

We, a collective of stuttering self-advocacy and activist organizations, are calling for action from Samsung regarding their new technology, the Impulse watch app. Impulse is marketed as an “invisible assistant” that uses AI and tactile rhythmic impulses delivered at the wrist to promote fluent sounding speech, as well as “confidence” and “autonomy” among users who stutter. This technology and its marketing are deeply problematic and perpetuate, rather than improve, issues faced by people who stutter. Though Samsung claims to create products “built around a human-centered philosophy that recognizes diversity and embraces our differences,” Impulse actively undermines their own ideals. Society’s punishments for stuttering teach people who stutter that they are only valued if they speak without stuttering and this technology reinforces this harmful view.

Impulse falls short because it oversimplifies what effective help with stuttering looks like. Fluency shaping approaches, like the rhythmic and metronomic methods used in the ad (and depicted in the historical film *The King's Speech*), have been employed for over a century and are far from “innovative.” Despite their long history, these methods are known to have only short-term effects and are often described by people who stutter as effortful, distracting, and unpleasant.^{1,2,3} Additionally, fluency does not necessarily improve the quality of life for people who stutter, as their experience of fluency is often effortful and fundamentally different from the effortless fluency experienced by non-stutterers.⁴ Effective therapy should instead provide empowering narratives that validate the community and highlight how dysfluency can positively change our relationship to time.

The disconnect between the app and the wishes and hopes expressed by the stuttering community at large suggest that the motto of disability activism—“nothing about us without us”—has not been sufficiently recognized in the process of developing and marketing this technology. If the technology misconstrues effective help with stuttering, it is because it misunderstands the “problem” of stuttering itself. The tagline in their video that “resynchronizing speech is a matter of rhythm” misses the point. Spoken communication (among the wide range of human voices) is a social process requiring *social* solutions, not technological fixes in isolation. Creating structural space for dysfluent speech is essential.

One area of concern regarding the technology is Samsung’s marketing approach. Their video suggests the app can eliminate stuttering –without offering supporting research– and uses stigmatizing language describing it as something people “suffer” from. Such marketing is problematic and risks being exploitative, especially considering the app is only available with the purchase of a smart watch. While Samsung may intend to help, the stuttering community has endured endless such attempts to leverage the hope of a quick fix. It is not wrong for people who stutter to want to speak fluently in a world that punishes them for stuttering. However, it is essential that treatments are evidence-based, holistic, and do not exploit these desires.

Samsung’s goal of erasing stuttered speech is in direct opposition with their mission to “contribute to a better global society” and “championing inclusive technological innovation for all,” which they would know if they included a wider range of people who stutter in their development process.

We request that Samsung:

1. Engage with stuttering self-advocacy and activist organizations to better understand the needs and wishes of the stuttering community.
2. Discontinue the practice of marketing an app without research to support its utility in terms

of impact on quality of life

3. Refrain from using stigmatizing language in marketing materials and instead focus on empowering narratives that validate the stuttering community.
4. Collaborate with tech organizations already engaged with stuttering communities to learn best practices for inclusive technological innovation, like [Almpower](#), [SuperPenguin](#) and [withVR](#).
5. Develop products that promote the belonging of people who stutter and truly innovate in the field of assistive technology for speech variations, instead of offering just “more of the same.”

We are long accustomed to having quick fixes dangled before us, but believe in 2024 that we can expect better.

