

## **College and Stuttering**

Attending college or university presents many different challenges for all people. Students are:

- Often away from home for the first time.
- Faced with many new and unknown situations.
- Challenged to meet new people and make new friends.
- Expected to handle the pressure of choosing a major, attending class, studying, and succeeding academically.

To say that students have a lot on their plate, which can be overwhelming, would be an extreme understatement. Keeping a strong perspective and attitude during college is vital in having an enjoyable experience and accomplishing goals in and out of the classrooms.

All students, not only those who stutter, are faced with the same issues. In that respect, you are never alone. However, as a person who stutters there are different things we can do to make the experience a little easier, all while keeping a strong, positive attitude.

- **Give people the opportunity to get to know you.**  
College students are not high school students. Those people in college are interested in learning, not only about their desired field, but about different people from all walks of life. College offers a vast and diverse group of people to meet and learn from, all of which have their own challenges in life. Give others the chance to get to know and learn about you.
- **Seek out an NSA support group**  
Meeting with people who stutter once a month is a great way to deal with challenges and issues in college. Here is a place where support is offered along with advice for any situation you may face.
- **Meet your Professors**  
Professors are required to be available to students for a certain amount of time at their office hours. Here is an opportunity to advertise stuttering, discuss concerns about the class or coursework all while developing a rapport with your Professor.
- **Get involved.**  
Participating in clubs, social or academic groups, intramural sports or student governance is a great way to make the college environment feel a bit smaller, meet new people and make new friends. Any situation where people gather with similar interests is worth exploring.
- **Get out of your comfort zone.**  
The classic adage “You get out what you put in” holds true in regard to college. It is certain that there will be situations that would be easier to avoid, challenges that invoke fear or anxiety and times when it will

seem like giving up is the best option. However, if you challenge yourself to take on social, speaking and academic situations, your college experience will be that much more worthwhile.

### **Advice For Your First Day of Class:**

The classroom can be both a scary and empowering place for people who stutter. You are the one who decides what your experience will be. Advertise in the beginning of the semester. This is not an easy thing to do, but it will help you. Try saying something like **“Hi, my name is Roisin. Because you will be hearing from me quite a bit throughout this class, I just want to let you all know that I stutter.”** This way, you will be sure to participate and do not have to lose *too* much sleep over presentations. It is very hard to end up a wallflower after doing something that brave in the beginning of a class. Remember that you are in class to both receive *and* share ideas. Stand up for your right to participate and excel.

College is a time for people to reinvent themselves and start to become the person they aspire to be. Don't let stuttering keep you from pursuing a certain major or career, making a new friend or having an exceptional college experience. Every student faces different challenges and receives the same advice as those who stutter. Keep a strong and positive attitude, reach out to others and remember that you are **never** alone.