DALLAS TWST MEETING SUMMARY 5-27-2020

The Dallas TWST group had its second meeting via Zoom. There were 5 teens in attendance as well as 5 parents, 1 guest facilitator (a person who stutters) and 2 SLP’s/chapter leaders. The meeting began with each person introducing themselves and then the teens telling something from their school year that had gone well or had been challenging and the parents telling something from the past school year that had made them proud of their teen. After that, our guest speaker, Lee Reeves, was introduced. He then introduced the topic for the evening which was “Victim or Survivor – You Choose”. He posed questions to the group revolving around how they would define the word “victim” and what some examples might be of someone being a victim. In addition, the group was to come up with their definition of the word “survivor” as well as some characteristics and/or actions that would make someone a survivor rather than a victim.

After those questions were presented to the group as a whole, they were divided into 2 break out rooms – one for teens and one for parents. Each group had a chapter leader present. After the groups had the chance to discuss those questions, Lee went into each break out room and asked the group to relate those concepts to stuttering. Specifically, the teens were asked to consider whether they were “victims” of their stuttering and to discuss why or why not. The parents were asked to consider whether they were “victims” of their child’s stuttering and to discuss why or why not. And both groups were asked to consider what would make someone a “survivor” of stuttering and how that could be achieved.

After the separate groups had additional time to consider the additional questions Lee presented, the entire group was brought back together for the last 30 minutes of the meeting. Someone summarized the discussion that the teens had (which was impressively deep and thought provoking – lots of very intuitive comments had been made) and someone did the same for the parent group. Following that, Lee then presented the work of sociologist, Dr. Thomasina Borkman, who did extensive research on the Victim/Survivor issue as it relates to self-help / support groups. Graphics were shared via screen sharing to help clarify and summarize the information being presented regarding the Stages of Experiential Development (Victim, Survivor, and Thrivor) and the Cycle of Experiential Learning. Finally, the discussion centered around how support groups/organizations are the ideal vehicle for helping individuals move from victim to survivor to thrivor as they not only provide support but provide the opportunity for individuals to offer support to others.

The meeting concluded with a teen who volunteered reading the Closing Words and an announcement about the topic for our June meeting.

Submitted by Tricia Krauss-Lehrman