

Remember

- Encourage students to find their own solutions to the challenges they face.
- Discussion with students helps to reduce sensitivity about stammering.
- Stammering does not have to limit choices. If students are relaxed and confident their stammering will become easy to manage.
- Fear of stammering can cause more difficulties than the stammer itself. Working together with students can help to reduce these fears.
- Ensure that the student has support of a Speech and Language Therapist who is a specialist in working with people who stammer. Download our referral form here www.swindonspeechandlanguagetherapy.wordpress.com
- Residential courses are run in partnership with The Fluency Trust charity- these are available for young people who stammer in Swindon visit www.thefluencytrust.org.uk

**Be aware, this difficulty may
be hidden.
8% of children stammer.
Your support is vital.**

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Speech and Language Therapy Services



Stammering Support

Information for Secondary School Teachers

Supporting young people who stammer in secondary school



The Specialist Stammering Service
Speech & Language Therapy Services
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Transition to secondary school

- A student who stammers may hide their difficulty so the problem is not recognised.
- Moving to a larger school and meeting new people may be very challenging for a young person who stammers.
- **All teachers** concerned with the student need knowledge and understanding to help the young person to build confidence and manage their difficulty in a positive way.

Signs and Symptoms

- The student may have stammered for some time and have entrenched difficulties.
- There may be negative emotions, self-consciousness, frustration, embarrassment or anger.
- Self-confidence may be affected.
- The student may remain quiet and restrict their opportunities.
- The student may fear being identified as having a stammer and may have already experienced bullying and teasing.
- A pattern of negative thinking may be contributing to the problem.

Work Experience

A positive placement can greatly increase confidence. It is helpful to consider the placement carefully. If the employer understands about stammering this can decrease the student's sensitivity about their speech and encourage a positive open attitude.

Choices and Careers

It is important that students consider all choices of courses and careers and do not feel limited by stammering. People who stammer can achieve in all careers.



How can stammering be recognised?

There may be a range of overt (open) symptoms and covert (hidden) symptoms. These vary from person to person. All or some of the following may be present.

Overt Behaviour

Word repetitions
Sound or syllable repetitions
Prolongations (sounds are stretched)
Blocking (getting stuck)
Facial tension
Body movements
Disrupted breathing pattern

Covert Behaviours

Avoidance: e.g. Changes words
Avoids words
Avoids situations
Remains quiet

Uses tricks (unhelpful behaviours) e.g.:

Uses a lot of fillers (um, eh, you know etc).
Uses body movement, fidgets, closes eyes etc.
May give incorrect answers.
May be disruptive, the class joker, or talk over others to conceal the problem.

Manage Teasing and Bullying

A survey of adults who stammer revealed that 82% were teased or bullied in school.

Students who stammer may find it hard to verbally report what is occurring, a system that allows written reports of bullying can be helpful.

Everyone should be aware of the anti-bullying procedures in place.

Managing Examinations

Oral exams may be challenging for students who stammer.

- Discuss in advance with the student what will make the task easier.
- Early planning and practise generally helps.
- Special consideration / extra time can be given, this needs to be applied for in advance and a Speech and Language Therapy report may be needed.
- Contact the Speech and Language Therapist for more information.

Challenging Situations

Stammering typically varies, with students having some easier or some harder days. These situations can be very hard for students who stammer.

- Registration – waiting for their turn.
- Speaking in front of a group.
- Reading aloud.
- Explaining complex ideas.
- Oral class work.
- Speaking when under time pressure.
- Explaining a difficult situation.

What Helps?

The best solution is to talk with the student and **ask them** what helps them and how you can be supportive. Generally it helps if you:

- Wait and give time.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Speak in a calm manner.
- Don't guess or fill in words.
- Don't put the student under time pressure to respond quickly.
- Allow the student to write down their thoughts and ideas.

Support in School

It is important that **all teachers** who have contact with the student have information about stammering and how best to support the individual.

Watch This DVD

'Wait, Wait, I'm not finished Yet' Information DVD for teachers and professionals supporting children who stammer. This can be viewed via the Michael Palin Centre for children who stammer web site.

<https://www.whittington.nhs.uk>

Visit this website

Information and support for schools from the BSA (British Stammering Association)

www.stamma.org

Flexibility in the classroom can help.

- Vary the register, students have a choice of responses.
- Allow students to read in pairs.
- Give choice about responding to questions.
- Give planning time (if this helps).

Increase Confidence and Self-Esteem

- Notice when the student manages well.
- Give appropriate praise for achievements.
- Encourage students to notice their own achievements.
- Encourage a range of interests and build on strengths.