


**Down Syndrome and
Selective Mutism
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Presentation structure

- Introduction
- Down syndrome and language / speech
- Selective Mutism
- Case study
- New Diagnosis
- Case study
- Discussion

DS, language and speech

- **Average developmental age 4-12 years**
- **Different oral structures**
- **Hearing loss**
- **Comprehension > expressive language and speech**
- **Self talk**
- **Specific nervous system**
- **Verbal regulation**

Selective Mutism

The cardinal characteristic of Selective Mutism is a persistent failure to speak in specific social situations in which speech is normally expected, despite speaking in other situations.

And

Although use of verbal communication is absent in certain social situations, the diagnosis does not exclude other forms of communication, such as gesturing, shaking the head, pulling or pushing, or grunting.

DSM-IV Selective Mutism

1. a persistent failure to speak in specific social situations in which speech is typically expected, despite speaking in other situations
2. It is not the result of an organic inability to understand language or a lack of knowledge of , or comfort with, the spoken language in the social situation
3. the disturbance interferes with educational or occupational achievement or with social communication

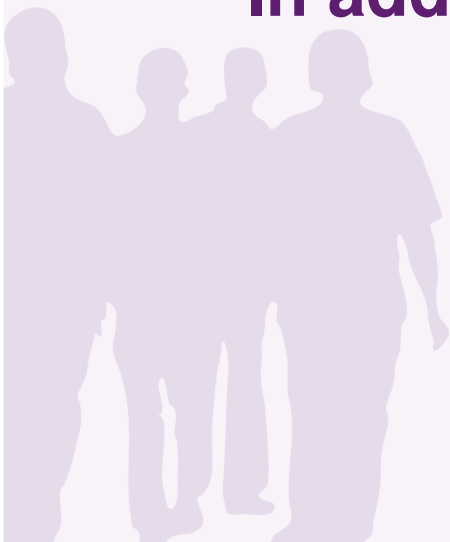
4. the duration of the disturbance is at least 1 month, not including the first month of school
5. the disturbance is not be better accounted for by a communication disorder (e.d. stuttering) and does not exclusively occur during the course of a pervasive developmental disorder, schizophrenia, or other psychotic disorder

Variant talking behaviours

Like talking with

- **less frequency**
- **less volume**
- **less spontaneity**

In addition to the mutism



Case Sarah

DSM-IV

• 1

• 2

• 3

• 4

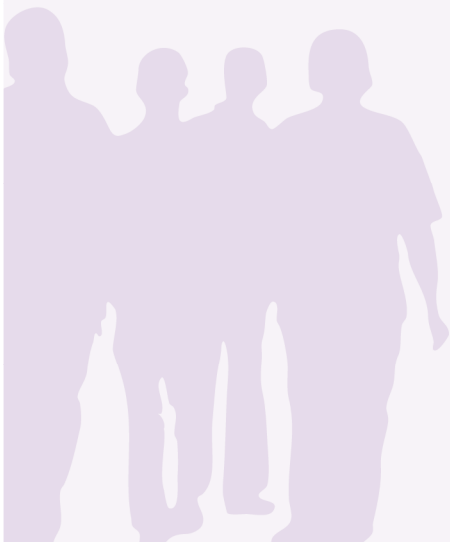
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Sarah

- She did speak at home and on vacation
- Language comprehension is very good
- She could not take part in specific verbal work situations
- Duration of several years
- There is no evidence or indication for a communication disorder or a psychotic disorder.

New Diagnosis

**The diagnosis Selective Mutism
can be used with adolescents and
adults with Down Syndrome**



Case Kelly

DSM-IV

• 1

• 2

• 3

• 4

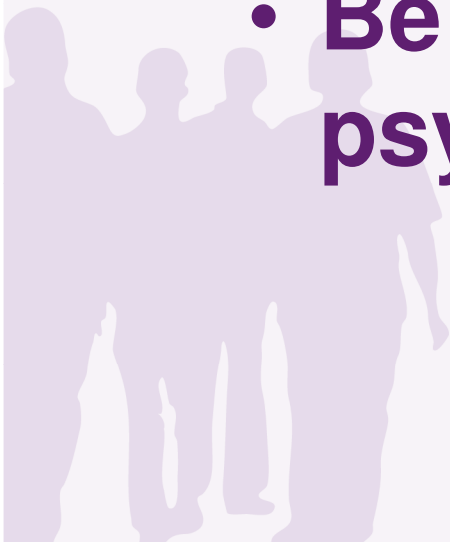
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Kelly

- She speaks in a microphone and through a telephone. In other situations she prefers to use other communication forms
- Peabody 8;1 years. She can read and write
- She could no longer work at the social work place
- It started in 1995 till now. There is a regression in communication
- There is no evidence for dementia and depression.

Recommendations

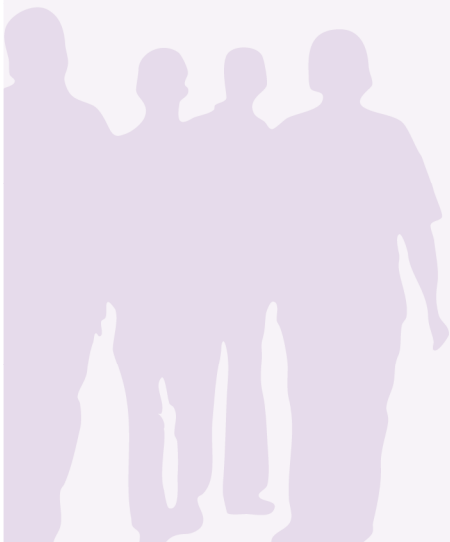
- **It is essential to recognize the symptoms on time**
- **A multi disciplinary approach is necessary**
- **Be alert of a co-occurring psychopathology**



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Classification and eatiology

- **Symptom or variant of an anxiety disorder**

Two theoretical accounts: (Manasis et al. 2003)

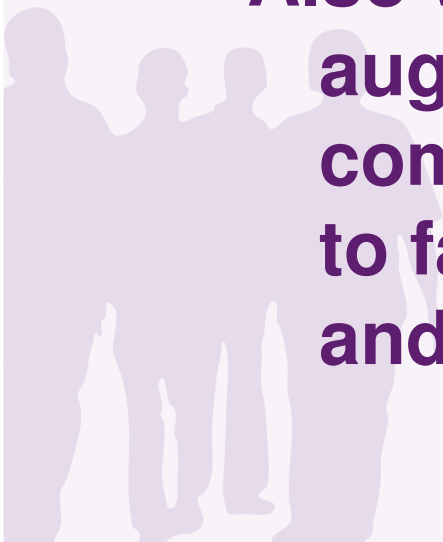
- **Speech restriction due to anxiety**
- **Speech restriction related to language impairment or broader developmental delays**



Treatment

We think treatment should not only include pharmacological treatment but also psycho education, restructuring of environment, lowering of demands.

Also we recommend the use of augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) to enhance and to facilitate speech, to structure life and life events.



- **To empahsize only the verbal communication lays an extra limitation in the communication and enhances the overloading of the person.**

