

# Self-Help Groups for People Who Stutter

## 3. What happens at the self-help group meeting?

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

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

Although you will start out with your own ideas as to what will happen at meetings, it will be beneficial to the group as a whole if ideas about the content of meetings and of the format of meetings is discussed and decided upon by the group. This discussion can take place at intervals to make sure the meetings are on track and that no changes or adjustments are needed. Of course one of the essential things is to decide how often the meeting should take place.

Some PWS may want to practice technique, the speaking technique they learned in therapy; some might want to learn about different therapies; some might want to practice some of these new therapies (hence the advantage of having an SLP); some might want to talk about what happens after therapy when quite often a PWS who is fluent in therapy reverts back to disfluency.

The main emphasis of any meeting will be to get as many PWS talking as possible. Before coming to a group meeting, a PWS may feel very lonely and isolated. One advantage of a group meeting is to meet other PWS and to talk with them, to exchange information to meet and make new friends. Always make sure that group members know what is happening and if possible what is planned at the next meetings. This helps to get the feeling of involvement and participation, and for some PWS it may be the first time they have ever been involved with people at this kind of level.

A PWS should come to understand that the self-help group meetings are times when they can talk with complete confidence irrespective of whether they stammer or not. The more they talk the more confident they will become in this new environment. Always bear in mind that the ability of a particular PWS to talk may be determined by the size of the talking group they are in. Of course there are other factors which will affect everyone's confidence.

If the self-help group is expanding, there may well be new members at every meeting. It is essential to ensure that new members are welcomed and made to feel comfortable and at home. Perhaps an existing member is assigned to them on the first few meetings. All new members should be drawn into all activities and never be made to feel that there is a group within the self-help group. As far as possible every group member should feel equal to every other group member.