



## YOUR ROLE AS A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL FOR PEOPLE WHO STUTTER

Medical professionals will meet many people who stutter and it's important that you demonstrate care, compassion and respect. If you hear stuttering, don't assume it's a medical condition or incidental to a medical condition you know about.

## THE GOLDEN RULE OF HELPER IN THE MEDICAL PROFESSIONS

If you do not understand something the person says, ask them to repeat just the part you need clarified. Give the person time to express their thoughts and ask their questions. People who stutter will appreciate a few extra minutes of your time.

# ALLIES:

1

### DEMONSTRATE PATIENCE AND ASK QUESTIONS IF INVITED.

- a) How would you like me to respond if you are stuttering?
- b) How can I be helpful?
- c) How can I support you?

2

### RESPECT THAT PEOPLE WHO STUTTER MAY BE NERVOUS AROUND A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL BECAUSE THERE MAY BE TIME PRESSURE.

- a) Reassure the person you can spend a few extra minutes with them.
- b) Do not make recommendations for speech services unless the person asks about it.
- c) Be sure to listen respectfully maintaining eye contact.

3

### MAINTAIN A GENERAL DEMEANOR OF RESPECT FOR ALL DIFFERENCES AND ENSURE ALL LEVELS OF INTERACTION WITH PATIENTS ARE DIGNITY BASED.

- a) Expect receptionists answering phones to be patient with all callers and don't hang up if met with hesitation or pauses.
- b) Encourage office staff to obtain personal information from patients who may stutter to do so in private areas.
- c) Talk directly to the patient that stutters, not to a companion or family member that may be with them.
- d) Include stuttering and communication differences in any clinical education that medical office staff participate in.

4

### ARE WILLING TO STEP INTO DISCOMFORT TO SUPPORT A PERSON WHO STUTTERS.

- a) Immediately address any inappropriate responses or reactions you see a patient encounter in your office.
- b) Help to reduce stereotypes by taking your patient that stutters as seriously as you would anyone else.
- c) Be willing to acknowledge you might not know very much about stuttering and show willingness to educate yourself and staff.