Learning from people who stutter:
"The stuttering community is very diverse, and people have many different thoughts about their stuttering journeys"

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Did you know that across the globe views about stuttering are evolving—some consider stuttering to be a complex speech disorder, others view it as a neurodevelopmental difference (i.e., not a disorder requiring intervention)?

Aim

Speech pathologists from SWS Stuttering Unit and Western Sydney University explored whether adults who stutter (AWS) are interested in accessing support and what they hope to achieve through that support.

Methods

An international online survey was conducted based on the research of Venkatagiri (2009). AWS were recruited via social media and international support groups.

Results

✓ Participants resided in either Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, North America, South America or the United Kingdom.

✓ Across 52 participants meeting inclusion criteria, 92.3% (n = 48) expressed an interest in accessing future support with regards to their stutter and 80.7% (n = 42) took the opportunity to describe what they hoped to accomplish through this future support.

✓ Using Attride-Stirling's (2001) Thematic Networks Analysis, four organizing themes emerged:

(i) To speak more fluently
(ii) To increase confidence and self-esteem
(iii) To connect with other AWS
(iv) To develop acceptance of stuttering both on personal and societal levels.

✓ Although the majority of participants' responses focussed on one theme, a number of respondents had goals across multiple organizing themes, yielding one global theme of diverse views and preferences.

Conclusion

• The support services requested by AWS and the goals they hope to accomplish through these services was diverse.

• To optimally assist AWS, professionals need to listen to adults' service preferences and hopes in the context of their stuttering journey and life experience. Society also needs to appreciate the evolving and diverse views of stuttering.
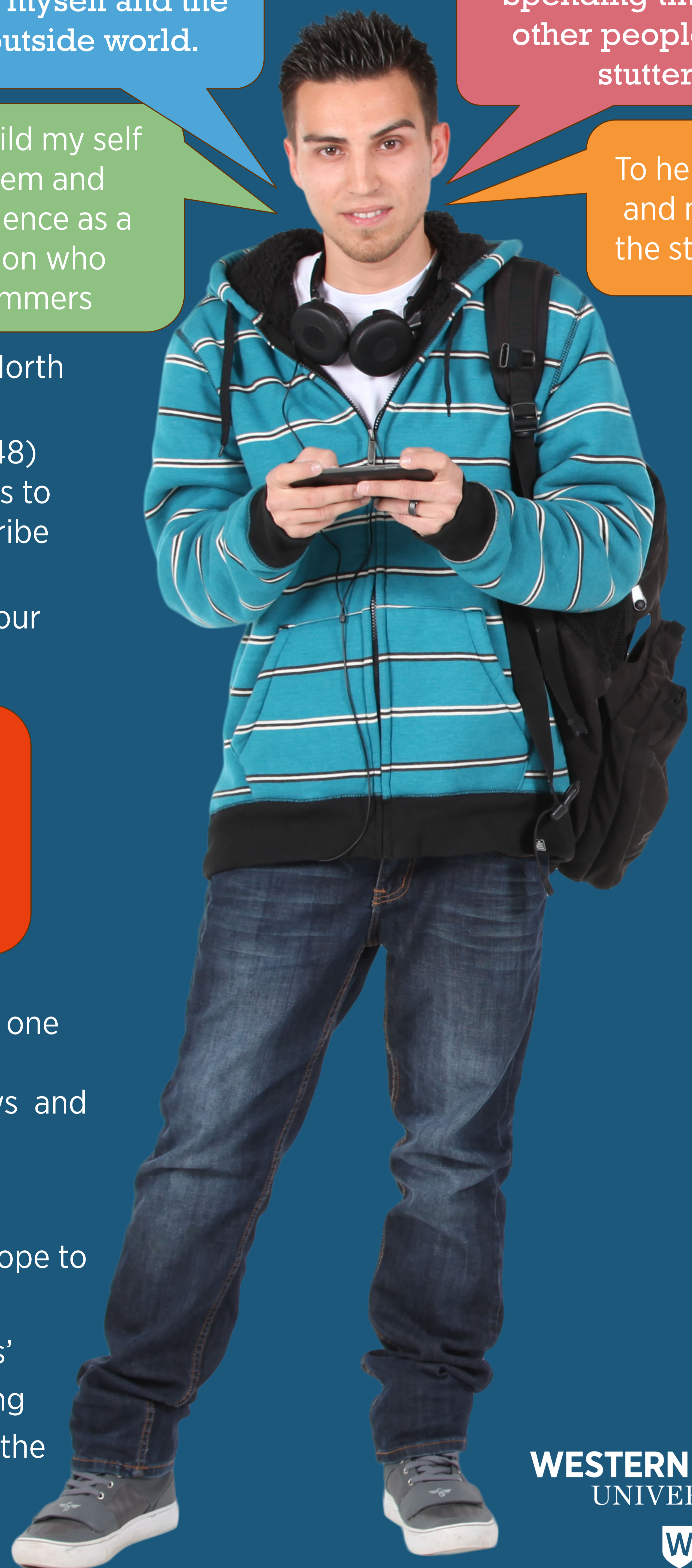
To help me be at peace with stuttering

Normalize stuttering for myself and the outside world.

Spending time with other people who stutter

...to build my self esteem and confidence as a person who stammers

To help speak and manage the stuttering

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

South Western Sydney Local Health District

NSW GOVERNMENT

References

Venkatagiri, H. S. (2009). What Do People Who Stutter Want--Fluency or Freedom?. Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 52(2), 500-515.
Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. Qualitative research, 1(3), 385-405.