

Name Change for the American Board of Fluency and Fluency Disorders Survey

December 2022

Our most recent name change survey indicated a clear consensus to change the name of the board. No one name in our survey had consensus. As we continue to listen to our membership and work towards agreement regarding changing the name of our board, we have reached out to board certified specialists who have participated in round tables and conversations around the name change and asked them to provide statements describing their views on a name for the board. Please read through the statement before ranking the options. Thank you for the time and thought that our membership has invested in this topic. A special thanks to Dr. Heather Grossman, Dr. Sue Ellen Krause, Lourdes Ramos-Heinrichs, and Dr. Kathy Scaler Scott for contributing to this survey with an indepth opinion to help outline the discussions that we have been having as a community.

The following statements reflect some of the discussions we have had in our round tables:

I believe the title "American Board of Stuttering and Related Disorders" most accurately describes the work we do and best reflects our actual expertise.

I have always felt the need to change from 'American Board of Fluency and Fluency Disorders'. Segmented, what would the American Board of Fluency do? It is confusing as it could imply we work on language fluency/proficiency. By itself, "American Board of Fluency Disorders" would be better, but I prefer the title above for several reasons:

I think adding the term "Related Disorders" opens the scope up well to include those cases where there is atypical stuttering, stuttering along with cluttering, stuttering with other issues, etc. making this an improvement of simply stating, for example, "Board of Stuttering."

While cluttering is within our scope of practice, the portfolio process currently does not require candidates to demonstrate proficiency in cluttering, nor does it require presentation of a case study including cluttering. I believe, therefore, it would be misleading to put the specific term "cluttering" in the title for the board.

Heather Grossman, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCS-F
Director of the American Institute of Stuttering

Fluency and Fluency Disorders is the umbrella term for all speech fluency disorders, including language based fluency and disfluency, stuttering, and cluttering. The ABFFD can opt to use social media, community outreach, and other avenues to describe the areas covered under the umbrella of fluency and fluency disorders. ASHA has already defined Fluency Disorders. That is not changing. It is detailed in the ASHA Practice Portal: [Fluency Disorders \(asha.org\)](https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/fluency-disorders).

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Fellow, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Fellow, Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association

I have about four reasons for maintaining the title: Fluency and Fluency Disorders.

1. This title allows researchers and clinicians to practice their craft in an unrestricted way. There are many conditions that may lead to eventual stuttering or cluttering, as we may not yet know the course the client will take, depending on the genetic and environmental factors.

2. There are three possible diagnoses: Cluttering-stuttering combined, cluttering alone or stuttering alone. Each should be a differential diagnosis after a fluency evaluation is performed.

3. The risk of changing the name of a field of study because the folks impacted by the disability don't want to be identified with that label, eventually they may not like the labels "cluttering" or "Stuttering" because those can be even more stigmatizing than "fluency disorder", as fluency disorder is general and more difficult to stigmatize the particular traits as it encompasses a wide range of characteristics, including allowing space for maturation (or spontaneous discontinuation) of the disorder

4. Looking through the extensive history of the field of stuttering/cluttering you find that even a simple google search for the definition of fluency disorder, the word fluency is used to define any interruption of speech fluency, for example see ASHA definition:

Fluency Disorders - ASHA

A fluency disorder is **an interruption in the flow of speaking characterized by atypical rate, rhythm, and disfluencies**

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Clinical Specialty Certification- Fluency Disorders
Boston Public Schools Stuttering Cohort Coordinator

My choice for the name change is the following: The American Board of Stuttering, Cluttering, and Fluency Disorders

I make this choice for several reasons. First, by including "stuttering" and "cluttering" it reflects the continued evolution of our field to support that fact that the end goal for many in treatment is not "fluency" but becoming an effective communicator. From a practical level, this board was designed with the intent that consumers would have a way to find professionals who are skilled in the treatment of stuttering, cluttering, and "other" (i.e., atypical) disfluencies. When consumers search for a practitioner, they may be more likely to put the words "stuttering" or "cluttering" into the search engine rather than fluency. I don't think many searching for cluttering treatment would even know to put in the word "fluency." This is critical because although we have made advances in educating the public about cluttering, it is still extremely difficult for clients who clutter to find someone with experience in diagnosing, assessing, and/or treating cluttering. This is even moreso the case for atypical disfluencies. For those who may say, "I am a stuttering specialist but I don't work with cluttering or atypical disfluencies" and I don't want to mislead the consumer, I urge you to consider yourself as the point person who can best direct this client, even if you can't treat them. As specialists we have access to other specialists, the ASHA SIG-4 list serv, and other means to connect clients we don't feel qualified (or don't have time to) treat with someone who can help them. The vision

for this group was to help those with stuttering, cluttering, atypical disfluencies, and by making the name inclusive of all it continues to serve that purpose.

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Winner of Deso Weis Award for Excellence in the Field of Cluttering

[Click here to take the survey.](#)