



University of Manchester



Voice and communication therapy groups for trans and non-binary people:

Safe voice change and well-being

International Festival of Public Health
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What are your pronouns?



Non-genderbread people

Challenges

- Charity funded programme
- No funds for speech and language therapy
- Big demand for services
- Long waiting lists at Gender Identity Clinics (GICs)
- Voice specialists in community viewed trans voice and communication work as highly specialist and declined referrals
- No precedent for a community-led, non-medical model service
- Indirect transphobia

Risks of voice practice in isolation

- ! Potentially harmful vocal exercises
- ! Undiagnosed voice problems
- ! Vocal abuse and, long term can lead to permanent damage such as nodules or polyps requiring corrective surgery and rehabilitation speech therapy

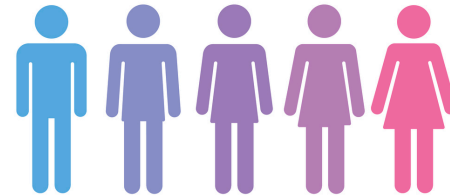
Aims of Project

- Pilot scheme
- Voice and Communication skills for trans people
- Addressing barriers to access
- Gather research and learn from partnership model of delivery
- Mutually benefit trans service users and university students

Who is the service for?

People who are:

- ✓ Trans individuals
- ✓ Gender non-compliant
- ✓ Wish to project a gender which differs from their biological sex
- ✓ Male spectrum
- ✓ Female spectrum
- ✓ Inclusive of all people, regardless of biological sex, sexuality, and gender presentation



Voice and communication

- **Advice on vocal hygiene** and protecting the voice when making changes
- **Assessment**
 - Computerised assessment of vocal pitch and loudness
 - Assessment of voice and communication
- **Voice coaching**
 - Exercises in groups
 - Individual home practice



Pitch

Articulation

Resonance

Gender perception

Language use

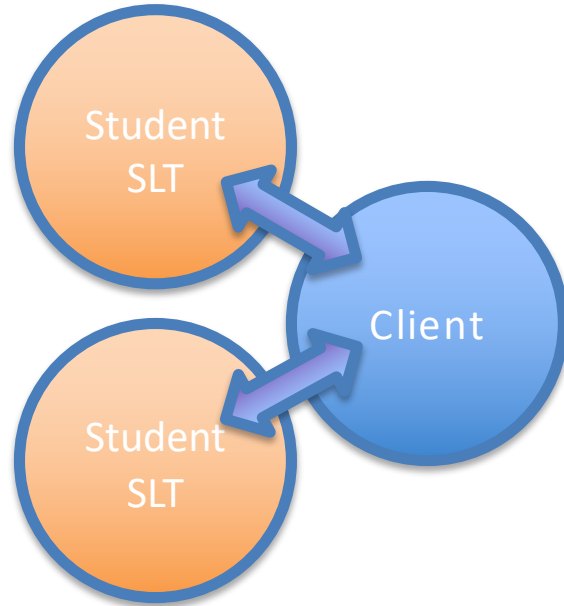
Volume

Non verbal

Student training

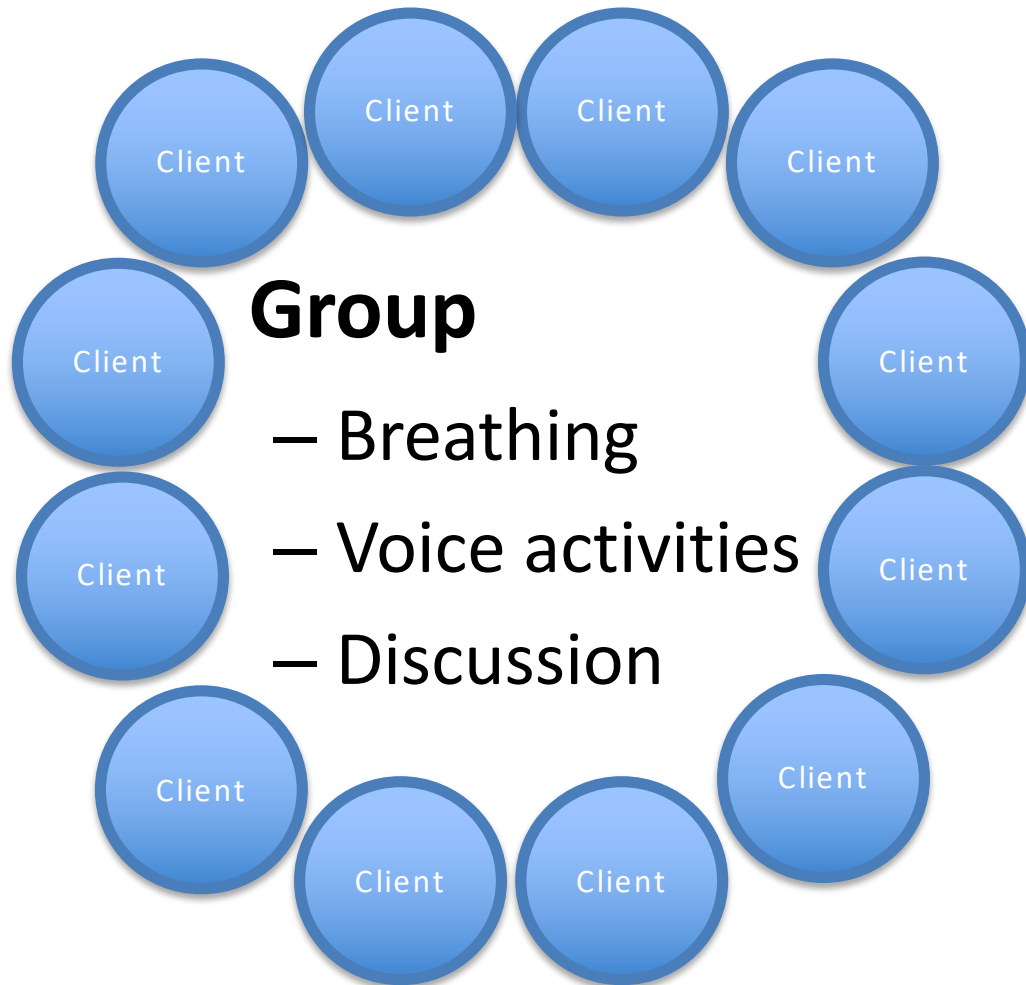


Weekend Intensive course



- **One-to-one**
 - Interview
 - Voice assessment
 - Goal setting

Weekend Intensive course



- 12-14 clients
- 12-26 students
- 1-2 SLT supervisors

Outcomes: Trans people

- “Every aspect was an eye-opener...”
- “...really helped build my confidence and capacity/ability to do the exercises”
- “Thank you so much. I have felt on my own for so long with regards to my voice, ...This has been a lifesaver (genuinely)”



Outcomes: Students

- 10-26 volunteers for each group
- ✓ Only one student had previously worked with a trans person
- ✓ More likely to want to work with trans people in their future career
- ✓ All felt more skilled with working with trans people
- ✓ All recommended volunteering to other student speech and language therapists

Outcomes: Professionals

- ✓ Better shared understanding
- ✓ Feedback and involvement of trans people to shape services
- ✓ Specialist knowledge to share with colleagues:
 - Email and 'phone advice to other SLTs
 - Part of the advisory panel for the competencies framework at the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, London
 - Knowledge and skills to train future SLTs

**Winner Staff
Volunteer of the Year 2018**



**Royal College of
Speech and Language
Therapists' Sternberg
Award 2017**



**Innovation in Health &
Social Care with the VCSE
sector in Greater
Manchester
Runner-up 2018**

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