



STUT TE RING

OR FLUENCY DISORDERS



Ordre des orthophonistes
et audiologistes du Québec



WHAT IS STUTTERING ?

Stuttering, a speech disorder, is an interruption in the flow of speaking. It is characterized by behaviors known as disfluencies.

“It is never too late to intervene.”

CAUSES

- 1 The exact causes of stuttering are not yet known.
- 2 Stuttering may or may not be hereditary.
- 3 A person is born with a predisposition to stutter.
- 4 A combination of several factors contributes to the emergence, development, and impact of stuttering. These factors vary from one person to another and may be determined during a speech and language assessment.

However, it is established that stuttering is **not caused by** :

- 1 Emotional disorders or trauma
- 2 Nervous tics or shyness
- 3 Lack of intelligence

WHAT DO PEOPLE DO WHEN THEY STUTTER?

- 👉 They may repeat sounds, syllables or words.
- 👉 They may have difficulty starting a word, phrase or sentence.
- 👉 They may prolong sounds, for example: hhhhhhhello.
- 👉 They may become tense or have to make an effort to speak:

BLINKING

TENSE FACIAL EXPRESSION

HEAD MOVEMENTS

- 👉 They may or may not be aware of their disfluencies.
- 👉 They know what they want to say.
- 👉 They need to speak at their own pace.
- 👉 They want to convey a message.

In fact, everyone hesitates while speaking at one time or another. Repetition of an entire word or the insertion of a syllable such as “um...” can be considered normal hesitation. The type, frequency and duration of disfluency, and its associated tension, determine whether stuttering is occurring or not.

ABOUT STUTTERING

- ▶ The first signs generally appear in children between 2 and 5 years old, but rarely after that.
- ▶ It may vary in intensity from slight to very severe.
- ▶ It may fluctuate over time, i.e. a person may stutter sometimes, and sometimes not.
- ▶ It occurs more frequently among boys than girls.
- ▶ It occurs in all languages and among people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Approximately 1%
of the population
stutters.



FACTORS THAT MAY INCREASE STUTTERING

FATIGUE

EMOTIONS

STRESS

* THE PERSON TO WHOM THEY ARE SPEAKING

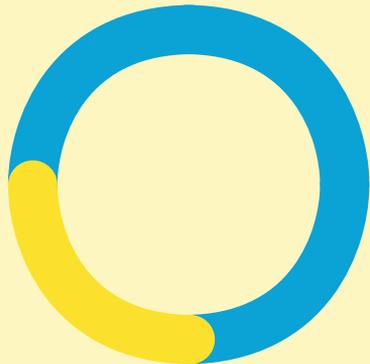
CHANGES IN ROUTINE

* POOR ATTITUDES TOWARD COMMUNICATION ON THE PART OF THE PERSON TO WHOM COMMUNICATION IS ADDRESSED

IN YOUNG CHILDREN, STUTTERING MAY BE TEMPORARY

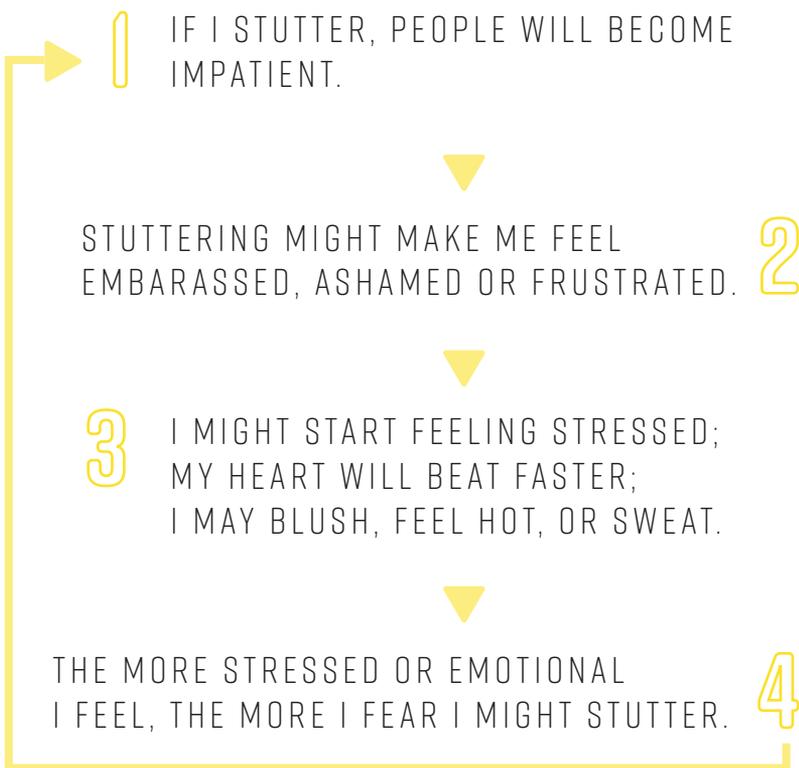
75 %
RECOVER FLUENCY

25 %
WILL CONTINUE
TO STUTTER



IMPACTS OF STUTTERING

What goes on in the minds
of people who stutter:



POSSIBLE IMPACTS

☺
I isolate myself.

☺
I avoid speaking or let others speak for me.

☺
I fail to take advantage of opportunities to express myself.

CONSULTATION

WHEN

- As soon as an individual or parent becomes worried or concerned about their speech fluency or that of their child.
- When stuttering becomes more frequent and lasts for longer periods; signs of tension are present; or unusual facial tics or body movements occur.
- As soon as someone experiences frustration or tends to avoid situations in which they must communicate.

WHO

A speech-language pathologist is the professional who can inform, assess, and intervene with people who stutter or experience other speech disorders.

WHY

- To discuss the situation, obtain information and understand more clearly, at any age.
- To acquire satisfactory fluency.
- To break harmful communication habits.
- To equip people who stutter and those around them with strategies to conduct everyday conversations.

WHERE

- Within the public healthcare sector or with a professional in private practice. Do not hesitate to contact the *Ordre des orthophonistes et audiologistes du Québec* for guidance.
- The following non-profit organizations also offer support:





THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL CONVERSATION

Following these advices and simple adjustments can improve interaction with a person who stutters:

- 1 Understand and accept that the conversation may take longer to begin and end.
- 2 Focus on the message.
- 3 Maintain eye contact.
- 4 Resist the temptation to give advice, such as: "Take your time", "Take a deep breath", "Relax", etc. *These messages only add to the stutterer's discomfort and frustration.*
- 5 Wait until the end of the message before speaking and avoid finishing the person's sentences.
- 6 Avoid pretending to understand if that is not the case.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- › Early intervention, from preschool age, is usually associated with favourable outcomes. However, it is never too late to intervene.
- › Among teenagers or adults, intervention may be more challenging, since negative emotions or protective behaviors may have become a habit.
- › Even if disfluency persists, a person who stutters can live a normal life.
- › If people in close interaction are made aware of issues related to stuttering and helpful strategies are put in place, the person who stutters can learn to communicate with self-confidence.

“A person who stutters can live a normal life.”





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