

THE CANADIAN
STUTTERING ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

voices rising

A DAY TO TALK
ABOUT STUTTERING

2018 Conference

October 20, 2018

University of Toronto Campus
Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Avenue
Toronto ON



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DAY AT A GLANCE

8:15 to 8:45 AM - Registration, Coffee & Muffins

8:45 to 8:55 AM - Opening Remarks *Town Hall Theatre*

9:00 to 10:00 AM - Workshops:

- A. Neuroplasticity: Speech Workouts To Reshape Neural Pathways, Remap Your Cortex, And Improve Fluency, **David Stones** *Town Hall Theatre*
- B. Let's Sing: The Potential Benefits of Choral Singing in Adults who Stutter, **Frank Russo, PhD and Sina Fallah** *Room 312*
- C. Let's Draw Comics! **Daniele Rossi** *Room 223*

10:00 to 10:15 AM - Break

10:15 to 11:15 AM - Workshops:

- A. A Stutterer's Journey, and Coming Through to the Other Side, **Catherine Moroney** *Town Hall Theatre*
- B. Explaining the Stuttering Paradox: A New Theoretically-Driven Approach For Treating Stuttering Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), **Robert van de Vorst** *Room 312*
- C. Family Matters: Part 1 - Parents Meet & Greet, **Eeva Stierwalt and Carla Di Domenicantonio** *Room 223*
- D. Family Matters: Part 1 - Teen & Young Adult Meet & Greet, **Alexandra D'Agostino** *Café*

11:15 to 11:30 AM - Break

11:30 to 12:30 PM - Keynote Speaker & Questions

12:30 to 1:30 PM - Lunch

1:30 to 2:30 PM - Workshops:

- A. The Fun in Letting Go: Improv for Beginners, **Samuel Dunsiger and Brian Woo** *Town Hall Theatre*
- B. Family Matters: Part 2, Parents and Children Come Together, **Eeva Stierwalt, Carla Di Domenicantonio and Alexandra D'Agostino** *Room 312*
- C. Financial Support for Disability, **Anna Huynh and Casey Kennedy** *Room 223*

2:30 to 2:40 PM - Break

2:40 to 2:50 PM - Stand-Up Comedy routine, **Joze Piranian** *Town Hall Theatre*

2:50 to 3:35 PM - Open Mic *Town Hall Theatre*

3:35 to 3:45 PM - Break

3:45 to 4:45 PM - Workshops:

- A. Updates on the Pharmacologic Treatment of Stuttering, **Gerald Maguire, MD** *Town Hall Theatre*
- B. Social Confidence With a Stutter, **Joze Piranian** *Room 312*
- C. Fake News: Debunking Stuttering Myths in a Hyper-Connected World, **Audrey Bigras** *Room 223*

4:50 to 5:00 PM - Closing Remarks
Town Hall Theatre

THE CSA CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

This Conference was made possible by CSA Conference Committee volunteers: Casey Kennedy, Program Coordinator and Emcee; Eeva Stierwalt, Co-coordinator; Dan Leca, Venue and Audio Visual; Arun Khanna, Finances; Lisa Wilder, Graphics and Web; Carla Di Domenicantonio, Registrations and merchandise; Melina Etienne, Co-coordinator; Alexandra D'Agostino, Social media; David Stones, Planning.

CANADIAN STUTTERING ASSOCIATION

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Charity tax number: 830606943
Corporation number: 429745-8

CSA CONFERENCE AGENDA

MORNING SCHEDULE



8:15 to 8:45 AM

Registration/Sign-In Begins, coffee and muffins served

8:45 to 8:55 AM

Opening Remarks by Eeva Stierwalt and Casey Kennedy

TOWN HALL THEATRE

9:00 to 10:00 AM

Simultaneous Workshops

A. Neuroplasticity: Speech Workouts To Reshape Neural Pathways, Remap Your Cortex, And Improve Fluency

TOWN HALL THEATRE

David Stones

Our brains continue to grow, change, and rewire themselves even into older age. This was breakthrough thinking in the 1980s, but it's common knowledge now. Viewing the human brain as elastic, malleable, and changeable is triggering dozens of stuttering research studies and firing the engines of exciting new therapies. Enter this workshop to learn more about neuroplasticity and your uniquely human capacity to remould the way you think about and process speech; leave with practical speech exercises and "Talking Tips" to guide and motivate change.

