

Dear

This person has come to see you because they stammer. When they stammer, they experience the following:

- They repeat sounds or words.
- Their words are sometimes stretched or elongated.
- They have a block and get stuck when trying to get sounds out.
- They are physically very tense and strained when they speak.
- They might use "um", "er" or other filler words to help ease into a stammered word.
- They sometimes say less to reduce how much they stammer.
- They anticipate words that might be difficult to say and change them for others.
- Other (as described)

It is normal for stammering to vary. It can fluctuate naturally over time and situations, or some people may have learned to hide it.

Stammering most commonly starts in early childhood and is a neurodevelopmental speech difference. Stammering which starts later in life can be associated with:

- a recurrence of a childhood stammer
- a neurological event or condition (structural neurological stammering)
- a change in the way the brain is functioning but in the absence of structural damage or disease (functional neurological stammering)
- a side-effect of prescription medication.

People do not stammer because they are nervous or anxious. Nor because they have a certain personality type or level of intelligence. It's just how they talk.

Helpful responses

- Let them finish their sentences without rush or interruption.
- Resist telling them to slow down or stop and breathe.
- Maintain natural eye contact and try not to look uncomfortable.
- Give the occasional nod to show them you're listening.
- Tell them they can take as long as they need.
- Don't make a joke about stammering.

If you would like further information or support either for this person or for yourself, please email us at help@stamma.org or call us on 0808 802 0002. You can also see further information on our website at www.stamma.org.

IT'S HOW WE TALK

STAMMA, the British Stammering Association
Box 140, 43 Bedford Street, London WC2E 9HA Tel 020 8983 1003
Helpline 0808 802 0002 mail@stamma.org www.stamma.org
@stammer @stammaUK / WeAreSTAMMA