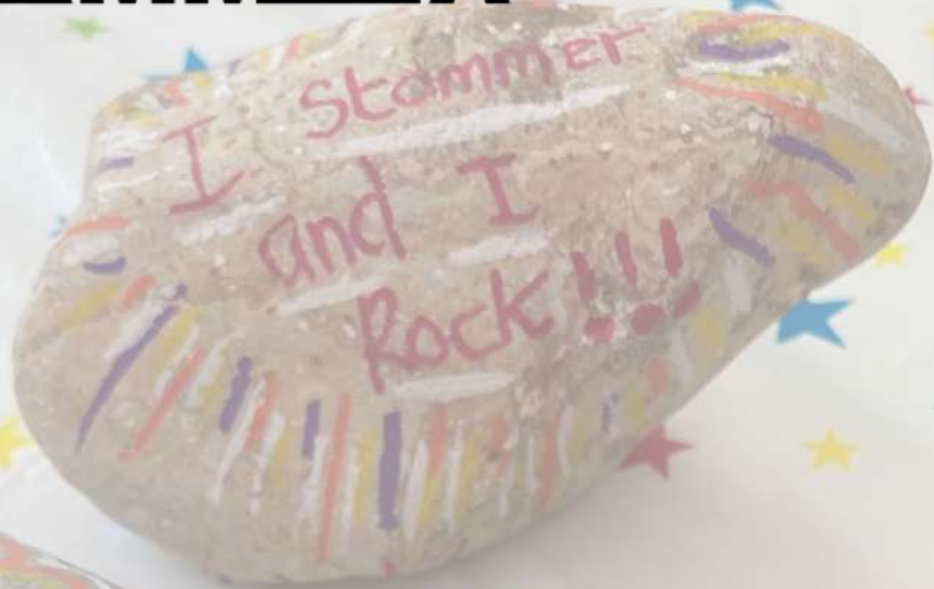


STAMMA

Rocks painted on Family Day



REPORT ON STAMMAFEST GLOBAL **FAMILY DAY**



27th August 2022
Guild of Students
University of Liverpool



Bubble blowing welcome to Family Day

Aims of the Family Day

1. To create a space for children and teenagers who stammer to meet one another and explore what it means to stammer. To support young people to feel more confident talking in front of others and to be less worried about stammering.
2. To provide parents/guardians of young people who stammer the chance to share their experiences and support one another in a relaxed and informal environment. To learn how to support their teenagers and children better and destigmatize stammering.

The Event

The Family Day took place on the Saturday of a 5-day international conference. While the main conference took place upstairs, the morning activities for the family day were in their own rooms on the ground floor. It meant while we were within the conference complex, the children had their own special, safe and secure area.

We had 63 attendees supported by 12 volunteers plus staff from STAMMA and Action for Stammering Children. All but one family who registered came, despite travel disruptions caused by train cancellations and delays over the weekend. The weather was good, the parents were keen to learn, and the children arrived with bags of energy.

We were delighted that the Family Day was sponsored by Action for Stammering Children with support from Alder Hey Children's Charity and Arnold Clark Community Fund.

We ran sessions for young people in age groups: 5-7, 8-11- and 12-15. These sessions were facilitated by a range of talented professionals from across the world including Penny Farrell, a specialist SLT from Ireland; Bob Adams, a performance artist who stammers and head of the Doncaster Stammering Association; Hilary Liddle, specialist SLT and lead clinician at the Willy Russell Centre for children and adults who stammer; and Hope Gerlach-Houck, an SLT and Assistant Professor at Western Michigan University in the US.

Everyone attended 2 different sessions with others of a similar age with refreshments in between. Every child had the chance to get involved in a range of different games and activities. Some played pass the parcel or explored Franky Banky comics by Daniele Rossi. Others drew pictures, painted tote bags and made models to explore what stammering

meant to them. Our older children also had the chance to explore their communication through a series of movement-based circus skills games involving bean bags, circus hoops and more!

Parents and guardians had three interactive sessions from some accomplished SLTs such as Jennifer Roche, a highly specialist SLT who lectures at Manchester Metropolitan University. They also heard from Ria Bernard from Action for Stammering Children and Abed Ahmed, a teacher who stammers.

Parents learnt more about stammering and ways of supporting their children, and raised lots of questions, such as how to develop their child's confidence at school. Parents clearly relished the chance to ask questions not just to SLTs but also to each other about how they had dealt with challenging situations and their worries about stammering.



Parents Session on Family Day

Families shared their experiences of being the parent of a child who stammers, with all the joys and challenges that this can bring. One parent talked of her frustration at the lack of support available at her son's school. Another, a parent of a child who stammers and a TA, discussed the challenges faced when trying to support children who stammer in school.

As one of our session leaders said, 'It was great for parents to have time and space to have a chat with each other and the SLT without a strict agenda'. The parents continued talking over taking their planned refreshments break. Despite this, parents said that they would have liked even more time to talk to other families.

