

Getting the word out



Workshop for parents/carers of junior aged children and under who stammer



Speech and Language Therapy Service

Before we start...

Please share

- Child's name and age
- One thing you like and admire about your child



How confident are you that you know how to support your child with their talking?

On a scale of 1-5 where
1 = not at all confident
5 = completely confident

1 2 3 4 5

Not Confident Very Confident

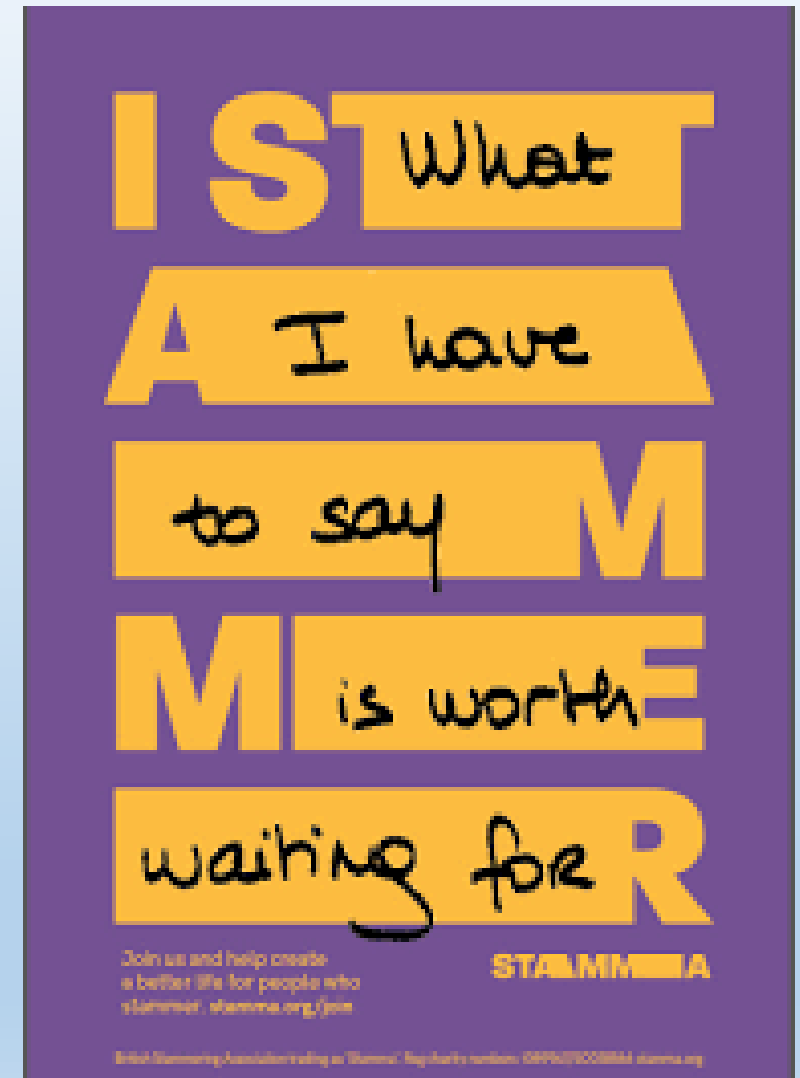
Aims of today's session



- Learn more about stammering
- Identify the factors that affect your child's stammer
- Know how to talk to your child about stammering
- Understand how to support your child's talking
- Know how to build your child's resilience
- Know where to find further information and resources

Our overall aims

- For stammering never to become a problem for your child
- For children to be confident and effective communicators, regardless of whether they stammer



Key takeaways

- It is okay to stammer... but it's not okay to struggle with talking
- You haven't caused your child's stammer... but there are lots of ways you can help



Quiz – true or false?

- Stammering often runs in families
- Most people who stammer start between the ages of 2 and 5
- ‘Stammering’ and ‘stuttering’ mean the same thing
- Stammering is caused by anxiety, stress, or nervousness
- Some stammering is not obvious to other people, like not answering a question in class

TRUE

TRUE

TRUE

FALSE

TRUE

Quiz – true or false?

