



THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION
OF SPEECH THERAPISTS
香港言語治療師協會

口吃 Stuttering



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What is ...



Stuttering is a disorder that involves disruptions in the fluency and flow of speech. These disruptions are often involuntary repetitions or pauses in our utterances, and the severity of stuttering might vary according to different environments and situations.

Two main types of stuttering:

- **Developmental stuttering:** Emerges in early childhood, often around the age of 3 - 4. Exact causes are unknown but it is believed to be related to environmental factors and abnormalities in brain structures and functions
- **Neurogenic stuttering:** Arises from neurological damages after a stroke, head trauma, or other type of brain injury



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Characteristics



Repetitions of sounds (e.g., "t-t-today"), syllables (e.g., "da-da-daddy"), words (e.g., "I-I-I like") or phrases (e.g., "I want-I want to eat.")



Blocks or brief silence within a word or a sentence, e.g., "I want to... (pause) go to the play... (pause) ground."



Prolonging a word or sounds within a word (e.g., "ssss-sometimes", "Caaaaan I have...?")



Secondary behaviours, e.g., grimacing, blinking, or other body movements



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Assessment

- Measuring the frequency, type and duration of disfluencies, presence of secondary behaviors, speech rate and intelligibility
- Identifying how stuttering varies in different contexts
- Assessing the impact on everyday life



Intervention

Direct treatment:

- Focuses on changing a person's speech in order to facilitate fluency, e.g., modifying the way of speaking, providing feedback on fluency

Indirect treatment:

- Focuses on modifying a person's environments to minimize the triggers of stuttering moments



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Suggestions



Let the person finish the sentence on his/her own



Avoid interrupting a person's speech



Allow enough time for the person to speak and respond



Encourage the person to slow down



Do not over-correct a person's disfluencies



When a person stutters, provide positive feedback and encouragement to try again



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