

# How Can We Make School a Safer Place for Youth to Stutter?

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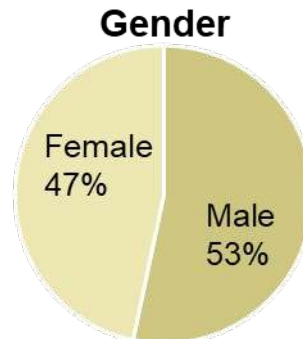
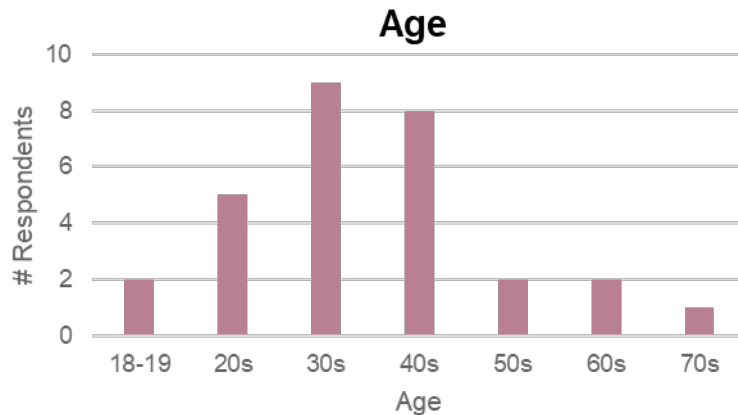
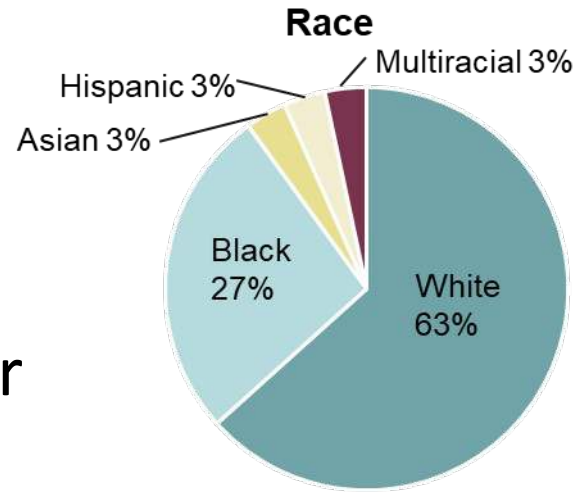
# Introductions



