

SEE WHAT'S NEW IN CANADA'S STUTTERING COMMUNITY

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CSA 2017 Conference Impressions



THE PLANNING COMMITTEE; TOP ROW: ALEXANDRA D'AGOSTINO, ARUN KHANNA, DAN LECA, CASEY KENNEDY, CARLA DI DOMENICANTONIO, LISA WILDER, SAM DUNSIGER, FRONT ROW: MELINA ETIENNE, EEVA STIERWALT, ANDREW HARDING, DAVID STONES.

Last October, John* thought about coming to the CSA conference but decided no - a whole day with people who stutter wasn't for him. This year, he walked to the front of the hall during the open mic session and talked freely about why this year was different. "Community is our strength and after doing speech therapy I've realised it is the support of other people who stutter that makes all the difference. [Read More.](#)

ANDREW HARDING, PAST NATIONAL COORDINATOR

Wow, what a great Conference! Everyone I spoke with told me that they got so much out of it and that they were looking forward to attending next year! I was amazed at the number of first timers we had there. We had some very positive feedback about the conference. People complimented the quality and variety of the workshops and the 'excellent' keynote speaker. [Read More.](#)

EEVA STIERWALT, CURRENT NATIONAL COORDINATOR

Meet your new CSA National Coordinator, Eeva Stierwalt!

My name is Eeva Stierwalt and I am honoured to be elected as the new CSA National Coordinator. What attracts me most to the CSA is the CSA Mission Statement: The Canadian Stuttering Association is a national, volunteer driven, not-for-profit organization that promotes awareness of stuttering and provides support for people who stutter and their families, with a view to helping stutterers deal as effectively as possible with their stutter and to achieve their full personal and professional potential.

Read more about Eeva in her CSA web site article [here](#).



EEVA STIERWALT

“Do you know what I mean?”

Dear CSA,

I was recently at a restaurant with a friend and I wanted to order a margarita. When I ordered, I stuttered on the ‘m’ and the server chuckled at me under her breath. What do you do when a server laughs at you when you’re ordering? Do you laugh it off? Do you say something? What if you are with friends or colleagues that you want to impress?

Ah, yes. We (Christina and Julia) have both been there.

And, we think it depends: How did your body respond in the moment? Who are you with? What is your purpose?

How did your body feel about in the moment? Did you feel a clench in your stomach, tightening of the chest? If a part of your felt triggered and offended, then it might be a good idea to say something. On the other hand, if there was no “sting” you might feel sympathetic that the average person has no idea that people stutter—most people are ignorant to that fact that people like us exist! We say listen to the moment because

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stuttering is like a roulette—sometimes we will feel stung, other time it glides right off of us. Trust that you know what you need to do for yourself, and your speech, at that time.

Who are you with? Context is also important. With our 20+ years of stuttering experience, we've felt like colleagues or fellow students tend to look the other way when we stutter, while rare few do not. You have control and can handle the situation how you see fit at the time given your company. Entertain the option of speaking to the server in private. Alternatively, you might also use this as an opportunity to set the tone with your colleagues and demonstrate to them you won't be having any of "that", and might choose to say something in front of them. Keep in mind that advocating on the spot might make those around you feel uncomfortable. But, at the end of the day, it is YOUR speech and YOUR experience. Sometimes, things need to be awkward for a few moments to bring many moments of comfort.

What is your purpose? With the above points begs the question: who are you really advocating for? Yourself and your speech? Or for other people who stutter, as to educate the wider community about people like us?

Take-away's: it depends on (1) how you felt in the moment (2) context -- what is the message you want to send to those who are in your company? (3) what is the message you want to send in general?

Worth trying out: Treat your stutter like your best friend!!! Sometimes we will tell our best friend "it isn't worth it" and pull them away from a situation, and other times we would tell them to go say something to stand up for how we feel. Trust that you know what's best at that time.

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.

Meet Richard Holmes!



RICHARD HOLMES

My name is Richard Holmes and I am a person who stutters (PWS). Stuttering has been a part of my life, in the sense that it existed, since I began speaking. It was not until around this time of year six years ago, however, that I took ownership of the role stuttering would play in my life. Prior to this change, stuttering for me was a “defect”, a success if swept under the carpet sufficiently. But after convincing myself to give therapy another shot at age 19, a paradigm shift occurred....

Curious about Richard’s paradigm shift? Read on [here!](#)

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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