

Understanding Stammering or Stuttering: A Guide for Parents, Teachers and Other Professionals

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Despite the attention brought by the award-winning movie *The King's Speech*, the speech disorder called stammering in the UK and stuttering in the US is still highly misunderstood. *Understanding Stammering or Stuttering* provides an informative and engaging introduction to stuttering for parents, teachers, and others in the lives of people who stutter. The authors are a speech therapist at the acclaimed Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children in Britain, and a medical journalist whose son received speech therapy from the Centre. Their knowledge and experience are seamlessly combined to dispel popular myths and to present reliable basic information and useful advice on how to improve the lives of those who stutter.

Nearly half the book is devoted to providing practical tips that can be implemented immediately in the home and school to help those who stutter to cope better. Teachers are shown how to handle such tasks as calling roll, asking questions, and administering oral exams. Parents are advised how to encourage children to build their speaking confidence and to practice therapy skills.

What most sets this book apart is its focus on the human experience of those who stutter and their families. Many quotations from children and young adults who stutter are included throughout to place the general information material and tips into personal context. By featuring these voices, the authors demonstrate the diversity of those who stutter (gender, age, and ethnic background), the various perspectives on stuttering, and the different types of stuttering. Having so many voices also reminds those of us who stutter and our families that we are not alone.

While the authors write primarily for a British audience with specific advice about the UK's health service and school system, the majority of the authors' recommendations easily transcend borders. Suggestions of American-based and other international organizations are provided for more locally relevant information.

With stuttering still a highly misunderstood disorder, the release of *Understanding Stammering or Stuttering* is most welcome. Parents and teachers, and indeed anyone in the life of someone who stutters, will certainly benefit from this easily approachable introduction. Those who already know about the medical side of stuttering will learn about the human side of the experience from the many comments by those who stutter. Kelman and Whyte have performed a great service by giving those who stutter a clear voice in how they want to be viewed and treated by the larger society.

WILLIAM GEE (Fall 2012)

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