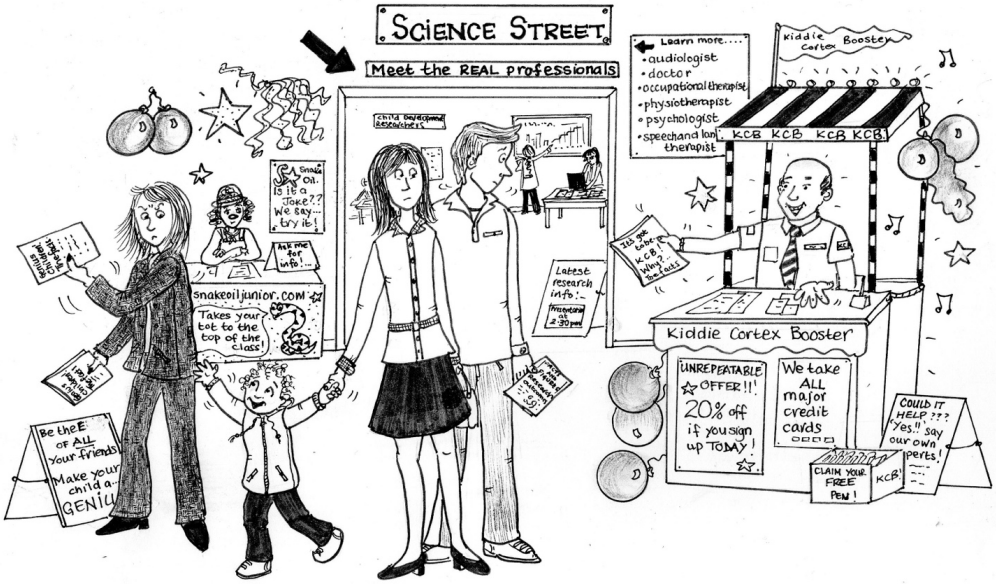
TREATMENT FADS

Science and pseudoscience in the clinic and classroom

Caroline Bowen AM PhD CPSP



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Medicine and allied health are science-based professions in which ethical, evidence-based, theoretically sound practice is central. Nonetheless, pseudoscientific "interventions" impact practice, complicating our work with children and young people with developmental disorders that affect aspects of speech, language, literacy, fluency, voice, communication, attention, cognition, working memory, behaviour, and nutrition.

In their book *Making Sense of Interventions for Children with Developmental Disorders*, Bowen and Snow (2017) clarify why pseudoscientific, "alternative" treatments don't or won't work, and in some instances why they are unsafe. But the book is not only about debunking myths and illuminating false promises. The authors also pilot readers towards treatments with worthwhile credentials, underpinned by solid theory, good science and common sense. Drawing on the 2017 book, and ongoing research for books in preparation for 2021 and 2022, Dr Bowen aims to provide opportunities for participants to call on their information literacy and research literacy skills. Using these skills, they will review popular but troubling fad interventions, contrasting them with interventions supported by robust research data; consider the cognitive biases that sustain them; look at fad-related, anonymized ethical dilemmas within four ethical frameworks; consider the opportunity costs for all concerned, and discuss what SLPs/SLTs might do and say in such potentially delicate situations.

The day comprises lecture-style content, small- and whole-group Q&A, discussion, and problem-solving around real but anonymized case scenarios. Participants are encouraged to recount fictionalized 'cases' of their own personal experience of, and responses to, questionable treatments.

Learner Outcomes: Participants will

Recognise the threats to clients, practice and the professions, posed by treatment fads.
Review key issues around research literacy, information literacy, and cognitive bias.
Contrast scientific interventions, with good credentials, with pseudoscientific, fad interventions.
Apply four frameworks to problem-solving ethical dilemmas, and learn from shared experiences.
Formulate responses to and remedies for ethical dilemmas, in Allied Health, and Education.

References

Bowen, C. & Snow, P. (2017). *Making Sense of Interventions for Children with Developmental Disorders*. Guildford: J&R Press.

Bowen, C., Snow, P., & Brandon, P. (in preparation for 2021). *The Developmental Disorders Roadmap for Families and Teachers*, Guildford: J&R Press.

Bowen, C. & Snow, P. (in preparation for 2022). *Making Sense of Interventions for Children with Developmental Disorders, Second edition*. Guildford: J&R Press.