

IF YOU *stutter*, YOU ARE NOT *alone*.

WARM-UPS

1. Good News-As members introduce themselves and ask them to add a piece of good news from their recent experience, something good that has happened to them recently.
2. More Information-As members introduce themselves, ask them to add one more bit of information (eg: Where did you first live when you left home? Where were you born? What did your room look like when you were ten years old?)
3. Introduce Someone Else - Instead of introducing yourselves, each person introduces the person next to them and is introduced by that person. Give each pair a few minutes to learn enough about each other to do this.
4. Special Name Tags - Pass an index card and a pencil or pen to each person and ask them to divide the card into four parts. In each space, they are asked to draw or write something which answers a specific question about themselves. For example: favorite movie or book, favorite place, what their stuttering "looks like," the animal which best describes them, the animal they would like to be, etc... Then ask members to mingle for ten or fifteen minutes, sharing what they wrote with others. Set a time limit. You can stay with one person. You can use a bell, which means "Switch partners," for this purpose.
5. "Can You Top This? " This is a game in which people are asked to share a notable stuttering experience (true or not!). Encourage people to ham it up. The winner is the person who gets the most applause. Be sure to make it fun.
6. "What Would You Do?" Have you ever role-played what you would do if you won the lottery? Ask attendees what they would do in this or other less-likely situations. The answers might surprise you!
7. Get a relaxation or visualization session to play, either online or via various free meditation apps.
8. Have people share who they would most like to be "in their next life" and why.
9. Come with pens and a big pad and have everyone participate in drawing a group picture. Then have each person share their experiences with the group. Who were the leaders, and who the followers? Did people wonder what others were thinking of them?
10. Go around the room and have others share what their favorite game as a child was.

11. The Name Game - Start at one end of the room and have the first person say their name. The person next to them has to say that person's name and his or her own. The third person gives the names of the first two people, etc., until the last person must name everyone. A good idea to do this with a lot of new people. Good for the beginning of the meeting and just before the break also.
12. Speed Friending; Set chairs in two rows facing each other. One row stays in place, while the opposite row switches down one seat after a predetermined amount of time. During the set time, have members introduce themselves. When the time is up, the 'moving row' moves down a chair and onto the next person, and the timer is reset.
13. The Alphabet Game - This is based on a children's word game. It combines speaking in unison, individual speaking, eye contact, and much fun. The first speaker says, "I went to the market, and I bought an apple" (or some word beginning with "A"). The second person then leads the whole group in repeating, "I went to the market, and I bought an apple and a. . ." He or she adds something beginning with the letter B. The third person then leads the whole group in repeating what has been said so far and then adds a word beginning the letter C, and so on.
14. Play the above with various topics. Some examples: "I went to the zoo and saw. . ." / "I went to a party, and I spoke to Aaron, Beth. "I went to the movies, and I saw Addicted to Love, Batman and Robin, Con-Air . . ."
15. Rare Knowledge - Everyone gives examples of weird or little known facts. Allow members to pass if they cannot think of anything.
16. Select a book about stuttering and have a short book club-style discussion about a passage, a chapter, or the entire book. Have members pre-read the selection from this book and then discuss it at the meeting, including implementing it into our day-to-day speaking lives. At the following meeting, we would then spend some time discussing how this worked for us.

DISCUSSING STUTTERING

17. Have members tell their worst stuttering experience and then discuss how they reacted, and what -if anything- they might change if it were to happen again today, and why.
18. Have members share the moment when they felt best about themselves as people who stutter.
19. Make a list of the ten most challenging situations for attendees. Discuss why.
20. Make a list of the situations members find the easiest. Discuss why.
21. Discuss the question of why some people who stutter do not like to be around others who stutter.
22. Discuss the dynamics involved in why people who go through stuttering treatment programs often revert to their old behaviors.

23. Discuss the advice that was given to your parents about stuttering and the advice you *wish* had been given to them.
24. Discuss the kind of person you think you would be if you did not stutter.
25. Have each person make a list of their most difficult words and then make up a story with them in it. Make it fun!
26. Discuss what *advantages* your stuttering has given you.
27. Discuss the best ways to react to someone who misbehaves with you-- fills in words, looks away from you, laughs, etc.
28. What are the best times and ways to advertise your stuttering?
29. Discuss the question, "If you could change one thing about your stuttering, what would it be?"

GAMES

30. Pictionary - Get two easels and some drawing pads and play with the whole group.
31. Balderdash is sometimes called "Fictionary" where you make up definitions of obscure words to fool the other players. It is a fun speaking exercise.
32. Trivial Pursuit - You all know this board game. You might decide that the questions must be read in a certain way, using prolongation, voluntary stuttering, etc.
33. Scruples - Rather than play the game as instructed, have the Facilitator ask the questions randomly.

GUEST SPEAKERS

34. Have a local yoga expert, meditation teacher, or someone involved in stress management speak.
35. Have one member who has a particular interest or hobby make a presentation about that to the group.
36. Have one or more local speech-language pathologists come. Invite one from the schools to tell you about his or her work.

PERSONAL CONTRACTS

37. Members can contract to do something at the meeting, like maintaining eye contact while they speak, stutter more openly, stutter differently, use a fluency-enhancing technique, avoid using a fluency-enhancing technique, speak more or less than usual, etc.
38. Members can contract (pledge) to do something between meetings.

