

STAMMAFEST REPORT NOTTINGHAM AUG '24

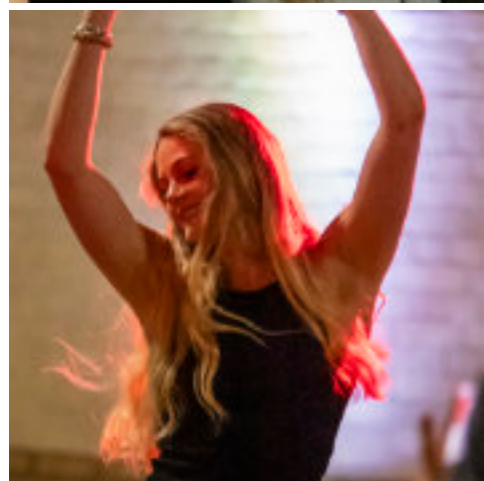


STAMMAFEST

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THANK YOU

This conference could not have taken place without the support of our amazing sponsors:

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“On Saturday there’s an eight-year-old girl with glitter in her hair and stars in her eyes, reaching for a sticker that says ‘Yes, I stammer, why don’t you?’. She tells me that this is the first time she’s met other kids who talk like her. Her father comes over and picks a sticker up that says ‘Someone I love stammers and they’ll change the world’, looks at it for a very long time and puts it in his pocket.”

Neha Shaji, STAMMAFest

STAMMAFEST

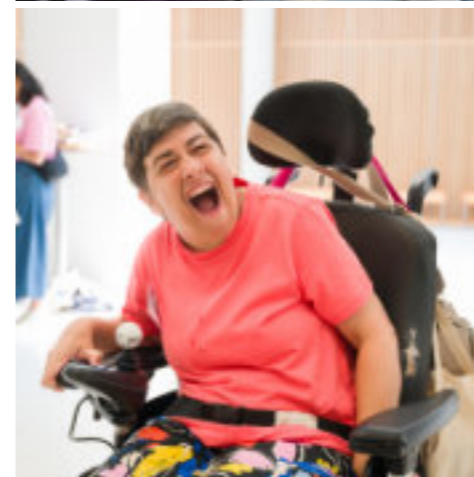
STAMMAFest is an opportunity to energise our community so they have the agency to take action themselves and with others, and provide the breeding ground for other plans to take shape.

Every two years, STAMMA holds a conference for members, for people who stammer and their allies. It’s STAMMA’s jewel-in-the-crown moment. A social event-cum-conference, where we come together as a community, celebrate our voices and look to the future.

STAMMAFest 2024 was held at Nottingham Trent University, 15th-18th August. Over 300 people came from across the UK as well as from Europe, and from as far afield as Japan, Australia, Canada and the USA.

We held plenary discussions and parallel workshops, a Family Day event, a welcome evening, a quiz night and supper and a party on Saturday night. The conference closed with the traditional, emotional ‘Open Mic’ session, where people were given the floor to speak with as much time as they needed. En-route there was a football match and brilliant Stammer Pride gathering.

Friendships were made and renewed, plans were hatched, minds were blown. No-one was left dry-eyed. 98% of those giving feedback found the conference either excellent (82%) or good (16%). 88% are planning to come to the next STAMMAFest.



COMMUNITY LED



What's unique about STAMMAFest conference is that it is community led, with most conference sessions given over to our community to encourage them to showcase what they're doing locally and internationally, and platform their voices. Speech & language therapists, researchers and professionals are welcome to attend and present, but as *part* of this community.

Opposite are the 40 workshops which took place at STAMMAFest 2024. Our role is to provide the umbrella for all, whether they are pro-stammering-pride or focused on fluency. What's important is to bring everyone together, to share ideas, allow discussion, support and learn from each other.



WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Writing Workshop [Adam Giannelli](#) | Stand Up and Be Heard - Authentic Public Speaking [Rob Grieve](#) | The Top 10 Research Priorities into Childhood Stammering [Ria Bernard](#) | First Timers & Lone Rangers [Bob Adams](#) & [Hilary Liddle](#) | Stammer-friendly speed-friending [Patrick Campbell](#), [Kristel Kubart](#) & [Ronan Miller](#) | A new lens: the power threat meaning framework & the mental distress of stuttering [Cameron Raynes](#) | A stuttering revolution. Don't fix your stutter, fix your life [Paul Gaskin](#) | Stammering entrepreneurship: turning challenges into secret weapons [Marin Mrsa.](#) | 'Dysfluent Journeys' film screening and discussion - the Stories Beyond Words Collective [Cathy Soreny](#) & [Emily Fox](#) | Let's talk about shame [Patrick Campbell](#) & [Sam Simpson](#) | Reflecting on stammering and neurodivergence [Penny Farrell](#) & [Alex Harrison](#) | Support groups [Robert Coe](#) | How to never have a 'bad day' because of stammering [Bob Adams](#) | How the NHS is using virtual reality people who stammer [Gareth Walkom](#) & [Nicola Maddy](#) | Listening, changing: How a project advisory group is shaping a PhD project [Barbara Moseley Harris](#), [Farzana Kausir](#) & [Joanne Lloyd](#) | Connecting dysfluency pride communities beyond stammering [Cathy Soreny](#), [Emily Fox](#), [Melissa Tanti](#) & [Lisa Luxx](#) | Wave nature: understanding emotional speech blocks [Dawid Tomaszewski](#) & [Jakub Bojdol.](#) | Women who stammer building community | [Christine Simpson](#), [Claire Tupling](#), [Sibon Phiri-Twaibu](#) & [Pamela Mertz](#) | Becoming a better ally for the stammering community [Cynthia Dacillo](#) | Cluttering: the unknown sibling to stammering [Ciel Udbjorg](#) & [Rutger Wilhelm](#) | Transforming media representations of dysfluency: principles and visions [Genevieve Lamoureux](#) | Talking Out: Who we are and what we do [Katy Jones](#), [Taylor Atkinson](#) & [Ben Bolton-Grant](#) | Dramatherapy workshop a focus on lived experience of stammering [Amruta Huddar](#) | Let's draw our stammer! [Daniele Rossi](#) | Speech recognition technology for people who stammer [Richard Cave](#) | Can a mobile app improve support for caregivers of children who stammer? The Penguin project [Alexa Gredinberg](#), [Jaclyn Morton](#), [Ben Bolton-Grant](#), [Nicola Maddy](#), [Ronan Miller](#) & [Kristel Kubart](#) | Youth engagement in the Irish Stammering Association [Penny Farrell](#) & [Aisling Keogh](#) | The power of poetry [Bevin Murphy](#) | How we got here [Michelle Paradies](#), [Gareth Walkom](#), [Lesley Brownlow](#), [Craig Marston](#), [Rory Sheridan](#) & [Ruth Cross](#) | Why the hell would I want to tell someone that I stammer? [Kirsten Howells](#), [Clara Burn](#) & [Jack Nicholas](#) | Shifting understandings of speech and sound through music [Patrick Campbell](#) & [Josh Walker](#) | 50 ways to be stammering assertive at work [Iain Wilkie](#) & [Rory Sheridan](#) | STAMMA Research Arena [Kirsten Howells](#), [Gill Rudd](#) & [James Whitehurst](#) | Being a gardener to the self: Thoughts from a life-long stammerer [Robyn Jones.](#) | If I spoke like you, I'd rule the world [Mike Scott](#) | Public speaking workshop: stammering is the new sexy [Pauline Fuega](#), [Emery Delmotte](#) & [Mounah Bizri](#) | Dysfluent: A stammering font, flag and magazine [Conor Foran](#) | Engage STAMMA's campaigns [Verena Meyners.](#) | What can STAMMA do for me? [Kirsten Howells.](#)

PLENARIES

'The Power of One' on Friday highlighted the influence just one person can make through making a complaint or raising an issue - and how that can lead to profound change.

On Saturday, Scroobius Pip hosted the 'Our Tribe' discussion, looking at the different journeys that Ian, Natalie, Conor and Nicole have been on. From seeking fluency to stammering pride. The session showed just how fluid our relationship to stammering can be.

On Sunday, the subject was 'Stammering in Sport'. As rugby player Mark Jones was unable to attend, Vee Meyners stepped in and hosted the discussion.

The panel provided a brilliant insight into the world of sport and inspired the listener to be authentic and determined, while giving advice on how to be confident on and off the pitch.

*From top, working from left to right: On **The Power of One** panel: Annette Cmela, Vee Meyners, Elissa Cregan, Catherine Casserley. Hosted by Paul Fix (not shown). Next level, the **Our Tribe** panel with Natalie Mortimer, Ian Trevor, Nicole Scott and host Scroobius Pip, and Conor Foran (bottom left). Then **Sport & Stammering** panel; Bob Breen, James Davies and Anne-Marie Withers hosted by Vee Meyners (not shown)*



Favourite experience: “Circus skills and dramatherapy. Seeing my daughter comfortable in a new group of people without us being with her. Parent feedback.

FAMILY DAY



Family Day was magical. Kids got the chance to meet and hang out with other children who stammer - cue wild excitement. Parents got the chance to meet other parents, meet adults who stammer, and talk to speech & language therapists. From their feedback, simply meeting other parents was massively important.

In the morning, Family Day events were held in separate rooms, away from the main conference activities. Children had special sessions with games and activities designed for them. Two of the three workshops were led by people who stammer, giving young people the chance to meet others who talk just like them, many for the first time.

In the afternoon, families packed into Daniele Rossi's drawing workshop. The children were thrilled to meet the creator of a comic character who stammers, and who stammers himself. Watching children proudly stand up and describe their stammering characters at the end of the workshop brought many in the room to tears.



