



Practice Interview Pilot 21-22 October 2020

Against the background of sharply rising global unemployment, 50 Million Voices¹ organised a pilot Practice Interview event for people who stutter to coincide with International Stuttering Awareness Day on 22 October.

Interviews are particularly stressful for people who stutter due to the difficulty in communicating fluently in time-pressured situations, where so much can hang on the outcome. This is compounded by most interviewers having little experience of candidates who stutter or of getting the best from them.

With participants from 8 countries and 6 continents, the programme created a safe space for experiential learning and development for a total of 67 participants, being 49 who stutter and 18 allies who don't stutter.

Impact – What happened and who benefitted

- All participants attended a 90 minute educational briefing on stuttering in the workplace.
- 50 one-to-one interviews took place, providing 100 individual interview experiences.
- 35 people who stutter received either 1 or 2 interviews to help improve their interview skills.
- 32 interviewers, being 14 who stutter and 18 allies who do not stutter, each gave up to 3 interviews to help broaden their interviewing skills.
- Participants came from Brazil, Canada, Ghana, India, New Zealand, UAE, UK and USA, with the majority from the UK and India.
- 18% of interviewees were women (4 out of 5 adults who stutter are men).
- 48% of interviewees were BAME.
- Most participants attended a 60 minute group feedback session.

Impact – What the data tells us

Confidential written feedback given by the interviewees and interviewers provided the following data on the 3 key questions of *Value*, *Recommendation* and *Future Participation*:

- 100% found the programme either extremely *valuable* (84%) or very *valuable* (16%).
- 97% would either definitely (87%) or probably (10%) *recommend* the Practice Interviews event to people who stutter or allies. 3% would possibly recommend it.
- 97% would definitely (84%) or probably (13%) like to *participate* again in a future Practice

Interviews event organised by 50 Million Voices. 3% possibly would.

Impact – What participants told us

"Up until a few days ago, I was utterly terrified at the prospect of having to interview for a future role outside of the military; however, the past two days have really enabled me to face and challenge my fears and preconceptions, but in a totally supportive and safe environment."

Interviewee – Howard Charlton, Military – UK

I just wanted to reiterate how thankful I am to those that have helped make this possible- I have nothing but great feedback. It's so inspiring to be aware of stammerers in my desired line of work, so to have such talented people on board and to be able to communicate with them is fantastic.

Interviewee – Not in employment – UK

"The briefing session was amazing...it gave us a different approach on stammering.....The most important thing I learnt is about "disclosure" that gave me a new perspective to face any communication in life be it an interview, group discussion, an elocution or public speaking. This helped me a lot during the practice interview round.

I fearlessly represented myself without having any anxieties or cold feet which I had earlier in all my interviews. This was my first interview session with an international interviewer in my life... I thoroughly enjoyed it. This was the first interview where I stammered without any tension . It was my learning experience and boosted my morale and confidence to present myself for any interview in the future.

In the group feedback session....people from different parts of the world shared their stammering stories. It was an awesome time being a part of this program. "

Interviewee – Samruddhi Samant – Manufacturing – India

"As someone who stammers, I could have really done with something like this 10 years ago when I was entering the world of work!"

Interviewer – Chris Gemmell, Corporate Development Director, Sage Group PLC – Global

"I am delighted that Compass was able to take part in the 50 Million Voices pilot interview project, to help individuals who stutter to build confidence and skills levels in an interview situation. I was lucky enough to be involved in the project and was extremely humbled by everyone's willingness to give their time to make a real difference to people who need it.

The pilot is not only a fantastic initiative in aiding people with a speech impediment, but was also an opportunity for the interviewers who took part to gain invaluable experience."

Interviewer - Dr Julie Humphreys, Group Head of Diversity & Inclusion, Compass Group PLC – Global

"It is always so rewarding to get to help people and as an HR professional, I felt I learned a lot."

Interviewer – Deise Grosso, Learning & Development Manager, Compass Group - Brazil

An amazing experience. I played my part as interviewer and ally and got the start of a much needed education around stuttering. I was blown away by my two 'candidates' and their courage.

Interviewer - Katie Osiadacz – Senior Responsible Business Manager – TSB - UK

Several interviewers have invited their interviewees to stay in contact so they can continue their allyship. At least one interviewee was invited back to a company involved in the Practice Interviews for a Student Assessment Day. Having passed this and a series of subsequent interviews, he has now accepted a job offer from them.

Conclusions

- The pilot achieved its objective to create a high quality international practice interview event which benefitted people who stutter and allies who don't stutter.
- 49 people who stutter benefitted directly, either as interviewees or as interviewers.
- 18 allies benefitted directly as interviewers.
- We now have a proven and scaleable formula for running similar events in the future.

Invitation

If you are interested in participating in future Practice Interview events, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Please contact Iain Wilkie at chair@50millionvoices.org.

The 50 Million Voices Team

December 2020 – Updated January 2021

Notes

1. 50 Million Voices is a community of leaders who stutter from 15 countries. We work with allies and employers to transform the world of work for the 50 million adults globally who stutter.
2. We are registered by the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Our charity number is 1189541