



Reflections of 2017

With 2017 coming to a close, it is that time to reflect on what we have accomplished this year. Which moments were most memorable? What might we have done differently? What do we hope to accomplish in the year to come? With 2018 just around the corner, as tempting as it is to set goals, it is perhaps more important for us to make a commitment to ourselves to be more patient, more open minded, and more understanding towards our speech. As we work towards becoming 'best friends' with our stutter, as we often say, it becomes possible to achieve new limits, perhaps even past the goals set at the beginning of the year.

Take a moment to reflect with an open and generous mind: What have you accomplished in 2017 to exceed the expectations you have set for yourself? A few highlights of the members of the CSA community include performing at improv shows, being interviewed on a radio station, obtaining post-graduate degrees, acing an interview and being offered an important job to further their career! To take a look at some of the highlights experienced by the CSA and some of our volunteers and members, check out the [article!](#)

**On behalf of everyone at the CSA, we would like to wish you a Happy Holidays
and a Happy New Year!**



Building Resilience During the Holidays

Between the gift giving, baking, and holiday gatherings, the holidays can be a tough time of year for everybody. But as people who stutter, typical holiday-related activities—meeting new people at holiday gatherings, ordering that specialty drink, booking taxis and reservations—provide us with ample opportunity to showcase our stutter in the spotlight, making it an extra stressful time of year.

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Despite these pitfalls that might leave us feeling intense shame—flawed, unworthy, and “less-than”—some-how we soldier on. This is because we are resilient. Resilience is defined as the ability to recover from setbacks or difficulties; or, in one word: toughness.

The good thing, is that we have all been there. The better thing, is that these painful experiences, when shared, are the glue that bond a community. According to shame and resilience researcher Brené Brown, resilience can be built by courage, connection and compassion. The ability to speak from our hearts (courage) increases our feelings of acceptance and understanding among others (connection), enabled by our ability to hear and understand shame (compassion).

Stuttering is a fast-track to building resilience, amplified by the holidays. This holiday season, if you are left feeling stung by a particularly painful speaking experience, know that with the CSA at your fingertips, you always have an outlet to share your stories. By having the courage to voice your most painful stuttering experiences, you will quickly learn that you are not alone, and as a connected community, we can build resilience to heal and grow together.

“Do you know what I mean?”

Dear CSA,

Can we talk about stuttering and traveling? I often find myself hesitant to go to another countries on my own, especially if their first language isn't English, in fear that my speech will stand in the way of me doing simple things like asking for directions or meeting people and socializing. Has stuttering impacted your desire to travel?

We decided that Christina should take this question as she is the travel buff!

As someone who loves to travel, I often think about the impact my speech has on my traveling experiences. Before addressing the positives, I will admit I have had some tough experiences. To draw on a recent example, I just got back from backpacking in Colombia and I had two very difficult experiences. Within a first couple days of my trip, I was in a hostel in Medellin chatting with a couple friends I had made and a guy walked by as we were on the topic of our varying abilities to speak Spanish - mine and that of a German girl being by far the most 'underdeveloped'.

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As I was chatting about which words I could say in Spanish, the bystander interjected and condescendingly commented that I "couldn't even say those words in English!" The group froze, but frantically shifted their focus between me and the direction of the comment. Later that week in a small fishing village on the coast called Taganga, I had just arrived at the hostel and joined some guests chatting around a picnic table. After a few minutes of friendly conversation, I was asked my name by the girl beside me. I stuttered when saying my name and she replied loud enough for everyone to hear, "Oh really?! Your name is "C-c-c-c-h-h-h-r-r-r-istina". To say the least, I was mortified.

During situations like these, I try to focus on a few things: Not everyone I meet says these sorts of comments. On this trip alone, I spoke to over 100 people and only two made a comment. Although it was painful to experience, the opinions of those I care about and of the wonderful friends I met along the way significantly outweigh the comments of these two individuals.

1. Traveling with a stutter is a great opportunity to spread the word and inform people around the world on a topic which receives relatively little attention. I try to present myself as an advocate not only a person that stutters, but someone who has a stutter and still travels the world!
2. My speech and the comments that might be made about my speech will never take away from the beauty of where I've been. Before Colombia, I have travelled to Seattle, Los Angeles, San Diego, Mexico City, London, Oxford, Paris, Verona, Rome, Frankfurt, Dubai, Durban, Cape Town - just to name a few - and my experiences with my speech will never overshadow the amazing experiences, memories and friends I have made in each place I've visited.
3. I think stuttering and traveling involves the overall acceptance of your speech something which is vital to ensure your speech is not holding you back in any area of life, not just traveling!

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If you have any stuttering and travelling stories I would love to hear them!

Please send any traveling experiences (good or bad!) to us at

csa.newsletterinbox@gmail.com.



Meet Lisa Rustom!

My name is Lisa Rustom and I am a new Speech Language Pathologist currently working at the Peel District School Board.

My passion for fluency disorders is driven by the rewarding feeling that I get when individuals are able to achieve their goals in speech therapy, which impacts positively on their whole life as a result. I will always remember the moment when I played back a recording of a client's speech prior to therapy and she was overcome with emotion at how far she had come.

During my time in the Master's program at the University of Toronto, I developed a huge passion for fluency disorders, particularly after taking Luc De Nil and Hadar Kaidar's course on this topic. Following this course, I have had several opportunities during placements to work with individuals who stutter, including preschoolers and school-aged children presenting with developmental stuttering and adults presenting with neurogenic stuttering. My passion led me to organize for members of our class to attend a FluencyPlus training workshop at the Speech and Stuttering Institute this past March.

Funny enough, the first student referral I got at my new job was for stuttering. I am very excited to be able to use the knowledge I have gained to implement a therapy program for him.

We urge you to send us your questions, comments or conversation topics and we will anonymously post your question with our response. Although our responses will only be based on our own personal experiences and opinions, we hope that this will spark conversation, provide some insight to those tough questions, and maybe bring some humor! We look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance!

Please send your questions, comments or conversation topics to csa.newsletterinbox@gmail.com.

CSA Newsletter

This newsletter is published monthly by volunteers of the Canadian Stuttering Association, Christina Spicer and Julia Palozzi. To contact the newsletter editors: csa.newsletterinbox@gmail.com.



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