

What is Stuttering?

1% of people speak in a way that is unique to most: they stutter.

Stuttering is a disability that impacts the flow of speech, and simply a different way of communicating. It is not a defect, nor an indicator of nervousness, stress or intellectual ability—rather, stuttering is a form of neurodivergence.

A stutterer may define stuttering in many different ways. For some, stuttering is a proud badge of difference. For others, it comes with worry and avoidance. Just as each stutterer's voice sounds different from one another, every stutterer has their own experience and definition of stuttering.

A listener may define stuttering based on outward characteristics they notice, such as **repetitions of sounds or words, prolonged sounds, or silent blocks** during speech. Some people who stutter primarily experience their stuttering in this way as well.

Much of what has historically been experienced by stutterers has been a focus on a cure, or on 'fluency.' Though some may naturally grow out of the stutter, for many there is no cure and **stutterers become pressured to hide their natural voice** in search of a more "correct" and time-efficient way to speak.

Due to social stigma, someone who stutters may face significant challenges on an everyday basis. Ordering coffee, making a phone call, raising their hand in class, or conducting a job interview may feel like impossible tasks. This dynamic leads many to opt for avoidance; changing words suddenly, or relying on temporary tricks to mask their authentic voices.

Here at SPACE, we embrace a world in which stutterers - and all people who speak differently - have a right to talk the way they talk. We believe every single person who stutters has the right for the accommodation of time, and deserves to be openly listened to. Our worldview is not just about allowing stuttering, but **embracing it as listeners.**

Want to know how best to support a person who stutters?

- **Listen to what someone says, not how they are saying it.**
- **Don't interrupt someone when they are speaking.**
- **Avoid finishing sentences or guessing words.**
- **Give people the time and space they need to speak.**

Let's create SPACE for stuttering together.

