

## National Stuttering Association

“Changing the lives of people who stutter”

When teenagers stutter, they experience challenges not typically faced by their peers. Fortunately, there are many ways that you and others can help.

Working with leading stuttering specialists, the NSA has prepared this “Top 10” list of helpful steps you can take to support your teen through this important time.

By following these recommendations, you will build a solid foundation for helping your teenager face his or her stuttering, and you will give your child the best opportunity for minimizing stuttering and improving his or her communication skills.

As you try these suggestions, remember that ***you and your child do not have to face stuttering alone.*** The NSA is here to help!

The **NSA** is the largest self-help and support organization in the world for children and adults who stutter and their families. Through our **NSAKids** program—and our new **Teens Who STutter (TWST)** local support groups—we have dedicated ourselves to providing parents and others in your teenager’s life with the knowledge, understanding, and hope they need to support children’s success in their speech and throughout their lives.



Here are just a few NSA programs for teenagers and their families

**Annual Conference!** Our 3-day Conference is the **best** way to help teenagers overcome the challenge of stuttering. Activities, motivational speakers, support from other teens and adults who stutter, and much, much more!

**Teens Who STutter (TWST) groups.** Bring teens together for support and encouragement—help them know they are not alone.

**“Our Voices” Newsletter.** Written by teens, for teens, to help them share experiences so they overcome the challenges they face.

**Parent Support Chain.** Connect with other parents who have faced the challenge of being the parent of a child who stutters.

**Ask the Expert.** Call **800 We Stutter** or email **AskTheExpert@WeStutter.org** to get help from top stuttering specialists and leaders in the stuttering self-help community.

With the NSA’s many outreach programs for teenagers who stutter and their families, ***you are not alone.*** Contact us today!

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**National Stuttering Association**

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**Please support the NSA with your time and tax-deductible donations.**

The National Stuttering Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Since 1977, we have dedicated ourselves to providing hope, dignity, support, education, and empowerment to children and adults who stutter, their families, and the professional community.

## “TOP 10” Ways To Help Teenagers Who Stutter

**Teenagers Who Stutter Face Many Challenges — There Are Many Ways You Can Help**

**These are the NSA’s “TOP 10”**



**National Stuttering Association**  
*Changing the lives of people who stutter*

*There are many things you can do to help your teenager! These are just our “Top 10!”*

*For even more helpful ideas, call us at **800 We Stutter** or go to **www.WeStutter.org***

*You can help your teenager...  
...the NSA is here to help you*

### **1. Learn about stuttering.**

Getting the facts about stuttering can help you understand what your teen is going through. The NSA has partnered with leading specialists to provide the most up-to-date information about stuttering research and treatment. The more you know, the more you can help.

### **2. Talk with your teen about stuttering.**

To the extent that she is comfortable, talk openly with your teen about stuttering. Keeping communication open creates an atmosphere of trust and sharing between you and your teen. Open communication helps your teen know that she can talk to you about how she feels about stuttering, and this helps her know that she is not alone in dealing with her speech.

### **3. Empower your teen.**

Through your acceptance and trust in your teenager, you can create opportunities for him to believe in himself. By empowering your teenager to become an independent problem-solver, he can grow more confident in his own skills to deal with stuttering throughout his life.

### **4. Provide direction and support, but recognize your new role.**

Teenagers who stutter continue to need their parents, however, **what** they need from you will change as they make the transition from being a dependent child to becoming an independent adult. More and more, decisions such as **whether** or **how** they will manage their speech are up to them...you can become a source of advice and opinion, but you can no longer expect your child to work on his speech simply because you want him to. Your support for your

teen's choices, whether or not they would be *your* choices, is key for creating an atmosphere of trust and responsibility.

### **5. Choose appropriate therapy.**

Fortunately, many treatments are available for children who stutter. Unfortunately, not all of these treatments are helpful for all children. Seek the advice of a speech-language pathologist (SLP) who specializes in the treatment of children who stutter and work closely with your therapist to ensure the best possible outcome for your child. If you need help locating a specialist, contact the NSA and we can help you find someone in your area.

### **6. Accept your child's stuttering.**

Stuttering is a small part of who your teen is, and an even smaller part of who she will become. Stuttering does not have to limit her life—the key to success is *acceptance*. You can help your teen face this challenge by showing that your love and acceptance are unconditional, regardless of how fluently she speaks. In particular, your acceptance of the way your teen chooses to manage her speech during this transitional time will help to provide a supportive atmosphere. Denial and avoidance give power to stuttering; acceptance and open interaction are positive and productive.

### **7. Release ownership.**

Remember that your teenager is responsible for his own speech. As he becomes an adult, he will need to feel this responsibility for himself, while knowing that he has your support and encouragement. This is true regardless of how he chooses to address his stuttering.

### **8. Be prepared for unexpected changes.**

Change is never easy, and it takes time, but with effort and persistence, it does happen. As your child moves through adolescence, you will find that his or her motivation and ability to manage stuttering may become either increased or decreased. Remember that these fluctuations are a normal part of dealing with stuttering in the teen years. Try to view these challenges as opportunities to encourage your teenager towards success, without expecting him to face his stuttering the same way you might. Embrace these times of transition, for they create new possibilities for you and your teenager to work together and grow together.

### **9. Give yourself—and your teen—a break.**

Change is a process that takes time and effort. As your family learns to cope with and accept stuttering, remember to give yourself and your teenager permission to take small and varied steps on the path to success.

### **10. Get Connected**

The National Stuttering Association (NSA) is dedicated to providing hope, empowerment, and support for you and your child. Through the NSA—and our new **Teens Who STutter (TWST)** groups—you will become part of a community that understands stuttering and how to help those who stutter. The greatest gift you can give your child is the knowledge that he or she is not alone in dealing with stuttering!

For more information on how you can help your teen who stutters, go to [www.WeStutter.org](http://www.WeStutter.org). And, start planning NOW to attend the next **NSA Annual Conference!**