

NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION

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



**Tuesday, October 27, 2020**

## **Part 1 - Unpacking Career Success Barriers for People Who Stutter: Job Searching, Resumes & Job Applications**

While people who stutter face the same career success barriers as people who don't stutter, we also have experiences that are unique to us. Join us as we discuss the barriers to job searching, resume development and job applications as well as how to overcome those barriers. Learn practical ways to utilize your skills, abilities and capabilities in job searching, resume writing, and applying to your desired job.

**Facilitators: Jonathan Lazenby and Carl Coffey  
(NSA WeStutter@Work Project Team)**

### **Behind the Scenes - Chat Room Excerpt**

Karen:	This section on attitude is so helpful. I often shut myself down before I even apply.
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Allison:	Karen, yes I am the same way. I agree-It was very helpful to discuss the attitude section!
JJ:	Yes. There could be a whole webinar just on that slide and what you mentioned with telling your story of the benefits stuttering will bring the employer.
NSA:	I agree everyone - good points. It's helpful to me to always try to reframe stuttering as valued strengths that employers want and need.
John:	Career profiles of real people with real stutters in really good jobs ... <a href="https://westutter.org/careersuccess/profiles/">https://westutter.org/careersuccess/profiles/</a>
Frank:	My wife recently found a job lead in our local dog park for our son who was recently laid off. You can network in the most unconventional places!!
NSA:	One of the things that does make us stand out is indeed the fact that we stutter. Stuttering makes us memorable. Years ago, I would have cringed at that. But now, at this stage in my life, it's helpful to stand out and be remembered.
Paul:	When I worked at my first job which was the ice cream stand in my hometown I got paid under minimum wage.
Rachel:	Hi, is it ok to give a head's up before an interview with an email saying you are a PWS?
Thelma:	Your smile, presentation, personality and dress are ways to stand out in an interview other than your stuttering.
Carl:	Thelma - great point! So many things we can do to improve our chances that other folks may not take the effort to do. :)
Carl:	Rachel - a friend also mentioned when setting up an interview, she asked the interviewer if she could schedule a few more minutes to ensure they had ample time to talk. She disclosed that way.
Allen:	I have been filling out a lot of applications online lately and always wonder what to put on the self-identify section if I have a disability. Was wondering what you recommend and if other people say no, or say yes. Does it help because it checks off a box for an employer?
John:	For me, disclosing my stutter does two things: (1) It disarms the listener and (2) It gives me permission to stutter.
Muhtasim:	In applications, for the disability section, should we note this as a disability? If so, what should we write as the disability?

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Carl:	Allen - great question. I'll open that up to others to share their thoughts.
Karen:	Yes, good question.
Sona:	I usually say no.
Muhtasim:	Woops. Someone beat me to it.
John:	This Job Interview guide from the NSA was written by a person who stutters that works in HR. You'll learn ideas on disclosing your stutter and ways to answer common job interview questions. <a href="https://westutter.org/wp-content/uploads/ace_your_next_job_interview_july2019.pdf">https://westutter.org/wp-content/uploads/ace_your_next_job_interview_july2019.pdf</a>
Thelma:	Should you need an accommodation in the interview or in your job, you will need to disclose.
Michael:	Me too. I usually say no.
Pamela:	I think we have to be comfortable with owning the word "disability" so that we can get accommodations as needed. Like more time, video chat vs phone
B.A.	I do not think Stuttering is a disability because from the drop down menu for definition of disabilities that I have seen at company applications, it sometimes says anything that can affect or impair your job. For a professional who knows his/her stuff (like we all do), I do not think stuttering affects one's ability to do their job. So, I always put No as well.
Daronn:	Self-disclosure has helped me during an interview.
Carl:	Allen - as you said, it can be an asset b/c companies are looking to ensure they have equal opportunities for diversity and inclusion in their workforce. From this perspective, it can be helpful.
Pamela:	B.A. stuttering is protected under the ADA as a disability in the USA. See the NSA webinar we did on Accommodations and the ADA; : <a href="https://youtu.be/EKofHVATwCs">https://youtu.be/EKofHVATwCs</a>
Allen:	I know there are career services for veterans that work with companies that more open to hire veterans. Are there career services for stutters who are 'more' open to hire stutters?
Daronn:	B.A someone can "know their stuff" who's in a wheelchair, have epilepsy, missing a leg from combat, etc...
John:	Employees who stutter have workplace rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The NSA did a webinar with an expert from the Job Accommodation Network sharing

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	insights about workplace accommodations for people who stutter; <a href="https://youtu.be/EKofHVATwCs">https://youtu.be/EKofHVATwCs</a>
Romelle:	My chapter had a long discussion about disclosing stuttering during an interview about 2 years ago. The experience I had was that I had to do a phone interview. Before the interview began, I disclosed that I am a PWS and there will be times when I will hit a block or stammer on a word. I didn't get the interview, but I felt good about it. I'll add that if a potential employer starts to feel uneasy about your stuttering, even after you disclosed your stuttering, then they are not the employer that you want to work with.
Bonisile:	I do find disclosing that stutter upfront, reduces tension and sort relaxes me.
Carl:	Romelle - GREAT point. Stuttering and folks' reactions are often very telling.
Allen:	Romelle, I agree, if they are already uneasy about it, working there might be even worse.
Frank:	Disclosure also allows employer to express any questions about stuttering.
Carl:	Good point, Frank.
Allen:	Frank, good to know, didn't realize that.
B.A.	Great point Romelle, thanks for sharing.
Pamela:	Also, when we stutter openly and with confidence, it gives listeners know that we're Ok with it, and they will generally follow our lead.
Michele:	So true Frank, I've got a question once about my childhood as PWS and my experience with stuttering.
Isadora:	Hello! My name is Isadora and I always tried to hide the fact that I stutter in job interviews but in the last ones that I participated I was totally honest with this and today I was accepted in my first Manufacturing Engineering Internship here in Brazil at EATON. I'm an engineering student :) I'm so happy.
Frank; JJ; B.A.; Ginger; Allen:	Isadora - Congratulations!! Congrats! Wonderful! That's Great!

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Allen:	Are there career services specifically for stutters? To Find “Stutter Friendly” companies? Not that we should limit ourselves, we are able to do anything as you can see by many careers from PWS!
Rachel:	Thanks for all the info and interesting suggestions. I believe that if the end goal is getting hired then it's okay to say before interview that you're a PWS. Thanks again!
John:	Stuttering in the Workplace — <a href="https://westutter.org/event/connects-workplace/">https://westutter.org/event/connects-workplace/</a>
Sharon:	This was great advice for all and thank you both for a great presentation!
Ginger; Allen; Tammey; Nelson; Michael; Michele; Daronn:	Thank you! Carl and Jonathan - Thanks for the webinar, Enjoyed the information! Thanks for all the great info from our hosts.

### Links:

[www.westutter.org/CareerSuccess](http://www.westutter.org/CareerSuccess)

<https://westutter.org/careersuccess/profiles>

[https://westutter.org/wp-content/uploads/ace\\_your\\_next\\_job\\_interview\\_july2019.pdf](https://westutter.org/wp-content/uploads/ace_your_next_job_interview_july2019.pdf)

<https://youtu.be/EKofHVATwCs>

<https://westutter.org/event/connects-workplace/>