

Avoidance Reduction Therapy for Stuttering (ARTS®) Master Class

Avoidance Reduction Therapy for Stuttering (ARTS®) is a stutter-affirming approach that values stuttering as a unique expression of human difference. Rather than targeting stuttering itself, ARTS focuses on separating stuttering from the struggle that can become intertwined with it. This struggle may emerge from conflicting drives to speak and remain silent, to communicate authentically and conceal stuttering, and to engage while also seeking safety and protection.

ARTS also addresses efforts to control the experience of stuttering. These may include attempts to control how stuttering looks or sounds—its duration, volume, tension, or perceived impact on a conversational partner—as well as attempts to control how others think or react. Control may also turn inward, as stutterers attempt to manage, suppress, or escape their own thoughts and feelings through avoidance or false fluency. ARTS supports clients in recognizing these patterns and gradually letting go of the control and reactivity that fuel tension, effort, and struggle.

Although the foundational concepts of ARTS are straightforward, skillful implementation is often complex. Clinicians must continually adapt therapy to individual patterns of struggle, readiness for change, competing needs for safety and risk, emotional responses, communication environments, and client and family values. Developing this clinical flexibility requires more than familiarity with ARTS principles; it requires practice, problem-solving, reflection, and opportunities to learn with other experienced clinicians.

This one-day ARTS® Master Class is designed for clinicians who have already completed foundational ARTS training and are ready to deepen their clinical reasoning and application. Through active discussion, collaborative problem-solving, case-based exploration, and debate, participants will examine challenging clinical questions that arise when ARTS moves from theory into practice. Topics will be responsive to the interests of the group and may include:

- How can we reduce struggle when a client presents with a highly complex stuttering pattern?
- How can clients balance safety, protection, and risk as they move through the therapy process?
- How do we address false-role behavior when letting go of one role appears to create another?
- What happens when big feelings enter—and sometimes overwhelm—the speech therapy room?
- How can ARTS concepts be meaningfully applied with our youngest clients?
- When clients and families genuinely want fluency, how can clinicians acknowledge that desire while maintaining a stutter-affirming therapeutic stance?

The Master Class invites clinicians to go deeper into ARTS—to wrestle with clinical complexities, challenge assumptions, examine our own responses and vulnerabilities, and think together about the difficult places where therapy rarely offers a simple answer.



ARTS® Master Class: Collaborative Problem-Solving



One-Day Workshop

Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM

A collaborative continuing education offering:
University of Maryland & Sisskin Stuttering Center, PLLC



Content: An in-depth, interactive, collaborative workshop in Avoidance Reduction Therapy for Stuttering (ARTS®) for speech-language therapists with prior workshop training in ARTS.

Format: This highly interactive Master Class uses case-based exploration, collaborative problem-solving, discussion, and debate to examine the complex clinical questions that arise in ARTS® practice. It will focus solely on one treatment approach.

Instructor:

Vivian Sisskin, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF: Clinical Professor Emerita, UMD; Director, SSC

Facilitators:

Samantha Wasilus, MA, CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF: SSC, PGCPs

Jessica Wertz, MA, CCC-SLP: UMD; SSC

Ben Goldstein, MA, CCC-SLP: PGCPs; SSC

Nic Brow, MA., CCC-SLP: SSC, FRIENDS

Maria Binger, MA., CCC-SLP: SSC

Matt Phillips, MA, CCC-SLP: SSC; MSU

Chaya Goldstein-Schuff, MA, CCC-SLP: SSC

Daniel Shaw, MS, CCC-SLP: SSC; SCS

Disclosures Financial: Sisskin is the Director of SSC and receives compensation from UMD. Wasilus, Goldstein, Brow, Binger, Phillips, Goldstein-Schuff and Shaw receive compensation from SSC. Wertz receives a salary from UMD and compensation from SSC. **Disclosures Nonfinancial:** Sisskin Stuttering Center is the owner of the ARTS® and Open Stutter® registered trademarks. Instructors and facilitators have no nonfinancial disclosures to report.

*UMD: University of Maryland. SSC: Sisskin Stuttering Center. PGCPs: Prince Georges County Public Schools. FRIENDS: FRIENDS Who Stutter; MSU: Michigan State University; SCS: Sumner County Schools.

Cost: \$150

Registration: Complete this form to receive registration invoice: [pre-registration](#)



CEUs: Application has been made to offer this activity for .6 ASHA CE (professional area, advanced level). To complete the course and earn ASHA continuing education units (CEUs), attendees must meet the following satisfactory completion requirements: attend the course in full, complete a self-assessment, and submit a course evaluation.