

Self-Help Groups for People Who Stutter

2. How do I start the self-help group?

Note: Stammering and Stuttering are the same. Different terms are used in different countries.

Reference: <https://uk.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/stutteringselfhelp/info>

There are several things which must be done in the initial stage of forming a self-help group.

1. Advertise your idea about starting a self-help group:
2. Look around for somewhere to hold the first meeting:
3. Assess the response to your first round of advertising:
4. If the response is not favorable consider advertising in different places or talking to any of the respondents to see if they have any further ideas:
5. Set an agenda for the first meeting which would include where the meeting will be held, the start time and any likely finish time:
6. Send the agenda round to the people who are interested, hold the meeting, and during the meeting request volunteers to help with the tasks associated with further meetings:
7. Together with others, plan the next few meetings and send the information around.

In the initial advertisement containing your ideas, you should set out in brief detail what needs to be done at the first meeting. You will need helpers to run the group, and to let everybody have some experience, you may wish to arrange a rota to let as many people as possible have a turn in each of the jobs, if that is what they want to do. You will suggest some initial things that the group could do which would be open for debate and discussion. You will explain how the group as a whole will try to help the individual. You will try to make it attractive to attend the group.

You should do a little research as to where the meetings might be held. There are many possible places, depending upon the number of people who wish to attend the group. If the group is small you might use group members' homes, but as the group grows you may wish to consider a public room or hall. If the group is scattered in a wide area, the meeting place could be held in a different parts of the area each time. If the group is based in a smaller area, it may be possible to use the same room every time. Ideas for places to explore would be universities; clinics; hospitals; libraries; you can probably think of many more places. The choice of venue may be influenced by public transport access, parking, toilets, ability to make a drink etc, suitable disabled access and other issues like this. The cost of such a venue will also be significant,

as it would mean either raising funds to meet the costs or having a small charge per group member per meeting.

There will usually be some small costs in arranging meetings. For example advertisements, maybe some posters, the hiring of the venue, the means of making a drink, to name but a few things. Therefore the issue of fund raising should be addressed early on, and if possible ways should be devised to make it a fun task. Wherever possible, if there is a membership charge per meeting, it should be remembered that some people may not be able to afford the charge. Therefore some discreet means arranging a subsidy may be invaluable.

You may wish to restrict the meetings to a single language. You may consider it more appropriate to help all PWS in your area and will have more than one language. This is a further aspect which needs to be planned with a little thought.

And as mentioned in the first article, you should make every effort to obtain the voluntary help of an SLT/SLP at the majority of your meetings.