

Courier Mail

No stutter rap for songster

- Janelle Miles
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NO HESITATION: Tallebudgera Valley singer Ashleigh Grosser, 21, has overcome her stuttering. Picture: Adam Head.

Source: The Courier-Mail

ASHLEIGH Grosser is pursuing a singing career, despite growing up with a severe stutter.

While speaking fluently has often been difficult, the 21-year-old has never had a problem when she sings.

"That's one of the reasons why I love it so much," she said. "For me, it's an incredible feeling of freedom.

"As a stutterer, you can become quite withdrawn inside yourself and not have a lot of confidence but once I realised I could sing, I could let myself shine."

Speech pathologist Geraldine Bricker-Katz, of the University of Sydney, said the phenomenon was well-known among people who worked with stutterers.

She said researchers believed different parts of the brain were involved in speech production and singing.

Stuttering, which has been highlighted in the movie, *The King's Speech*, depicting British monarch George VI's struggle with the disorder, affects about one per cent of the adult population.

For Ashleigh and many other stutterers, the condition runs in their families, suggesting a genetic link. She has relatives on both sides of her family who stuttered as children.

Dr Bricker-Katz said speech pathologists had good results when treating children with stutters before they started school.

But Ashleigh, whose stutter worsened through adolescence, has been able to overcome her speech disorder in adulthood through a technique called Ezy-Speech, developed by recovering stutterers David Edwards and Ray Potter, speech pathologist Lisa Hudson and psychologist Judy Rafferty.

Ashleigh features on a DVD aimed at helping people learn the Ezy-Speech technique at home.

For more information: www.ezyspeech.com.au

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