

Cheri Horkman: Board Recognized Specialist in Speech and Swallowing Disorders



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Harlingen - The American Speech-Language Hearing Association -- the association that grants basic certification to all Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) as an entry level requirement for clinical practice -- began this specialty recognition program in 1995. When searching for a specialist on the BRS-S membership website, there are approximately 136 people nationwide who hold the BRS-S certification. Cheri is one of only nine listed in Texas, 7 in Houston and 1 in San Antonio.

Speech-language pathologists treat patients with a variety of speech-language and swallowing disorders. A speech-language pathologist who is a Board Recognized Specialist in swallowing and swallowing disorders maintains exceptional, advanced knowledge, high-level skills and clinical experience in the evaluation and treatment of swallowing disorders. A BRS-S speech-language pathologist has chosen to specialize in this area, that is, they devote a significant amount of their clinical practice and continuing education to diagnosing and treating this complex disorder. Because of this dedication and training, a BRS-S speech-language pathologist has learned the latest, state-of-the art clinical approaches and can most effectively and efficiently evaluate and treat individuals with swallowing disorders. This certificate is akin to Board Certification that qualified physicians hold

A BRS-S specialist has studied extensively and remains current on research in the field of swallowing and swallowing disorders. The BRS-S specialist provides appropriate, evidence-based treatment techniques to address the swallowing problem(s) of each individual, based upon the comprehensive swallowing assessment. While BRS-S is voluntary, it is becoming the standard for identifying an SLP who is an expert in dysphasia, or swallowing disorders.

In April, Harlingen Medical Center speech pathologist Cheri Horkman received Board Recognition as a Specialist in Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders. This specialization recognizes Cheri's advanced skills and knowledge related to assessment and treatment of adults and children who have swallowing disorders. There are less than 150 Board Recognized speech pathologists in the country, and she is the first clinician in the Rio Grande Valley to have achieved this distinction. At Harlingen Medical Center Cheri completes the Modified Barium Swallow Study with both inpatients and outpatients. Through this exam, she is able to assess adults and children who have swallowing disorders, and she can provide treatment guidelines and dietary recommendations for those patients who are experiencing dysphasia.