- Children who stammer just need to relax and calm down before they speak

FALSE

- 8% of children stammer and 2% of adults stammer

TRUE

- It's helpful to finish people's sentences when they are stammering

FALSE

- Children who stammer are just as intelligent, creative, kind and funny as children who don't stammer

TRUE

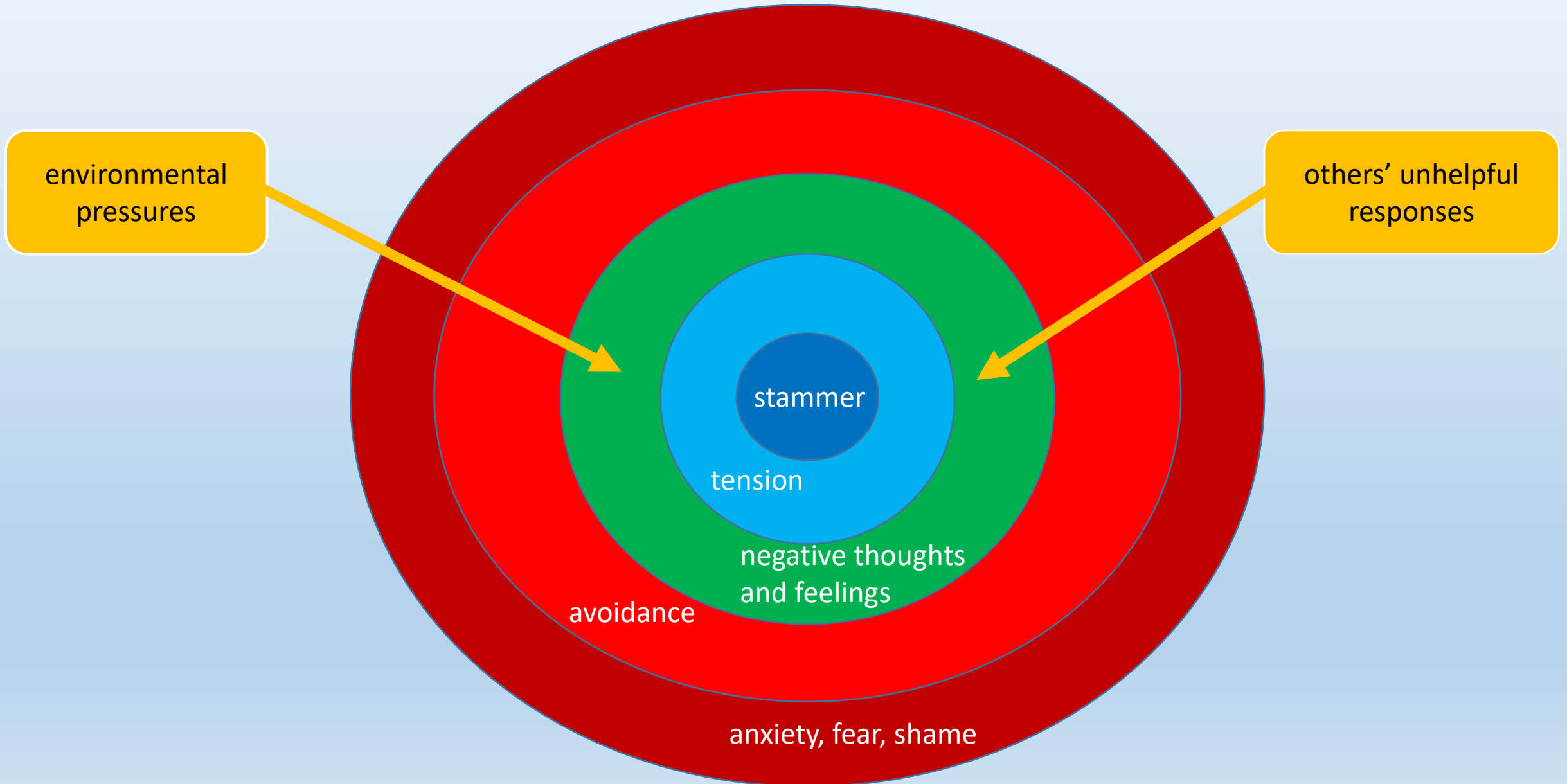
What is stammering?

- Stammering is a neurological condition that makes it physically hard to speak.



- Someone who stammers will repeat, prolong or get stuck on sounds or words. There might also be signs of visible tension as the person struggles to get the word out.

