



Editors Sam Simpson (left), Carolyn Cheasman (second right) and Rachel Everard (right) with Jen and Janey from Teddington Waterstones

## Book launch raises stammering awareness

On the day after International Stammering Awareness Day (22 October), around 40 people gathered in Waterstones, Teddington, for a local book launch of ‘Stammering Therapy from the inside: New perspectives on working with young people and adults’, edited by Carolyn Cheasman and Rachel Everard of City Lit, and Sam Simpson of intandem.

Sam, Carolyn and Rachel spoke about the book’s context and its 14-year gestation. The book details an approach based on understanding, acceptance of stammering and developing a greater ease of speech.

I predict it will cause controversy in regions, such as Australia, where the ‘fluency shaping’ school of thought is the establishment.

The audience heard two articulate accounts of therapy like those described in the book. Dan, a salesman who experienced a spectacular failure

in simultaneously expressing himself and masking his stammer during a presentation at work, turned to therapy. He learned to identify the workings of his stammer, to modify it and to desensitise himself to others’ reactions. Cara started her adult therapy about a year ago and has come a long way already. She started off rejecting the idea of acceptance, “it was too passive; like giving up”. But, as British Stammering Association CEO Norbert Lieckfeldt later commented, “people think acceptance is the easy way out, but it’s such hard work”.

The editors hope that practising therapists throughout the world will buy the book, as well as people who stammer, and that it appears on the reading lists for students, making a contribution to the world-wide therapy debate. Here’s hoping they succeed.

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**Nico Burgers**