# Our Study

Interview study

30 adults who stutter



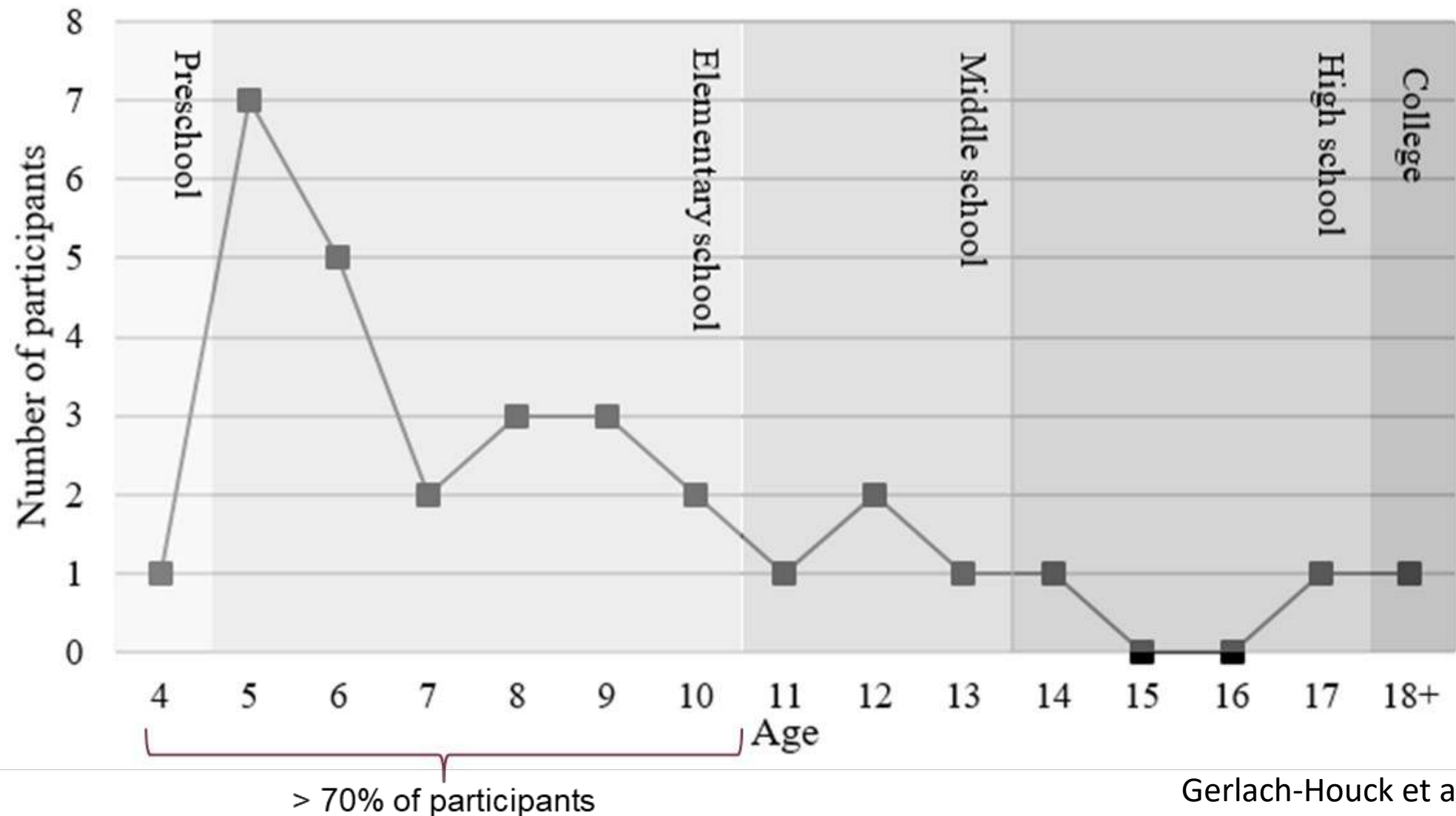
1. Growing up, what was it like to stutter at school?
2. Did you ever hide stuttering at school? What was that like?
3. If you had one, what was your experience with your school speech therapist like?
4. What needs to change for schools to be a safer place for kids to stutter?

1) What is it like to hide  
stuttering at school?

# Small group discussion questions #1

- How old do you think you were when you first started concealing stuttering [if relevant]?
- What were the specific ways that you concealed stuttering at school?
- What were your reasons for trying to conceal stuttering at school?
- If you worked with a speech therapist at school, to what extent did you find your experience working with them to be helpful or unhelpful. Why?
- If relevant, how would you describe the speech therapists role in hiding or being open about stuttering?

# How old were you when you started concealing stuttering?





# Ways of concealing stuttering at school



# Reasons for concealing stuttering at school



Self-protection



Maintaining  
social norms



Accessibility



2) How can we create a better future in school speech therapy for youth who stutter?

# Small group discussion questions #2

- What do you wish school speech therapists knew about stuttering and concealing stuttering?
- How do you think school speech therapists can support kids who are concealing stuttering?
- What do you think school speech therapists can do in terms of changing the environment to make school a safer place to stutter?

# ***What do adults who stutter view as helpful in supporting kids who are concealing stuttering at school?***

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Discussable topic

No word for their experience

Variability

How to bring stuttering up

How to respond to questions about stuttering

Understanding they are not responsible for listener reactions

Help find niches, discover strengths

Help establish allies

More time


No cold calling

Option to choose order

Alternative formats

# ***What do adults who stutter view as unhelpful in supporting kids who are concealing stuttering at school?***

Therapy  
approaches  
rooted in  
conforming



Learning to hide in speech therapy

Praise for fluency conditions hiding

Cold/clinical

Desire to be included in decision-making

“Not everyone is ready to face the music quite yet. And you can traumatize someone trying to force them to swim by throwing them into the pool”

# Conclusion

- From a young age, people who stutter learn potentially harmful messages around stuttering, which contribute to a feeling that stuttering is something that should be hidden.
- We believe speech therapists and educators should actively engage with tackling ableism and seek to make environments more accessible and supportive for children and young people who stutter.
- By doing so, future generations will perhaps learn that they do not have to conceal to be accepted!

# Kids Educating Their Class About Stuttering!





Thank you!