

Marketing & Public Relations

Ryan Pollard, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF

Community Outreach Chair

Risa Battino, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF

Social Media Director

Christopher Anderson

Consumer Representative

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the American Board of Stuttering, Cluttering, and Fluency Disorders (ABSCF) is:

*To promote among speech-language pathologists the highest standards for training and service delivery to impact positively the communication skills and thereby the lives of those who demonstrate fluency disorders.

*To verify knowledge of fluency disorders and mastery of skills of professionals who seek and maintain the credential of Board-Certified Specialist-Stuttering, Cluttering and Fluency Disorders.

*To publicize the benefits of working with specialists in fluency disorders and to provide an up-to-date listing of individuals who maintain the status of Board-Certified Specialist-Stuttering, Cluttering, and Fluency Disorders.