Stammering is not just about getting the words out



Avoid talking about stammering/speech as 'good' or 'bad'

Use neutral language instead



He's stammering
less at the
moment

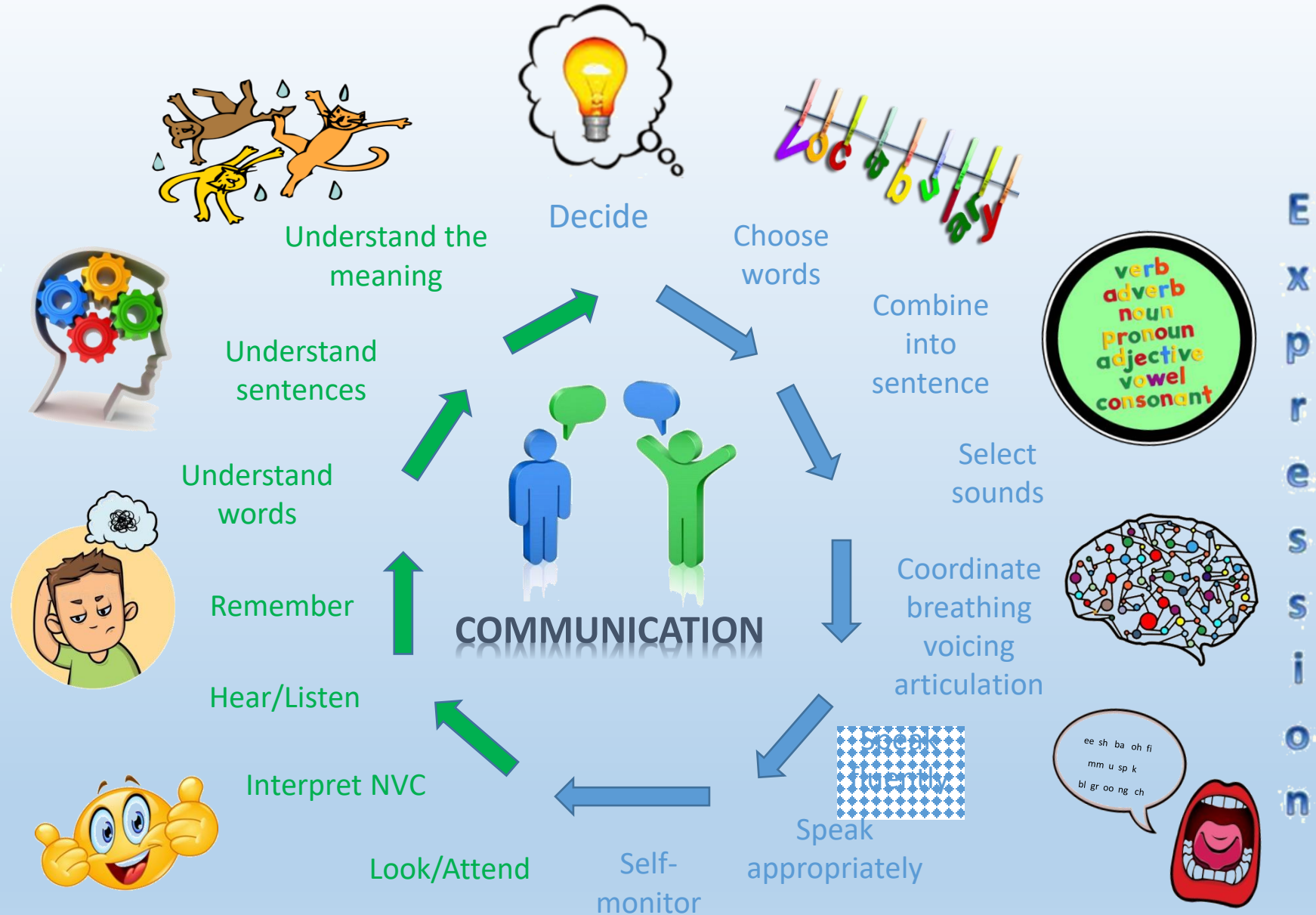


Her stammer is
more noticeable
today

What makes an effective communicator?



