



Tips For Speaking With Someone Who Stutters

Stuttering may look like a problem that can be easily solved with simple advice, but for many adults, it can be a chronic life-long disorder. Here are some ways that you, the listener, can help.

- 1** Don't make remarks like: "Slow down," "Take a breath," or "Relax." Such simplistic advice can be felt as demeaning and is not helpful.
- 2** Let the person know by your manner that you are listening to what he or she says — not how they say it.
- 3** Maintain natural eye contact and wait patiently and naturally until the person is finished.
- 4** You may be tempted to finish sentences or fill in words. Try not to. Use a relatively relaxed rate in your own speech — but not so slow as to sound unnatural. This promotes good communication.
- 5** Be aware that those who stutter usually have more trouble controlling their speech on the telephone. Please be patient in this situation. If you pick up the phone and hear nothing, be sure it is not a person who stutters trying to start the conversation before you hang up.
- 6** Speak in an unhurried way — but not so slowly as to sound unnatural. This promotes good communication with everyone.

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7 tips for talking with your child



- 1** **Speak with your child in an unhurried way, pausing frequently.** Wait a few seconds after your child finishes speaking before you begin to speak. Your own slow, relaxed speech will be far more effective than any criticism or advice such as "slow down" or "try it again slowly."
- 2** **Reduce the number of questions you ask your child.** Instead of asking questions, simply comment on what your child has said.
- 3** **Use your facial expressions and other body language to convey to your child** that you are listening to the content of her message and not to how she's talking.
- 4** **Set aside a few minutes at a regular time each day when you can give your undivided attention to your child.** This quiet, calm time can be a confidence-builder for younger children.
- 5** **Help all members of the family learn to take turns talking and listening.** Children, especially those who stutter, find it much easier to talk when there are few interruptions.
- 6** **Observe the way you interact with your child.** Try to increase those times that give your child the message that you are listening to her and she has plenty of time to talk.
- 7** **Above all, convey that you accept your child as he is.** The most powerful force will be your support of him, whether he stutters or not.

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