Presentations

39. Therapies - Have one-member research a particular therapy and report on it to the group.
40. Outside Presentations: Put together a panel of your members and volunteer to present a program at the local university or in front of community groups (Lions Clubs, Rotary, etc)

Role-Playing

41. The Telephone Call

Place chairs back to back in the middle of the room. Have one telephone at each chair. You can think of variations of the following plot or make up your own.

Plot: A caller is a person who stutters when complaining or inquiring about something. The "callee" is rude, has little patience, and interrupts the person who stutters.

Examples: Calling an auto mechanic about work done on a car. Calling a fancy resort to inquire

Job Interviews

Take turns role-playing various job interview scenarios. These can be serious or funny. Perhaps some member is going through these in real life and needs some good feedback.

Sharing

42. The Picture Party: Each member is asked to bring in photographs of their parents, children, spouses, pets, etc. This can be used as a warm-up exercise to be done while snacks are offered, at a social gathering of the chapter, or during the speaking portion of the meeting as a personal "Show and Tell" exercise.
43. Stuttering Metaphors: Take time and come up with as many different ways to describe stuttering as you can. "Wrestling with speech," "Coming up against blocks," "Feeling stuck," "tongue-tied", etc.,
44. Have members share their most embarrassing moment *outside* of their stuttering.
45. Have members describe the worst & best year or day of their life.

Social Events

46. Check out a local sporting event - professional or student. Attend as an official group and get your chapter name projected on the scoreboard.
47. Go bowling together.
48. Have a summer picnic. Be sure to involve everyone in making arrangements and bringing things.
49. Run/walk in a race. Have members enter a local race or organize an NSA 5K. Those who don't want to run/walk can join them as support and a pot-luck picnic

afterward. The group could identify themselves as being with the NSA by wearing shirts or bringing a banner.

Public Speaking

50. *Take it From Here*

This is an impromptu storytelling exercise in which members are encouraged to use their imagination, ingenuity, and "tall story" expertise. A member is asked by the Facilitator to get the ball rolling by beginning to relate an experience he claims to have had. For example: "Last weekend I was walking in the woods when I came across the most unusual creature I had ever seen. It had four antennas and a fantail that enabled it to take off and land in twenty-foot glides. I stopped. . ." At this point, the Facilitator stops the yarn-spinner and asks members to the left or right to continue the narrative in any way, shape or form they choose. Each person continues their part of the story as long as they want to before leaving it for the next person to take up where they left off. People are encouraged to let their imaginations soar.

This process can also be started by reading the beginning of a story from a book; a mystery story or children's story would suffice. You can also let the next storyteller be chosen at random by the previous speaker or the Facilitator (And then what happened... Harry.)

51. *Debate*

Topics are chosen ahead of time. Members take each side of the debate. Debate rules can be modified to fit the time allowed and the number of participants. A time-keeper is needed. Topics can be humorous or serious.

52. *Best Excuse of the Week*

This is a short exercise which can be used as a warm-up or at the very end of the meeting. Have members explain why, for example, their stuttering is so bad this week. ("Because the Cardinals are not playing too well") Have a small award for the best one. (Sacramento)

53. *Zany Questions*

Make a list of ridiculous or intriguing questions that members have to pick from a hat and answer spontaneously. (Example: Would you be willing to eat a bowl of live crickets for \$40,000? If your home caught fire and you had time to save one item (or three items or five items), what would you save?)

54. *The Small Household Object*

Put a collection of small household objects in a bag and have members take turns drawing one out. They can either give a talk on its usefulness or make up an outlandish story about it.

55. *Table Topics*

The purpose of Table Topics is to have members "think on their feet" and speak for a minute or so. The Facilitator prepares and issues the topics. Originality is desired in the topics. Each member may be given an individual subject or a choice of subjects may be presented from which they can draw at random.

Example: It has been proposed to build a Brooklyn Sports Complex on Coney Island. The organizers want to house a minor league baseball team. Would you support this with your tax dollars?

56. *Telephone*

This exercise lets the person who stutters do something we are all good at--whispering!

A quote from a classic book or a belief about stuttering or some other statement is written down and then whispered to one person. That person in turn whispers what they remember to the next person. When the last person has gotten the message, they tell the entire group the message and it is compared to the original one. Variations can be done by asking each person to "bounce" on every word's first sound or use some other technique. Try this with the speaker (whisperer) standing up so they have to deal with a little of the "spotlight".

57. *Coffee Pot*

This is a word-guessing game in which a member is asked to think of some activity a person does, in a verbal form, i.e. fishing, golfing, driving, kite-flying, etc. The rest of the members try to find out what the person is thinking of by asking questions and substituting "coffee pot" for the activity in question. The questions can only be answered yes or no.

Example of questions: "Can you coffee pot indoors?" "Do you hold something in your hand when you coffee pot?"

The person in the group who guesses correctly gets to think up a new word.

58. *Three Words Only*

Put people in groups of three. Have each group stand up and talk using only three words at a time. What they say does not have to make sense or be logical:

Example: How are you? My dog's sick. I love bowling. / What's a high score? / That's four words. In which way? Not in Russia. Be crazy and keep it lively.

Oral Reading

59. Have members bring to the meeting a very meaningful or humorous passage from a novel, play, or poem that they like. Take turns reading these out loud. (E. Washington - N. Idaho / Spokane)

60. Have everyone bring in their favorite book, and invite them to read their favorite passages (if they choose).

61. Pretend you are making a five-minute public service announcement on the NSA. Create, write, and produce it as a group.

Video & Film Presentations

62. Show the *When I Stutter* documentary (Ask NSA office how to obtain a copy)