C
o
m
p
r
e
h
e
n
s
i
o
n



E
x
p
r
e
s
s
i
o
n

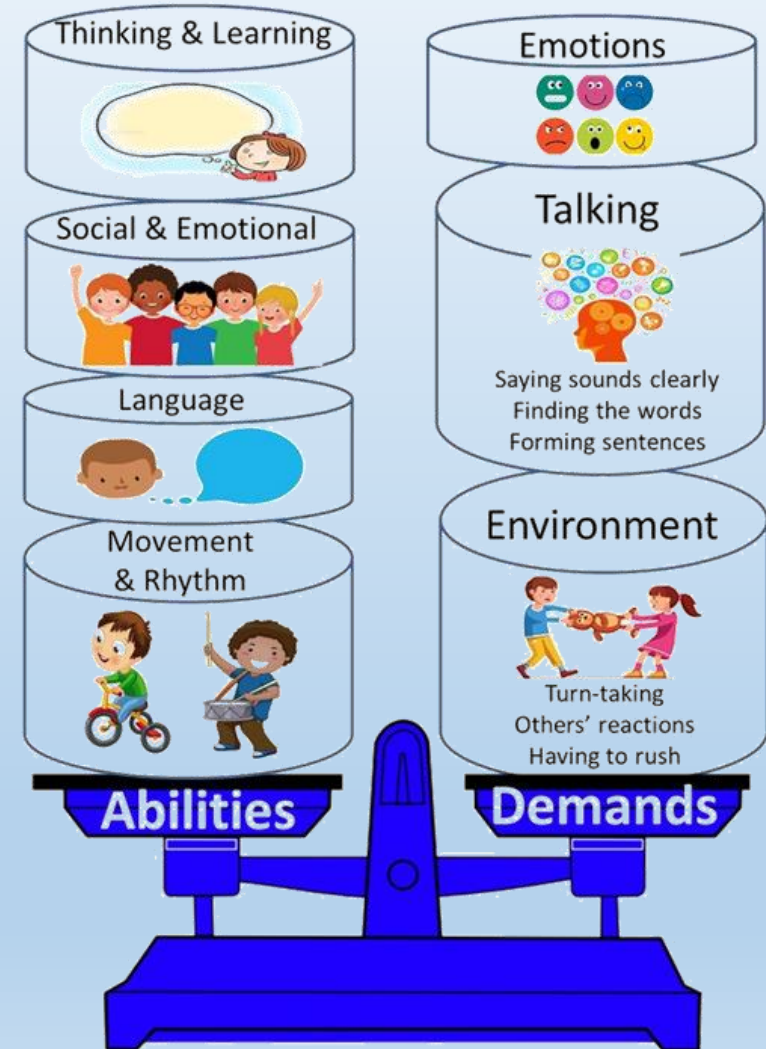
How do we talk?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4Y4EQaw5oU>



Why do some children stammer?

Stuttering/stammering results when **demands** for fluency from the child's social environment exceed their **capacities** for fluent speech



C. Woodruff Starkweather, 1990

Stephanie Burgess, Speech and Language Therapist

Temperament

- **Is your child**
 - Sensitive or not overly?
 - Happy go lucky or a bit of a worrier?
 - Easily upset or not particularly?
- Temperament plays a role in how children react to and manage their stammering
- Children who are highly sensitive and tend to worry about things or get upset easily may be more likely to notice and react negatively when they stammer



When does your child stammer more and when do they stammer less?

For example, when they are...

- Tired / well-rested
- Excited / upset / calm / confident
- In 1:1 situations / when competing with siblings / interrupting
- Answering lots of questions / responding to a comment
- Rushing / taking their time with talking



Words you can use when talking to your child about stammering



stammering



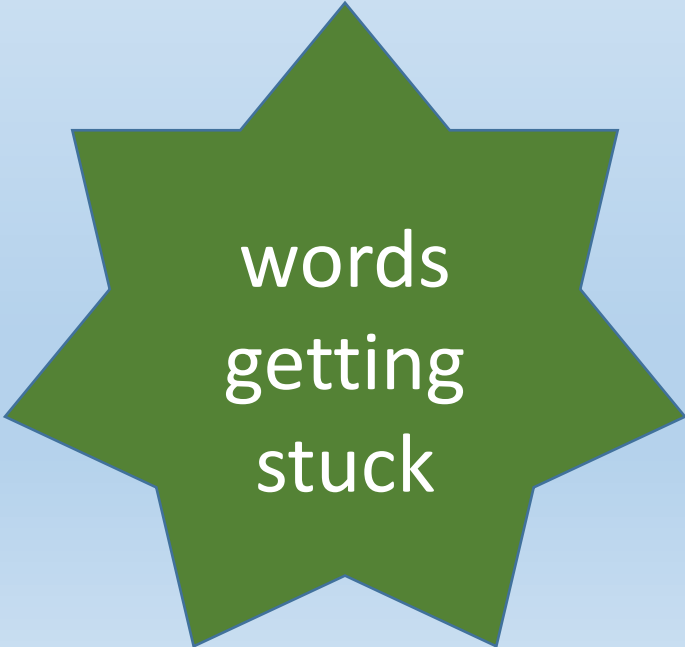
tricky
words



bumpy
talking



stuttering



words
getting
stuck



sticky
words

How to talk to your child about stammering

Normalise: “Lots of people get a bit stuck with their words sometimes.”