David Stones is a mostly retired business executive with a career built around the disciplines of marketing, communications, and strategic planning. He is a past Director of the CSA, now serves on three other Boards of Directors and recently has turned his attention to the writing and performance of poetry. His one man show, *Infinite Sequels*, just finished a six performance run at the London Fringe Festival, earning top marks and the plaudit "brilliant and beautiful" from the London Free Press – not bad for a guy who's stuttered his whole life.

B. Let's Sing: The Potential Benefits of Choral Singing in Adults who Stutter

ROOM 312

Frank Russo, PhD and Sina Fallah

This workshop will explore the potential benefits of singing for adults who stutter. There will be an overview of theory and research considering the brain basis of adult stuttering, and a review of studies that have considered fluency gains through choral singing. Emerging research that considers the benefits of community-based singing for other communication disorders (e.g. Parkinson's Disease, and Hearing Loss) will be looked at. There will be an opportunity to engage in song and to experience first-hand the fluency gains that have been reported elsewhere. If there is interest, a post-workshop discussion will focus on the planning of a community-based choir.

Frank Russo, PhD, is Professor of Psychology and the Hear the World Research Chair in Music and Emotional Speech at Ryerson University. He is also the Founding Director of the SMART Lab, a Professor in the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, and an Affiliate Scientist at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute.

Sina Fallah is the Founder and Director at the Centre for Music Education and Cognition at Ryerson University, as well as the Music Director for the 50+ program at Ryerson University's Chang School of Continuing Education.

C. Let's Draw Comics!

ROOM 223

Daniele Rossi

Daniele will discuss the benefits of having a creative outlet, and how drawing comics about stuttering helped him to develop and share a healthy sense of humour towards his stuttering. Participants will have the opportunity to draw their own comics about stuttering, share them with the group, and perhaps also snap a photo of their work to post online and spread some awareness. All drawing levels, or lack thereof, welcomed!

Daniele Rossi self-published an illustrative survival guide called "Stuttering is Cool: A Guide to Stuttering in a Fast-Talking World" and produces a podcast of the same name. His favourite comics include Calvin and Hobbes and Peanuts, and Daniele also enjoys a healthy dose of Looney Tunes cartoons.

10:00 to 10:15 AM

Break

10:15 to 11:15 AM

Simultaneous Workshops

A. A Stutterer's Journey, and Coming Through to the Other Side

TOWN HALL THEATRE

Catherine Moroney

Catherine will recollect her life growing up with a severe stutter, and the resulting isolation and coming through to the other side becoming an open, successful, and ragingly extroverted person who continues to stutter. Catherine will recount the ecstasy and agony of going through therapy (realizing tremendous gains only to lose them all four months later,) medical treatments, and the continuing the vital role that the CSA and NSA play in her life. She will also tell a few funny stories of life as a stutterer, and end with the reasons she would not take that magic fluency pill if it were ever offered to her.

Catherine Moroney is a physicist and software engineer at NASA. She grew up and went to school in Canada, and is now living in Los Angeles. She has stuttered all her life, with widely varying degrees of severity, and is an active member of the National Stuttering Association (she can't turn down a good party!) She has been through the therapy wars and has learned to see the particular humour that comes with stuttering.

B. Explaining the Stuttering Paradox: A New Theoretically-Driven Approach For Treating Stuttering Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

ROOM 312

Robert van de Vorst

This workshop will explain 'the stuttering paradox': although evidence exists for genetic and neurological differences between PWS and fluent speakers, generally the less attention and effort persons who stutter (PWS) put into their speech, the less they tend to stutter. This may be explained by general increased levels of monitoring in PWS. Core principles of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) may be used to address this overactive monitoring system as well as negative cognitions and emotions that can maintain and exacerbate the stuttering. Principles of ACT may also put the use of 'fluency shaping' and 'stuttering modification' techniques in a new and broader perspective.

Robert van de Vorst is currently enrolled as a doctoral-student at McGill University. He is interested in the sensorimotor processes underlying speech and music performance. As a person who has experienced stuttering, he also is interested in the role of cognition and emotion on motor performance in general as well as in stuttering specifically.

**C. Family Matters: Part 1 -
Parents Meet & Greet**

ROOM 223

Eeva Stierwalt and Carla
Di Domenicantonio

Parents of teens and young adults who stutter will come together to share stories and offer support to one another, sharing each other's parenting journeys. Discussion will touch on topics that uniquely relate to parenting a teen or young adult who stutters (e.g., dating, high school or university experiences, work interviews, etc.). Participants will be invited to generate questions for their children, as a group, in preparation for part two of this workshop. This workshop is suited to first-timers and conference veterans.

