

Let's talk about stuttering

How to Listen and Make SPACE The SPACE Team

What Causes Stuttering?

The exact **cause** of stuttering is unclear but evidence shows that it:

Is not from trauma, nervousness, or stress
Is almost always **neurological in nature**
Is often passed down genetically

There is no cure for the physical stutter

Stuttering is defined externally by 3 speech sounds;

repetitions of sounds or words: *I'm a person who st-st-st-st-stutters*

prolongation of sounds: *I'm a person who stuuuuuuuuuuutters*

silent blocks: *I'm a person who _____stutters*

Occasionally, these sounds also come with physical movements, called **secondaries**, for ex: *blinking, hand tapping, or looking away.*

But people who stutter often define stuttering as more than that.

So much of what makes up the experience of stuttering is **internal**, *whether a person is actually physically stuttering in that moment or not.*

For example, due to social stigma, **someone who stutters may face significant challenges on an everyday basis**. Ordering coffee, making a phone call, or raising their hand in class may feel like impossible tasks.

People who stutter might begin to avoid words, sounds, or situations entirely due to the **fear that they may stutter in that moment** and be judged or discriminated against for it.

Many people who stutter worry they will never be eligible for jobs that require communicating frequently or effectively, as some of society still believes (incorrectly) that stuttering is a sign of poor communication.

At SPACE, we do not see stuttering as something wrong or something to 'fix'. Stuttering is just a **different way of speaking**. The main difference between a person who stutters and a person who doesn't, is that the person who stutters may take a little longer to speak.

How to best listen to people who stutter (and everyone!)

Listen to **what someone says**, not **how they are saying it**.

Don't interrupt someone when they are speaking.

Give people the **time and space they need** to speak.

Together, let's create SPACE for stuttering

