

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS : SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS WHO STAMMER

The aim of reasonable adjustments is to support a student in participating actively in all aspects of learning and apprenticeships. As every person is different, the examples provided below are not exhaustive and will not all be relevant. This document can be the basis of a discussion with a student to identify areas of challenge for them. It can also inspire the two of you to create a student-centred plan. The plan can continually evolve with the individual and over time. Flexible communication options are likely to benefit many students, not only those who stammer, so think about making flexible options standard procedures across your courses, rather than for a single student.

CHALLENGE	SUGGESTIONS FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS	PROPOSED OUTCOME
<p>Introductions & icebreakers</p> <p>I may not feel confident meeting new people.</p> <p>I may find saying my name a challenge.</p> <p>I may find speaking first a challenge.</p>	<p>Be introduced rather than introduce myself.</p> <p>Agree in advance when my turn will be when group introductions are being made.</p> <p>Use name badges rather than verbal introductions for face-to-face classes, seminars or tutorials.</p> <p>Use on-screen names rather than verbal introductions during videocalls.</p> <p>Use an on-screen background that lets others know that I stammer during online sessions.</p> <p>Use a pre-recorded greeting and introduction when working on the telephone.</p> <p>Wear a badge, lanyard or clothing that lets other people know that I stammer.</p>	<p>I know how introductions will be made which reduces stress I may feel around stammering when meeting new people.</p> <p>I feel confident about meeting new people which is important for my self-esteem.</p> <p>I feel positive about introductions which is important for future working relationships and will enable me to integrate fully into the environment.</p>

CHALLENGE

Contribute to face-to-face and online classes, tutorials and meetings

There may be times when I find it difficult or tiring to interact with people face-to-face, either individually or within group settings.

I am reluctant to volunteer to speak in case anyone reacts negatively when I stammer.

It may be difficult for me to express my ideas quickly in a fast-paced discussion.

It may be more difficult for me to speak in an online forum.

I find it difficult to watch myself stammering in online sessions when I can see my own image.

SUGGESTIONS

Stammered speech is welcomed and respected within group settings.

Good management of turn-taking within group settings to ensure that space is made for all contributors.

Group participants use a visual signal to indicate when they wish to speak rather than just jumping in verbally.

Student and teacher have pre-agreed signals. One indicates that the student knows the answer but does not wish to answer out loud. The other that the student knows the answer and is willing to be called on.

The option to use visual and written materials to support spoken word, and for these contributions to be given equal weighting with spoken contributions, e.g. Padlets, Mentimeter, chalkboards, notepads.

The option to liaise on session plans in advance, so that I can prepare topics that I wish to speak about.

The option to contribute in writing before/after sessions.

Online sessions:

The option to use the chat function instead of speaking and for these contributions to be given equal weighting with spoken contributions.

Edit your onscreen name or add a background image with text saying that you stammer.

Use the 'Hide my video/Hide for me' feature so that I do not have to see my video stream during the meeting.

PROPOSED OUTCOME

Knowing that stammered speech is welcomed and respected in group settings will make me feel comfortable and confident.

CHALLENGE

Presentations

I worry that I will be judged on how I am speaking rather than what I am saying.

Tasks where I am required to present individually can make me feel under pressure, making it more difficult for me to communicate verbally

Oral exams & interviews

Oral exams or being interviewed can make me feel under pressure and make it more difficult for me to communicate verbally.

Examiners and assessors may hold inaccurate beliefs about stammering which influence their assessment of my skills and knowledge.

I worry that I will be judged on how I am speaking rather than what I am saying.

SUGGESTIONS

Stammered speech is welcomed and respected within presentations.

Flexibility around presenting e.g.

- Present with a peer or in a group
- Use visual/written resources as well as spoken word
- Share information using an alternative mode of communication
- Pre-record a video presentation.
- Don't set a time limit.
- Allow student to read the presentation if this helps them.

Stammered speech is welcomed and respected within interviews and oral exams.

Examiners and interviewers receive, in advance, information about stammering and about my own pattern of stammering and the way I work through it.

Receive the questions early.

The option to refer to notes.

The option to use visual/written resources as well as spoken word.

The option to write down my responses and then read them aloud together with a peer or teacher.

The option of additional time, no time limit, or a slowed pace.

If I tend to say less, the option to provide further written responses in the 10 minutes after the interview.

PROPOSED OUTCOME

Flexibility around presenting will help me to participate fully, demonstrate my knowledge and fulfil my potential in this area.

I feel as comfortable as possible in an exam or interview so I can convey my skills and knowledge.

CHALLENGE

Relations with peers

Sometimes it's difficult for my peers to understand what it is like to have a stammer.

Research shows that many people incorrectly believe that stammering means someone is nervous or less competent.

SUGGESTIONS

Provide peers with information about stammering and guidance on how to respond in conversation with someone who stammers.

PROPOSED OUTCOME

Educating peers will improve interpersonal skills and working relationships for all team members.

Increasing awareness of stammering will lead to a considerate student and teaching community, and will support the college in its aim for inclusion and diversity.

Using the phone

If I stammer, the person on the other end might hang up, thinking there's a bad line or that I am not there.

I may find speaking more of a challenge when using the phone.

Feeling self-conscious about my stammer could make me reluctant to use desk phones in open-plan spaces.

Noisy surroundings could make it more difficult for me to use the phone.

The availability of a quieter space to make phone calls, and the option to use a mobile phone.

Use a pre-recorded greeting and introduction when working on the telephone.

Use Relay UK for telephone calls.

Flexible options to meet face-to-face, via videocall or use emails, instead of the phone.

Use a mobile phone for calls so that the other person is likely to see who is calling before they answer the phone.

Pre-arranged time to call so that the other person knows who is calling.

Feeling comfortable in my surroundings when using the phone will enable me to carry out phone related tasks to the best of my ability.

Alternative means of communication will enable me complete tasks and to choose which method of communication I prefer to use.

CHALLENGE

Using intercoms & radios

Feeling self-conscious about my stammer could make me reluctant to use intercoms or radios.

It may be difficult for me to speak on an intercom or radio.

It may be difficult for me to access a building if the person on reception doesn't realise that silences may be due to stammering .

Navigating conflict

Sometimes speaking is harder for me where there is conflict, or in emotionally charged situations.

Maintaining student wellbeing

I may want to access some therapy to support my communication, requiring time out of college.

I may want to amend the reasonable adjustments over time so that they evolve with me, both to support areas of difficulty and enable my strengths to come to the fore.

SUGGESTIONS

Flexibility to opt out of using intercoms.

Alternative options for accessing a building.

Flexibility to opt out of using radios.

Use of specific callsigns on group radio channels to indicate that I need more time to talk.

A trusted tutor or peer to raise concerns with and to provide feedback to, about communication, work issues and general work culture.

The option to participate in peer support, courses or therapy.

The ability to personalise the reasonable adjustments, and to view the document as a work in progress that can change over time.

PROPOSED OUTCOME

It is important to be able to access the locations which are part of my learning.

This is how I talk and it is important to feel that my voice is welcome in a range of communication channels.

Feeling as comfortable as possible in an exam will enable me to convey most fully my skills and knowledge.

I feel positive about my communication which helps me feel confident at college and engage fully in the learning.

Being able to personalise how I receive support will help me realise my potential.

College and communication flexibility would make me feel supported and accepted. This would help me to focus my attention on learning.