COCAF-4

Checklist of Cluttering & Associated Features

DOB_____

Test date_____   Name_____

Category	Feature	1	2	3	Reported but not observed	Seen at assessment
Speech rate & speech fluency	Stuttering					
	Perceptually overly rapid speech rate					
	Short bursts of fast speech					
	Unable to maintain natural speech rhythm					
	Inappropriate speech rhythm / pausing					
	Inappropriate breathing patterns					
	Phoneme repetition					
	Part word repetition					
	Word repetition					
	Phrase repetition					
Articulation	Mumbling/low volume indistinct speech output					
	Excessive cooarticulation/overcoarticulation					
	Cluster reduction					
	Weak syllable deletion					
	Festinant speech (speech becomes faster and more mumbled over a sentence or phrase)					
	Transposition of phonemes (spoonerisms)					
	Anticipatory coarticulation errors					
	Mispronunciations					
	Speech characterized by a lack of physical tension					
Language and linguistic fluency	Confused wording					
	Revised sentences/phrases					
	Word retrieval difficulties					
	Use of non – specific words "thing"					
	Use of interjections and fillers, e.g., "um, er, well, you know, like"					
	Poor syntax					
	Empty speech/maze behaviour					
	Repetition and revision of words and phrases					
	Semantic paraphasias (e.g., magazine for paper)					
	Unfinished sentences					
	Possible high-level comprehension difficulties					
Disorganized thinking	Reduced ability to sequence significant events in a story (also may give prominence to unimportant details when storytelling)					
	Gives inappropriate level of detail					
	Goes off-topic/tangential speech					
	Unaware of fluency/speech/language errors					
Writing	Untidy handwriting					
	Written errors mimic speech errors. This may include: missing or transposed characters, lack of consistency in letter height					
	Careless spelling errors					
Attention	Short attention span					
	Easily distracted					
	Forgetful					
Other nonverbal attributes	Poor gross motor control					
	Poor fine motor control					
	Other					

COCAF-4 Checklist of Cluttering & Associated Features

Purpose and notes for administration

COCAF-4 is a revised version of an earlier checklist; COCAF (Ward, 2017). Its purpose is to provide the clinician with a quick and easy to administer guide as to the presence and the extent of features that can be regarded as core to cluttering, alongside those which may be commonly be seen as concomitant to it. The checklist adheres to the lowest common denominator (LCD) definition of cluttering (St Louis & Schulte, 2011, pp 241-242) as below:

> *'Cluttering is a fluency disorder wherein segments of conversation in the speaker's native language typically are perceived as too fast overall, too irregular, or both. The segments of rapid and/or irregular speech rate **mus**t further 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.'*

> Note also: *'Cluttering must occur in naturalistic conversation, but it need not occur even a majority of the time. Clear but isolated examples that exceed those observed in normal speakers are sufficient for a diagnosis.'*

Notes for completion of COCAF-4

> Scoring – for each feature listed, place a cross or tick in the appropriate column:
> **1** = within normal limits
> **2**= appears more commonly than expected
> **3** = strong feature

This simple 3-point scoring system can help the clinician arrive at an indication of cluttering or cluttering spectrum behavior (Ward, 2017) but further examination on the core characteristics will be needed to confirm a diagnosis of cluttering. The checklist cannot provide an exhaustive list of possible factors and clinicians are encouraged to expand on responses across all areas noted on the checklist and consider other factors not listed. COCAF-4 should, therefore not be used as a stand-alone tool for the differential diagnosis of cluttering. COCAF-4 includes sections which might also have implications for consideration of (amongst others): attention deficit disorders, language disorder, phonological disorder, dyslexia and dyspraxia. COCAF-4 is suitable for use with both children and adults.

For an indication of cluttering to be made under the LCD definition, the client's profile on COCAF-4 must show deficits in 1) At least one of the two darker shaded areas, and 2) At least one of the lighter shaded areas.

(Note: The LCD definition provides a narrow, but secure, account of cluttering. However, there is ongoing debate as to which features can be considered core, and which ones are concomitant to the disorder. It is possible that under different definitions, further areas probed on the COCAF-4 but not indicated by shading, may be seen as core.)

In addition to the three columns (as above), there are two further columns: 'Reported but not seen' and 'Seen at assessment'. When scoring for presence /absence for each feature (in the first three columns), clinicians might wish to use different colours to indicate whether the check marks refer to 'Reported' or 'Seen' behaviours.

Some apparently 'associated' features may well have ramifications for core LCD behaviours. For example, word retrieval, which is not an LCD feature in itself, could result in abnormal pausing, or increase in normal non fluency through adding filler words: e.g., 'um', 'er', both of which are, when used to excess, core cluttering characteristics under the LCD definition. Such potential interactions should be explored at assessment.

The clinician can complete the COCAF-4 with the client to gain their self-perceptions. If so, it is recommended that the clinician also compiles their own version independently. The match or mismatch between the two data sets can be helpful when determining the direction and focus of future therapy.

COCAF-4 may be freely copied and distributed

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References:
- St Louis, K.O. and Schulte, K. (2011) Defining cluttering: the lowest common denominator, In D. Ward and K. Scaler Scott (Eds.) *Cluttering: a handbook of research, intervention and education* (pp 233-254) Psychology Press: East Sussex

- Ward, D. Stuttering and Cluttering. 2nd edition (2017) Routledge, Psychology Press, East Sussex