A BYSTANDER'S VIEW

Parents and children arrived on Saturday morning, looking for the most part, apprehensive. Sitting at the registration desk as children and families departed at the end of the day was a delight. Children were skipping, chatting and laughing. One small girl hurtled towards the speech & language therapist who'd persuaded her to come - giving her a massive hug. Other kids wanted the STAMMA lanyards to wear and take home with them. Parents were relaxed and relieved, full of praise for the day.

As one mother said, "I got to know my daughter a little better today".

That moment of meeting someone else who stammers, for children and adults, can be utterly transformative. And for parents of children who stammer, meeting *adults* who stammer can be a similarly life-changing moment. A moment when they realise that their child is capable of having a happy, fulfilled life and career. More than that, they get to meet other parents, share experiences, feel normal, and offer and find support. The relief was etched on their faces as they left, laughing with the kids as their offspring grabbed momentos from the day.

FAMILY DAY 2025

This was our third Family Day at a STAMMA conference, and the impact was so palpable that we really don't want to wait until 2026 for the next one. We want to support as many children and families as we can. So, knowing how intense the day can be for parents, we want to take the pressure off them. Instead of having to drive across the country and then wrestle with parking, we want to bus kids in ourselves.

If you'd be interested in helping sponsor a coach for the next Family Day, please contact fundraising@stamma.org.



OPEN MIC

The very last session of every conference is 'Open Mic'. This is a chance for people to step forward and address the audience. They can talk about whatever they want.

For many, this is the first time they've ever attempted public speaking

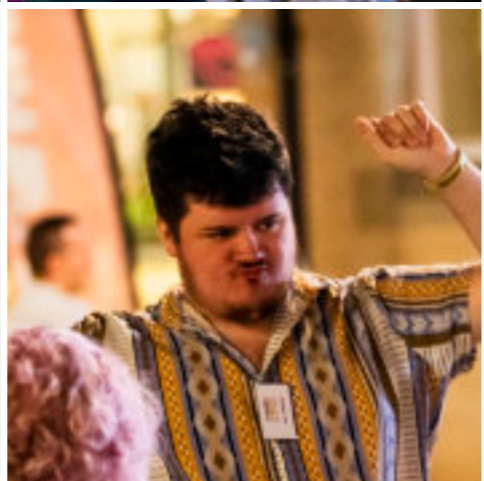
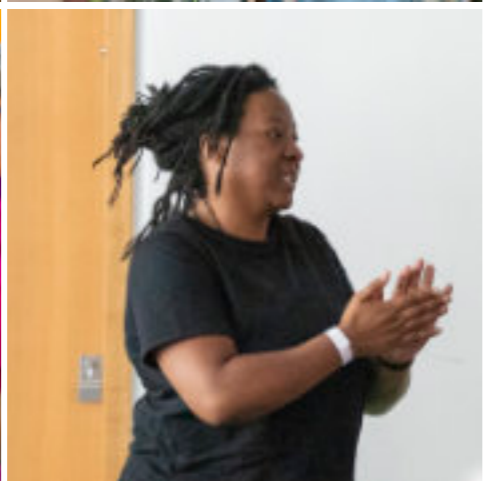
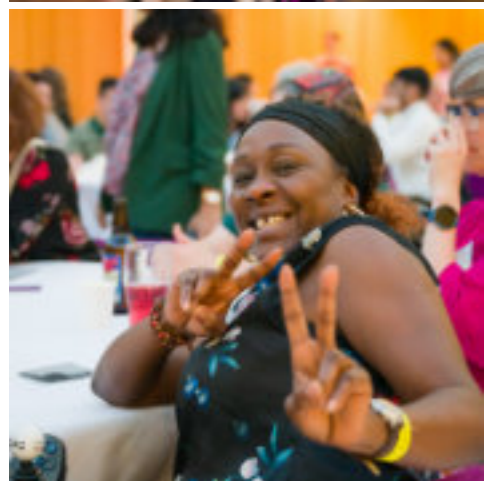
At STAMMAFest 2024, attendees all gathered to give respect and space, first to those who'd never spoken before at Open Mic. Compere Paul Roberts encouraged them to take all the time they needed, and say whatever moved them.

In the stillness and silence of the audience you'd have heard a small mouse crossing the floor. The first speaker moved many to tears when she said, "I'm no longer ashamed of my stammer". Tears turned to awe, laughter and cheers as different speakers took to the floor. Every voice mattered.

We don't take photos during Open Mic, it isn't appropriate. But here are some pictures taken over the four days, of people who did speak, and others who didn't!

Thryve,
Sponsor of the
STAMMAFest
Open Mic





SOCIAL

A significant amount of the conference is given over to social events. The Thursday welcome, the Friday night quiz and the Saturday night party.

It's always been this way, because conference isn't about STAMMA mainlining its message to our members and supporters. Conference is about building on the power of community. Sharing stories, inspiration, research, laughter, tears and friendship.

The workshops and plenaries are great, but very often the real takeaways come from the conversations in between sessions. Our impact on the world around us will always be greater *as a community, or a series of communities*, than by individuals or single organisations.

As we sit, laugh and share alongside each other, these friendships and exchanges strengthen our bonds with each other here and across the world.

Money Wellness

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