Afternoon Sessions

Most of the families socialised over lunch and many then joined the rest of the conference delegates in our Courtyard space. While some families then left, many remained to attend some of the family-friendly workshops, such as 'Stammering Rocks', a workshop in which people decorated a rock with a message about a topic which mattered to them. In these sessions, families had the chance to talk to adults or other young people who stammer. For many this was the first time they had ever heard an adult stammer and an opportunity to realise that stammering need be no barrier to a career or a fulfilled life.

@Tweentravellers Went to the **@stammafest** in Liverpool today! This was a very exciting day for me (Eve) as I have a stamma myself so it was amazing to talk to kids that have a stamma too. We went on Saturday (today) which was family day but the event has been in Liverpool since Thursday and finishes tomorrow. In the morning we did exiting activities followed by lunch. After, we got a ton of cool souvenirs including a tote bag and pens and after we listened to a talk. This was an amazing day at **@stammafest** !!! **#itshowwetalk**

#stammafestglobal2022 #stamma #stammakid #stammafest #greatdayout #exiting



A post from @Tweentravellers on Family Day

Attendees and Beneficiaries

The capacity of our venue allowed for up to 240 beneficiaries. In the event 63 people attended. Less than we'd hoped, but the lower numbers gave us the opportunity to provide dedicated one-to-one support for parents and children and plan smaller group activities.

23 families registered for the Family Day - 29 children and young people and 36 parents and guardians. One parent and child couldn't attend on the day. Nine families came locally from Liverpool and the surrounding area, with the remaining 14 coming from across the UK including Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, and Hertfordshire. Age-wise the breakdown was as follows: -

	Registered	Attended
5-7-Year-Olds	7	6
8-11-Year-Olds	14	14
12-15-Year-Olds	9	9

Impact

While some of the children seemed anxious at first, it didn't take long for them to start excitedly talking to one another as they compared balloon animals and tried to catch giant bubbles in mid-air. Once they found their voices, the real challenge was getting them to stop! During the refreshment break, they were eager to share what they had made with their families and couldn't wait to get back and try something new.

As one of our session leaders said, the children 'all arrived shy and quiet but left loud and laughing - what a great outcome!'. Another told us 'It was great to provide a variety of sessions & the opportunity for children to do activities that they wouldn't usually do in a clinical setting.' This atmosphere was infectious, and after the first half an hour the parents too had discovered their confidence. Their opening session with Jennifer went down a storm, with parents asking questions, sharing stories, and swapping advice about anything and everything to do with stammering. They loved having the chance to 'grill' an SLT and have the time to explore different topics in more detail.

100% of families on our feedback forms rated both the morning and afternoon activities as 'great'. One child reported that they 'had loads of fun with the activities', while others reported that they enjoyed meeting both other children and adults who stammer. We also

heard from adults at the conference who told us how much they enjoyed talking with the children and young people.

The hub meant that that while the Family Day felt connected to the main conference, we could run tailored activities in a secure location; with separate rooms for each age group, a larger space for parents to listen to more structured talks and another space for children who were feeling overwhelmed or needed a break from the main activities.

Some Feedback

- *I would like to say thank you to all staff and STAMMA for creating such an amazing platform at the event, especially family day. My son and I felt so welcome and most importantly for him- comfortable and confident.*
- *My daughter loved it as she met people who stammer like her.*
- *The Conference was extremely beneficial to us, we wish more children had attended the workshops as they were very valuable. Thank you for organising.*
- *Everything about the day was great. Especially for children to meet and talk to other children.*
- *We absolutely loved STAMMAFest thank you. It was so nice to meet other parents like me and share our stories and advice, it's nice to know you're not alone. I've kept in touch with some of the parents after STAMMAFest too which is nice.*
- *[My son] had an amazing day! He loved the activities and meeting other children like him who stammer, he's also kept in touch with some of the children with hopes of meeting again someday. We would love to do this again at some point!*

Learnings

This was STAMMA's first in person event for children and families since the pandemic began, and the largest event planned as part of our biannual conference.

The biggest lesson was that we overestimated how many families would be able to attend. We'll survey the attendees and see whether a weekday or a Sunday would have been better.

Next time we'll also start marketing earlier and focus on working more closely not just with SLTs in the area, but also local schools to ensure as many people could attend as possible. Families could buy tickets until 24 hours before the event. While this allowed as many people attend as possible, predicting how many would come impacted on our catering and room hire costs. We weren't sure whether we'd get a last minute 'surge' or not. In the end we didn't.

The session leaders and volunteers were excellent at working with the different children and young people, but some found it difficult to coordinate times to plan their sessions as they were coming from different time zones/locations. This made it harder for some groups to design/make/buy the resources they needed for their sessions without support. Next time we'll allow more time for supporting volunteers.

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