Acknowledge: “That word was a bit tricky for you”

Validate: “It’s annoying when our words don’t come out, isn’t it?”

Reassure: “You’re doing brilliantly. I’m listening. You’re still learning with your talking.”

How to support your child's talking

- Slow down your own rate of speech, but don't tell your child to slow down or take a deep breath
- Ask one question at a time and allow plenty of time to answer – or make a comment and just wait
- Keep your language (relatively) simple



Resist the temptation to show anxiety or impatience, or to correct or fill in their speech

Try instead to

- Keep natural eye-contact
- Listen to what your child is saying, not how they say it
- Pause before answering questions
- Make sure everyone in the conversation gets a turn to speak



Special Time



- Aim for 5 minutes a day
- 1:1 calm time when you can give your undivided attention to your child
- No screens, avoid boisterous play, not reading
- Look at books together, do craft, Lego, go for a walk
- Focus on what your child is saying rather than how they're saying it
- Experiment with using strategies e.g., following your child's lead/pausing/ slowing your own rate of speech/asking fewer questions

What would you like to do more of or try out to support your child's talking?



Supporting your child's resilience

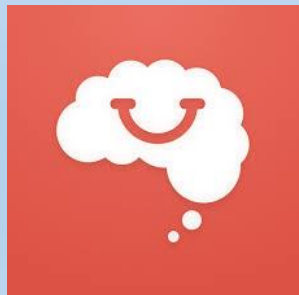
- Resilience is the ability to bounce back after challenges
- Resilience helps us to
 - manage our emotions
 - have a sense of realistic optimism
 - control impulses
 - have belief in our own abilities
 - cope with stress
 - embrace new opportunities
- Resilience skills can be learned



Resilience skills – Relax Breathing and mindfulness



Just Breathe video



Smiling Mind app

weheartcbt.com

Breathing Techniques

When we feel anxious, upset or distressed, it can be difficult to know what to do to feel better. By using these breathing techniques, we can reduce our anxiety and lower our blood pressure/heart rate. This helps us feel calmer and more focused and helps us to face our fears.

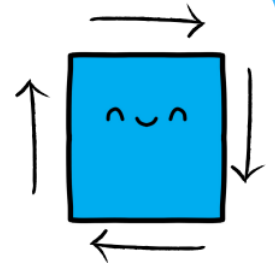
Belly Breathing



- Take a deep breath in and fill your belly like you're inflating a balloon.
- As you do this, count 1, 2, 3, 4 to breath in and fill the balloon in your belly.
- Pause and then let all of the air out of your belly like you're letting a balloon deflate.
- As you do this, count 1, 2, 3, 4 to breath out and let the balloon go down from your belly.

Square Breathing

- Imagine you're drawing a square with your finger in the air.
- Breath in while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the top line and then pause.
- Breath out while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the line down the side and then pause.
- Breath in while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the bottom line and then pause.
- Breath out while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the line up the side to make the square.

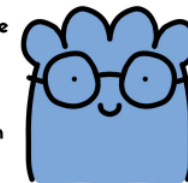


Finger Breathing



- Use your index finger to trace around the edges of the fingers on your opposite hand.
- Count 1, 2, 3, 4 and breath in as you go up the first finger.
- Count 1, 2, 3, 4 and breath out as you go down the finger.
- Repeat until you have traced up and down all five fingers, breathing 1, 2, 3, 4 in and 1, 2, 3, 4 out each time.

Top Tip! Practise these breathing techniques when you're calm so that you're better prepared to use them when you need to.



Count **slowly** when breathing in and out and **repeat** the technique as many times as you need to until you feel calmer.

Resilience skills - Reflect



- **Self-care:** Remember, you need to take care of yourself before you can look after others
- **Thoughts** are just thoughts, not facts; and the stories we tell ourselves can be very real to us, but they may be untrue. Ask: 'What evidence do I have? How else can I think about this?'
- **Empathy:** Connecting with others builds resilience – we are evolutionarily wired to feel connected when we share a smile, a hug, or a few kind words.

