



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

HOW TO REACT WHEN SPEAKING WITH SOMEONE WHO STUTTERS

- Refrain from making remarks like: “Slow down,” “Take a breath,” or “Relax.” Such simplistic advice can be felt as demeaning and is not helpful.
- Let the person know by your manner and actions that you are listening to **what** he or she says—not **how** they say it.
- Maintain natural eye contact and wait patiently and naturally until the person is finished.
- You may be tempted to finish sentences or fill in words. Try not to do this.
- Use a relatively relaxed rate in your own conversational speech—but not so slow as to sound unnatural. This promotes good communication no matter with whom you are speaking.
- Be aware that those who stutter usually have more trouble controlling their speech on the telephone. Please be extra patient in this situation. If you pick up the phone and hear nothing, be sure it is not a person who stutters trying to initiate the conversation before you hang up.

*A Nonprofit Organization
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