

# First Things First

## Stuttering Can Be Challenging

Stuttering can be a difficult and challenging problem. It's also pretty complicated. People who stutter get caught up with their speech in different ways. When speech is tight, sounds and words can get stuck or repeated. In addition, people who have stuttered for a while sometimes have bad feelings about stuttering and/or ideas about it that can make the problem worse. That's why speech therapy deals with *both* the *physical part of the stuttering* and the *feelings and ideas* that come with it.

## The Good News

The good news is that *there are several things you can learn that will help you work with your stuttering*. Your speech therapy will involve a variety of things.

Things like...

- » learning about how we produce speech
- » learning about the problem of stuttering
- » figuring out what you're doing when you stutter
- » learning ways to stutter more easily
- » learning ways to speak more fluently
- » exploring your feelings about speaking and stuttering
- » bringing what you learn into your daily life, and
- » becoming "your own speech therapist"

## This Workbook

This workbook focuses on two things:

### 1. Learning ways to Stutter More Easily

Stuttering modification strategies will help you *stutter more easily*. You'll learn to take a close look at what happens when you stutter and see that you can work with your stuttering and change it. These skills will give you the ability to effectively manage your stuttering in real-life situations.

### 2. Learning ways to Speak More Fluently

Fluency-enhancing strategies will help you to *speak more fluently*. You'll learn how to change your breathing, voicing, and articulating in ways that create relaxed speech. At first, you'll practice these techniques in private while using slow speech patterns. Later on, after you're able to use the skills at normal speeds, you'll use them out in the world.

## Stuttering Involves Tension

It's important to remember that nobody speaks perfectly. Many people who *don't* have a stuttering problem *do* have trouble talking at different times. Sometimes they repeat words, change words, get caught up in some way, or say the wrong thing. This is particularly true when people are anxious (for example, when giving a speech). At other times, they speak without any trouble.

This is also true for people who stutter. Sometimes they speak freely and at other times they have more difficulty. *What's different is that people who stutter have speech systems that don't always work as well.* Therefore it's more likely that they'll have trouble, and that trouble can end up being pretty tense and tight. That tension is a big part of the problem.

The stuttering modification and fluency-enhancing strategies that you'll be learning will help you manage tension in your speech. These are important tools that can help you work with the *physical part of your stuttering*.

## The Bottom Line

**It is true that:**

- A. Working with a stuttering problem isn't always easy, and
- B. You need to practice the stuff you learn in speech therapy.

*However...*

*You can get a handle on your stuttering  
and the things that will help you work with it.*

So again, that's the GOOD NEWS. Now it's just a matter of getting started.

**One last thing:**

As you learn the skills that are presented in this workbook, it's extremely important that you understand *what you're doing* and *why you're doing it*.

*Therefore, remember:  
The more questions, the better.*