'Making time to invest in friendships and close relationships is probably the single most important thing you can do to improve your resilience'

(from *How to Build a Healthy Brain*, Kimberley Wilson 2020)

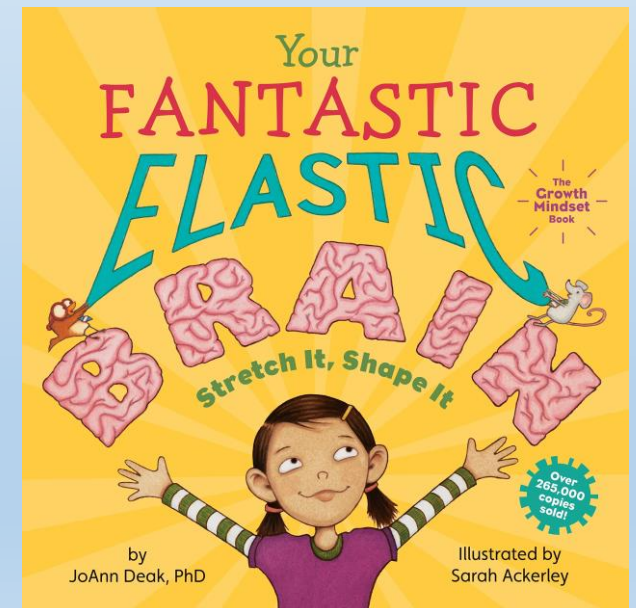
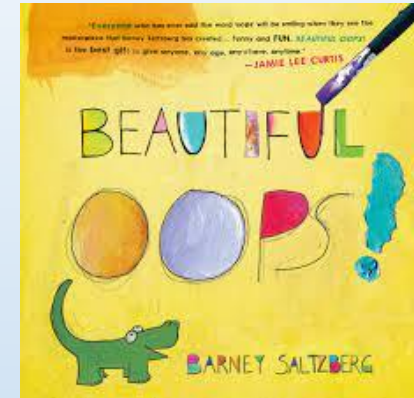
Resilience skills - Respond

Strengths: *remembering* our strengths and resources can build confidence and help us cope when things aren't going well

Growth mindset:

- show your child it is okay to make mistakes
- encourage a 'can-do' attitude

Gratitude: Noticing the good stuff shifts perspective and improves mood (3 good things diary, Happiness jar)



Using praise to build resilience

- Be sincere and specific
- Praise effort and progress rather than achievement or character
- Describe what you notice, and then add a descriptive praise word
- Praise their communication skills to boost confidence with talking

You are working so hard on that!

Wow, that is an excellent word to use!

You are doing such good listening today

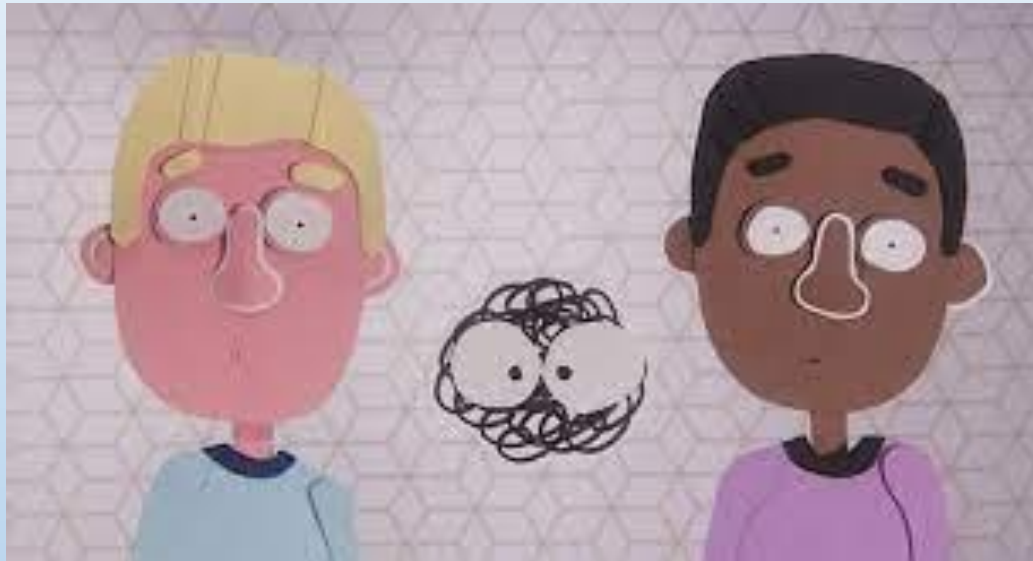
I can see you've put all your Lego in the box. That was very helpful of you.

