

BY TIM MURPHY-

I have read comments from people who have attended elsa meetings in the past and they used phrases like "life changing" and "amazing". On the way to the meeting i was feeling a mixture of sceptism, nervousness and excitement - but in my wildest dreams I never envisioned it would be the experience it turned out to be. I feel so lucky to have been apart of a group of people who together have grown day-by-day, hour- by- hour in self-confidence.

I have learned so much about my rights as a person who stammers from informational and interactive lectures on disability rights and awareness of suppressive techniques. I have also taken part in fun, imaginative and ingenious drama workshops which have led to me getting on stage and acting out three presentations!

I have never laughed and enjoyed myself so much, i have met people who understand me and that i trust to open up to which is not easy to do as a person who stammers as you will probably know. By this point you maybe wondering why i have not spoken much about stammering or therapy. This is because this meeting was not another therapy programme ( or not in the conventional sense of the word). I have tried many therapy approaches such as speech therapy, hynotherapy, medications, and breathing techniques but none of them gave me what i got from this meeting and that is a strong fireball of belief and acceptance of myself with or without my stammer. which will forever burn inside of me and fuel me for when times get tough. No more self pity as i know that anytime it sneaks up i will remember the faces of my f-f-friends who now inspire me to reach my limitless potential.

I would like to say a big thankyou to the BSA for allowing me to go on this programme, and also a massive humongous thankyou to everyone involved with elsa I will be forever indebted.

But the biggest thankyou actually goes to stammering as if it was not for my stammer i would not have been able to attend and therefore would not have met my f-f-friends for life, i never thought i'd say this but THANK YOU stammer.

P.s as an added bonus i now have places to stay all over europe, did someone say cheaper holidays? :)