

# INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



**ADDvanced Solutions**  
Supporting you to find the answers

## Selective Mutism

### Selective Mutism (SM) is ...

...different for each individual

...an inability to talk comfortably in every situation

...a fear of talking to certain people or in particular situations (usually outside of the home)

**...often described as a phobia of talking to people outside of a small trusted group**  
(usually parents, close family or friends)

### Reducing worries:

Remember that selective mutism is based in anxiety, and reducing worry is important for your child

Let them know what is due to happen each day; unexpected events will raise anxiety levels

Help your child to manage their worries by writing them down or drawing them, then decide together which to focus on

Regulating activities can help, especially at the end of a stressful day. For example: walking or going on a swing or the trampoline.

Find something that can distract or comfort your child/young person

### Parents/carers can help by:

trying to stay relaxed about your child's difficulty with speaking

being reassuring – let them know they will get better at talking

Don't put pressure on your child to talk

Be ready to explain to others, and discourage them from pressurising your child to talk

Focus on the things your child can do well, and the things they find easy to do

Allowing time to relax at the end of a school day

Talking through their worries at a calm time, focusing on what could help them

Give your child other ways to communicate – sticky notes to use for friends and visitors

Giving them time to 'warm up' without having attention from others when at gatherings of family/friends

Agreeing a finishing time for visits to or from friends

Choosing play activities with that don't require a lot of talking

### Remember:

SM is not your child/young person being stubborn or difficult

Don't put pressure on your child/young person to talk, or ask them how much talking they've done when you pick them up from an activity

Work together with them, be collaborative, use comments rather than questions

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