Signed,

Adult Stuttering (USA)
Afro Deficiente Brasil (Brasil)
Almpower.org (USA)
Airedale Stammering Centre (UK)
American Institute for Stuttering (USA)
ANAPcD - Associação Nacional de Apoio às Pessoas com Deficiência (Brasil)
Asociación Iberoamericana de Tartamudez (International)
Asociación Peruana Habla Libre (Perú)
Association Bégaïement Communication (Canada)
Associação Brasileira de Gagueira - AbraGagueira (Brasil)
Associação EspaçoNave Criativa - Acessibilidade Cultural (Brasil)
Association des jeunes bègues du Québec (Canada)
Asociación Mexicana de la Tartamudez (Mexico)
Association Parole Bégaïement Belgique asbl (Belgium)
Belgische Stottervereniging BSV (Belgium)
Brown Cub Speech Therapy (USA)
Cadence Speech Therapy (USA)
Canadian Stuttering Association (Canada)
Centro Especializado en Tartamudez (Perú)
Clínica Check-up Roma - Consulta de gaguez (Portugal)
Clinique spécialisée en bégaïement et bredouillement (Canada)
Coletivo Orgulho Gago (Brasil)
Columbia Speech and Language Services, Inc. (Canada)
De Stotterpraktijk (The Netherlands)
Diário PCD (Brasil)
Dysfluent (UK)
Escuela Con-Confianza Peru (Perú)
Exploration Bégaïements Bredouillements (France)
Flexspeak (USA)
Fluir + Chile, Abordaje Clínico de la Tartamudez (Chile)
Fundación Colombiana de la Tartamudez (Colombia)
Friends: The National Association of Young People Who Stutter (USA)
Front Range Speech & Stuttering Specialists (USA)
Fundacja Centrum Logopedyczne (Poland)

Granite Bay Speech (USA)
Henderson Stuttering Therapy (USA)
Infinite Limits Speech Therapy (USA)
International Cluttering Association (*International*)
Irish Stammering Association (*Ireland*)
İstanbul Medipol Üniversitesi DKT Bölümü (*Türkiye*)
Jornalista Inclusivo (*Brasil*)
Kekemeler Derneği (*Türkiye*)
Labo IV, the laboratory for innovations in Speech Language Pathology of the University of Montreal (*Canada*)
Lebsack Speech Therapy (USA)
Links to Health (*Canada*)
Logopädie & Stottertherapie (*Germany*)
Logopediepraktijk Tilburg (*Netherlands*)
Magic Words Therapy (UK)
Martha Speech (USA)
Meaningful Digital Experiences Research Lab (USA)
Mi Habla Mi Tiempo (*Perú*)
Myspeech (USA)
Nederlandse Vereniging voor Stottertherapie (*Netherlands*)
National Stuttering Association (USA)
Nolan Stuttering Foundation (USA)
Oficina de Fluência (*Brasil*)
Parada do Orgulho da Pessoa com Deficiência Brasil (*Brazil*)
Passing Twice (USA)
Proud Stutter (USA)
Redefining Stammering (UK)
RISE Speech and Communication Center (USA)
SAY: AU The Stuttering Association for the Young of Australia (*Australia*)
SPACE (Stuttering, People, Arts, Community, Education) (*Canada*)
Specialized Center for Stuttering (*International*)
Speech and Stuttering Therapy of New Jersey (USA)
Speech Bubbles Therapy (USA)
Spero Stuttering, Inc. (USA)
Stamily (*International*)
Stammerers Through University Consultancy (UK)
Stichting StotterFonds (*Netherlands*)
Stottercentrum Noord (*The Netherlands*)
Stottercentrum Rotterdam (*The Netherlands*)
Stotterconnect (*The Netherlands*)
Stottertherapie Kato Polfliet (*Belgium*)
Stuttering Commons (*Canada*)
Stuttering Society (*International*)
Stuttering Therapy Resources (USA)
Take Courage (UK)
Talking Out Ltd (UK)
Tartamudez Venezuela (*Venezuela*)
That Speech Lady Ltd (UK)
University of Iowa Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (USA)
University of Iowa Stuttering Lab (USA)
Vermont Stuttering Therapy (USA)
Vale PCD (*Brasil*)

Vozes Gagas (*Brasil*)
withVR (*International*)

¹Cream, Angela, et al. "Protection from harm: the experience of adults after therapy with prolonged-speech." *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders* 38.4 (2003): 379-395.

²Cream, A., A. Packman, and G. Llewellyn. "The playground rocker: A metaphor for communication after treatment for adults who stutter." *Advances in Speech Language Pathology* 6.3 (2004): 182-187.

³Corcoran, Joseph A., and Moira Stewart. "Stories of stuttering: A qualitative analysis of interview narratives." *Journal of Fluency Disorders* 23.4 (1998): 247-264.

⁴Constantino, C. D., Eichorn, N., Buder, E. H., Beck, J. G., & Manning, W. H. (2020). The speaker's experience of stuttering: Measuring spontaneity. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 63(4), 983-1001.