Eeva Stierwalt, the CSA National Coordinator and Chair, is also the mother of Alexandra D'Agostino, a young adult who stutters who is the Social Media Coordinator of the CSA and who has been involved with the NSA by leading parent workshops. Eeva is an IT professional at the London Public Library and is Past-Chair of the Innovative Users Group with over 1,000 library members worldwide.

Carla Di Domenicantonio is a Registered Speech-Language Pathologist who has had a career-long interest in stuttering and related fluency disorders. She has worked in hospital and university settings, and currently practices in a private office in Burlington. Carla is SLP Liaison on the CSA Board of Directors.

**D. Family Matters: Part 1 -
Teen & Young Adult Meet
& Greet**

CAFÉ

Alexandra D'Agostino

Teens and young adults who stutter come together to share stories and offer support to one another, sharing each other's stuttering journey. Facilitated by a young adult who stutters, discussion will touch on topics that uniquely relate to growing up with a stutter, such as school, dating, interviews, etc. Participants will be invited to generate questions and comments for parents, as a group, in preparation for part two of this workshop. Fun will also be on the agenda! This session is suited to first-timers and conference veterans.

Alexandra D'Agostino is 24 and recently obtained her BA from Wilfrid Laurier University with a combined honours in anthropology and psychology, and is now a student at Nipissing University's Nursing Scholar Practitioner Program in Toronto. She has stuttered since she was seven, and is on the CSA's Board of Directors as the Social Media Coordinator. She is also involved with the National Stuttering Association in the United States.

11:15 to 11:30 AM

Break

11:30 to 12:30 PM

Keynote Speaker



For many of us, **Mary Wood** needs no introduction. She has been a dynamic, insightful, and loving presence in the stuttering community since first attending a conference for PWS in Ottawa in 1993 where she presented a workshop on self-esteem. Since then, Mary has touched many lives through her careful and deep scrutiny of stuttering and its impact on the person. Beyond Ottawa and Canada, Mary has inspired people at conferences in the United States, Europe and Great Britain. She was ordained as a Unity minister in 2005, a lesson that taught her you never know what's around the next corner. We look forward to hearing what is sure to be a moving and insightful keynote speech! Question and answer session to follow.

12:30 to 1:30 PM

Lunch is provided

CAFÉ

AFTERNOON SCHEDULE

1:30 to 2:30 PM

Simultaneous Workshops

**A. The Fun in Letting Go:
Improv for Beginners**

TOWN HALL THEATRE

Samuel Dunsiger and
Brian Woo

Have you rehearsed what you're going to order at a restaurant? Have you ever written a script on what you're going to say before making a phone call?

As people who stutter, it's overwhelming to think about what we're going to say, while also being concerned with how we're saying it. This improv workshop is for anyone who wants to put aside the planning and find out how fun living in the moment can be. We're going to explore how improv can benefit us as people who stutter. And yes, we're going to play some improv games focused on being completely in the moment and reacting with acceptance rather than judgment. Everyone is welcome. The only requirements are to be supportive of each other and be willing to have a good time.

Samuel Dunsiger is a writer, marketer and improviser from Toronto. He was trained in improv at Second City Toronto. Since then, he has performed in shows at Comedy Bar, Bad Dog Theatre and The Spoke's live storytelling show. He credits improv with having benefits for both his anxieties and stuttering. Plus, it's so darn fun. He also loves coffee and cats.

Brian Woo increased his confidence by performing improv comedy. He has been trained at Durham Improv and Bad Dog Theatre. He has performed at Black Swan Comedy, the Abilities Centre, the Disability Pride Celebration and the Walk for Stuttering Awareness. Brian aims to promote awareness of stuttering and encourage other people who stutter to step out of their comfort zone.

**B. Family Matters: Part 2,
Parents and Children
Come Together**

ROOM 312

Eeva Stierwalt and Carla
Di Domenicantonio and
Alexandra D'Agostino

This workshop provides an opportunity for parents, teens, and young adults to continue discussions initiated in Part 1, and to collectively respond to the questions and comments received from the other group. Answers will be shared and discussed during this second part, where parents and children join each other.

Bios above.

