



# Selective Mutism In Our Own Words

by Carl Sutton, Cheryl Forrester, Donna Williams (Foreword)

Selective Mutism (SM) is a situational anxiety disorder which generally begins in early childhood but which can sometimes continue unabated into adult life. A child or adult with SM cannot speak in certain situations due to fears of initiating speech / being overheard.

Children with SM may find themselves unable to speak for the entirety of their school lives. In some instances the school environment can cause so much stress for a child that they require home schooling. In adolescence and adulthood the repercussions of SM can be depression and other anxiety disorders (e.g. Agoraphobia, Social Anxiety Disorder, and Generalised Anxiety Disorder); severe social isolation; difficulty finding or maintaining employment; difficulty attaining romantic relationships; and so on.

We did not feel that there were sufficient first-hand experiences of Selective Mutism in published literature and so we created this book, *Selective Mutism In Our Own Words*, to bring lived experience of this anxiety disorder - including Carl's own experience - into the public domain.

The book looks at the experience of SM in all age groups - from early childhood all the way to adulthood. It contains the lived experiences of around 40 people from the US and UK who write about Selective Mutism *in their own words*. Also included are candid first-hand accounts of living with a dual diagnosis of Selective Mutism and an Autism Spectrum Disorder and parents', therapists' and a teacher's perspectives of this condition.

For more information go to <http://www.ispeak.org.uk/inourownwords.aspx>

## Reviews

Finally a book to dispel the myth that SM is an exclusively childhood condition. My greatest hope is that this valuable contribution to the field will not only improve understanding of the nature and far-reaching effects of SM, but help mobilise Health Services to provide appropriate support for both children and adults. **(Maggie Johnson, FRCSLT, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust.)**

A fascinating and beautiful glance into the lives of individuals with Selective Mutism and those who love and support them. **(Aimee Kotrba, PhD, SelectiveMutism.org.)**

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