You explained that so clearly!

What do you already do to build your child's resilience, and what else would you like to try?



Videos



[My Stammering Child](#)



[Videos for parents of pre-school children](#)

Videos



Top tips from the Michael
Palin Centre for
Stammering



Sam's poem 'I have a
stammer'

<https://forms.office.com/e/iZduTKZtap>

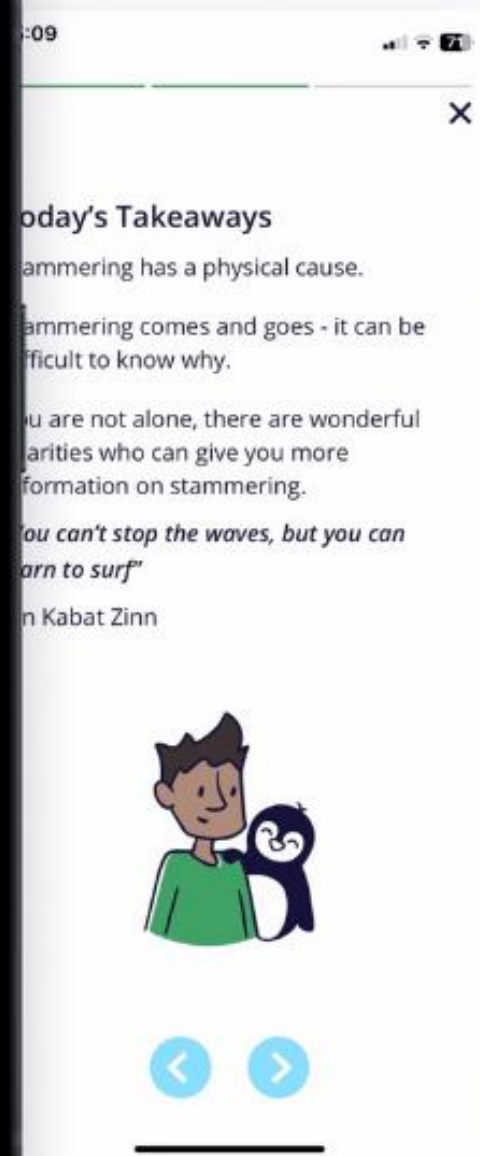
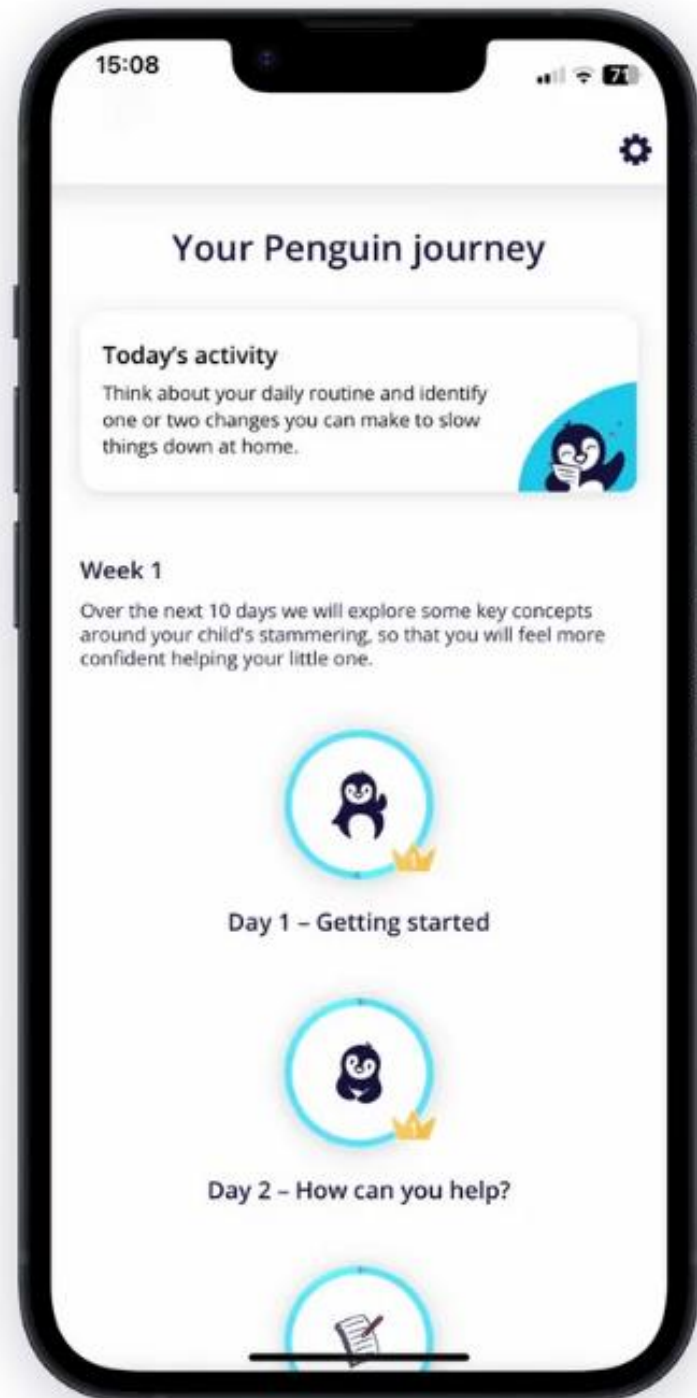
Getting The Word Out parent workshop feedback