C. Financial Support for Disability

ROOM 223

Anna Huynh and Casey Kennedy

Many are unaware of the financial support available for people with disabilities, including for people who stutter. From the Registered Disability Savings Plan, to the Disability Tax Credit, to the OSAP grant for students - this workshop will walk you through the funding that may be available to you. We will also lead a discussion about the elephant in the room - the word "disability." Is stuttering a disability? What does "disability" even mean? What is the difference between a disability, a disorder, and a difference?

Anna Huynh is currently studying Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Toronto. Being a person who stutters, she is passionate about supporting people with communication disorders. She is the President of Hear2Speak, a not-for-profit organization that supports speech-language and hearing healthcare, and is actively involved in speech research.

Casey Kennedy is a person who stutters and a Speech-Language Pathologist in Toronto. He is also the Director of Conference Programming with the CSA, and heavily involved in the NSA in the United States. Casey's personal and professional journey with stuttering has taught him that there is real power in changing how we think about and react to our stutter.

2:30 to 2:40 PM

Break

2:40 to 3:35 PM

Open mic session with comedy intro

10 minute stand-up routine

Joze Piranian

A short comedy stand up routine will jump start this open mic session, one of the most popular features of our conference.

Open mic session

TOWN HALL THEATRE

Have your say! Don't be afraid to take the mic.

3:45 to 4:45 PM

Simultaneous Workshops

B. Updates on the Pharmacologic Treatment of Stuttering

TOWN HALL THEATRE

Gerald Maguire, MD

Empirical research over the past four decades has yielded evidence that certain medications, specifically those that affect the dopamine system, can effectively reduce the severity of stuttering symptoms. Newer pharmacologic agents show greater tolerability than prior compounds yet more definitive research is planned. As of today, no agent is approved in Canada or the USA specifically for the treatment of stuttering but in this workshop, the studies supporting such use will be presented. Of note, other medications may negatively impact stuttering and insights will also be provided into these compounds. The workshop will also review the growing body of evidence of the neurodevelopment differences in the brains of those who stutter and how targeted pharmacologic treatments show promise.

Gerald Maguire, MD is Professor and Chair of Psychiatry and Neuroscience and Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Education at the University of California, Riverside School of Medicine. Dr. Maguire also serves as the medical director of the Kirkup Center for the Medical Treatment of Stuttering at UC Riverside. Being a person who stutters himself, Dr. Maguire has dedicated his career to advancing medical treatments for the condition that he shares with so many others. He has presented his research nationally and internationally and has published numerous articles and book chapters on the advancements in the pharmacological and other medical treatments of stuttering. Dr. Maguire currently serves as the Chair of the National Stuttering Association (USA) and having served in the past as the Vice Chair of the International Stuttering Association.

C. Social Confidence With a Stutter

ROOM 312

Joze Piranian

Many stutterers (Joze included) grow up in social isolation out of fear of being judged. Socializing and dating can be especially challenging with a stutter, but it doesn't have to be that way! Through self-confidence, self-acceptance, and self-deprecating humour, a stutterer can be a "social badass". During this workshop, Joze will share his story from isolation and avoidance to constantly making new friends anywhere; sharing strategies that can be replicated by others; and enacting "mock" social interactions among participants to practice strategies right away. Time for questions and discussion will be provided at the end.

Joze Piranian is a lifelong stutterer on the quest to confront his fears one stage at a time. He's a TEDx speaker, winner of the Grand Slam at Toronto-based inspirational public speaking competition Speaker Slam, and a stand-up comedian who's performed in Toronto, Montreal, New York and Chicago.

D. Fake News: Debunking Stuttering Myths in a Hyper-Connected World

ROOM 223

Audrey Bigras

Stuttering can be a mysterious impediment, and we still have a lot to learn about it. But there are many persistent myths and stereotypes about stuttering floating around the internet, media, and society. How can people who stutter better educate others about stuttering? In this workshop, we will share and discuss the importance of staying informed about stuttering, especially in a hyper-connected world in which information is more accessible than ever.

Audrey Bigras joined the Association des Bègues du Canada (ABC) in 2015 as a Secretary of the Board of Directors. She is the Editor of the "Communiquer," ABC's regular newsletter. Audrey enjoys writing and sharing content about stuttering for people who stutter and those interested by the mysterious (and wonderful!) world of stuttering. Audrey lives in Montreal and currently works as a research professional.

4:50 to 5:00 PM

Closing Remarks

TOWN HALL THEATRE

Get together for conversation, food and drinks at nearby restaurant to follow.