

The Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children

# Top Tips on supporting kids and teens who stammer

by children who stammer

## About us

- We are much more than just our stammer

*"I don't think that the stammer is my main feature or characteristic, I'm just a normal 18 year old."*



*"Someone who's got a stammer should be treated like everyone else."*

- There is no link between stammering and intelligence

*"People usually judge you by your first appearance and if the first thing you do is talk funny people do sometimes think that you're not as bright."*

- Certain situations make us stammer more. Many of us find being put on the spot or under pressure the hardest.

*"It isn't always easy if I'm put on the spot."*

*"... and it would make me feel more uncomfortable and then that would normally lead to me stammering more."*

## How to help

- Give us time to think and speak

*"A good teacher doesn't interrupt what I'm saying. They give me time to speak."*

*"After I've been asked a question if I was given the time to start thinking about the answer and my speech as well it would be very helpful because I could think of some techniques for my speech."*

- Let us finish our sentences in our own time



*"People in general will try and finish your sentences for you. They probably think that it helps, but the majority of people who stammer would rather know that they can finish their own sentences."*

- Tell us we're doing ok & calm us down if needed, but don't advise us about our speech

*"I don't really like being told to slow down."*



*"People tell me to hurry up, but I get annoyed because I speed up and then I stammer more, so then it takes even more time to get the words out."*

## What else to know

- We want you to understand that we stammer and how it makes us feel



*“Teachers should ask me questions about how I feel about having a stammer.”*

- Some of us get bullied and feel isolated

*“There were these two friends of mine, and then they weren't my friends because they walked off and said that I couldn't talk because I've got a stammer.”*

- Family support is important too

*“Supportive families are really helpful 'coz they just help you to release all of the pressure and tension that builds up if you start to stammer a lot.”*

- We should be referred to a speech & language therapist (with parental consent)

*“Everyone who stammers should come to speech therapy...it teaches you new techniques to cope with it and how to actually live with it.”*

This handout was developed as part of the Stammering Information Programme, a DCSF-funded project to raise awareness in the education workforce about stammering. For further resources please see the below websites or ask your local Speech and Language Therapy team who can access a copy of the DVD 'Wait, wait, I'm not finished yet,' featuring pupils who stammer talking about their stammering and what people can do to help.

If you are concerned about a pupil who stammers please contact the Speech and Language Therapy Service in your local NHS Trust:



### **The Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children**

Finsbury Health Centre, Pine Street, London EC1R 0LP

Telephone: 020 7530 4238 Email: [stammering.information@islingtonpct.nhs.uk](mailto:stammering.information@islingtonpct.nhs.uk)

Website: [www.stammeringcentre.org](http://www.stammeringcentre.org)

### **The British Stammering Association**

Telephone: 020 8983 1003 Website: [www.stammeringineducation.net](http://www.stammeringineducation.net)