Penguin: Stammering Support App



Penguin



Talk with Me factsheet

Taflen ffeithiau Siarad gyda Fi ar atal dweud

Has your little one developed a stammer?



It's normal for little ones to repeat words and phrases, and to hesitate as they work out what they want to say – this isn't usually stammering. When children know what they want to say but the words aren't coming out, this is more likely to be stammering. Stammering can start gradually (over a few weeks) or suddenly (overnight), and can come and go for days or weeks at a time.

1 in 12 children experience
stammering during their
preschool years.



When children are stammering, they might repeat words or parts of words: **"and-and-and it works"** or **"be-be-because I want to"**. They might stretch out sounds: **"I like sssssssssss"** or get stuck on a sound while nothing comes out: **"I want a... because"**. You might notice your little one trying to force words out or giving up on what they were trying to say.

Why is my child stammering?

Learning to talk is complex and your little one isn't stammering because of anything you've done or not done. Young children stammer when their speech system isn't able to cope with demands placed on it – not because they are nervous.

These demands could come from your little one having lots to say and being excited, upset, rushed, or tired. They could come from other people – for example, asking your little one lots of questions or using language that is too complex.

Should I be worried?

Most children will stop stammering as they get older, and it's important to remember that it's okay to stammer. If your child has recently started to stammer, and they don't seem to be aware or bothered by it, then you probably don't need to be worried. If your little one has been stammering for a few months and you are concerned, you can speak to your Health Visitor, your local speech and language therapy service, or [STAMMA](#).

How can I help them?

How you respond to your little one when they stammer can make a big difference. You can give your little one the time they need by waiting for them to get their words out. Try to avoid rushing them or finishing their words.

- Slow down your rate of speech but don't tell your little one to "slow down", "take your time" or "take a deep breath".
- Follow your little one's lead when you are chatting. Talk about what they are interested in and respond to what they say and do.
- Make a comment and wait or ask one question at a time. Give them plenty of time to answer.
- Pause before answering your little one's questions. This shows them that it is okay to take time to think.
- Show them you are interested in what they are saying, not how they are saying it. Look at them when they talk to show you are listening.
- Talk openly and reassuringly with your little one about their stammer. You could say: "Some words are hard to get out. It's okay, I'm listening".
- Make sure everyone gets a turn in conversations.
- Spend five minutes a day having calm, uninterrupted, one on one time with your child.

Stammering
often runs in
families – about 60%
of people who stammer
have another family
member who also
stammers.

Bilingualism
doesn't cause
stammering.

Find further
information

STAMMA

Action for Stammering Children
Michael Palin Centre for Stammering
Top tips from the MPC (Michael Palin
Centre for Stammering)

Further information and resources

<https://actionforstammeringchildren.org/>



www.michaelpalincentreforstammering.org

<https://stamma.org/>



- UK Peer support group for parents of children who stammer
- STAMMA – Space for Stammering



What is the main thing you are taking away from this session?



How confident are you that you know how to support your child with their talking?

On a scale of 1-5 where
1 = not at all confident
5 = completely confident

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Confident

Thank you for attending



Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health
Board
Speech and Language Therapy Service