

Online *Voice and Communication Change* Groups for Trans and Non-Binary People

RCSLT Conference 2021: Breaking barriers and building better



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Telehealth: Necessity is the mother of invention

- * First service users in **January 2021**
- * Many service users waiting for long periods around the country (up to 4 years)
- * SARS-COV-2 spread by aerosol, with voice work being considered a high risk activity, with a **20-30 x higher risk associated with loudness** (ventilation being an important factor) (Chacon, A. M., Nguyen, D. D., McCabe, P., & Madill, C., 2021, Gregson *et al.* 2021)
- * Telehealth is the lowest risk to staff and service users while infection rates remain high
OR working outside / well ventilated spaces in small numbers



Image: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United States Department of Health and Human Services (2020).

Previous service evaluation: In-person

✱ Trans and non-binary people

- Group intervention acceptable to 98%
- Working with student volunteers 100%
 - (n=69)

✱ Student volunteers

- Only 4% of had encountered trans people on clinical placement
- 97% reported better understanding of the client group
- 99% more likely to work with trans people in the future
 - (n=97) (Pert, 2020)

✱ Would this transfer to TeleHealth?



Co-production

- ◆ Panel of trans and non-binary people
- ◆ Recruitment
- ◆ Care pathway
- ◆ Advice and videos
- ◆ Self-help group facilitation and link



Co-production

- ◆ “Current healthcare service system boundaries are limited by a professional-knows-best mindset, which can be blind to the powerful actions and forces that shape health outside of the boundaries of the healthcare system. Transcending those limits unleashes new resources...”
- ◆ (Batalden *et al.* 2016)

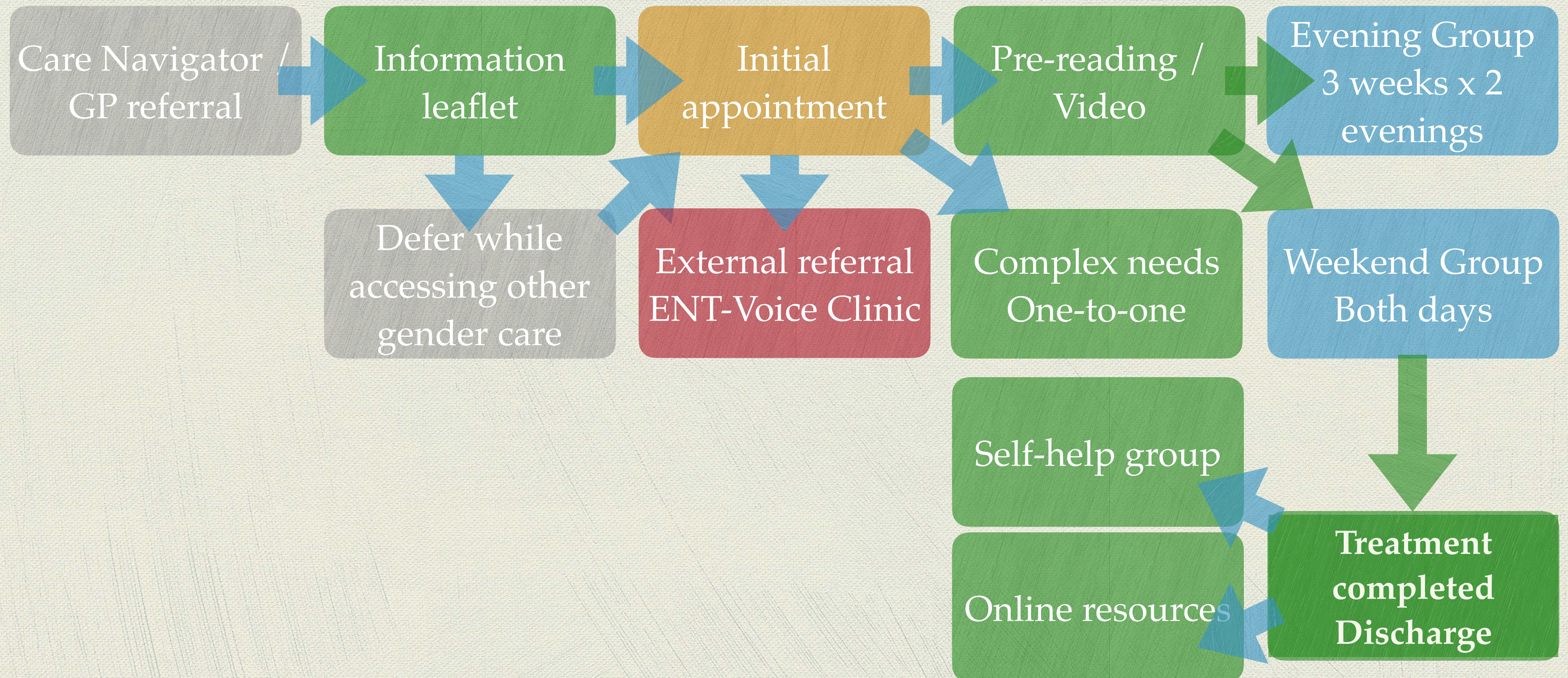


Authentic voice

...SLTs need to be aware of colluding with heterocisnormative stereotypes and unconscious biases about binary construct, and instead facilitate voice and communication which is **personally authentic** to the client. SLTs are culturally sensitive to trans and gender-diverse clients and be able to sit matter-of-factly with gender variance, and operate an **'ask etiquette'** ...

(RCSLT, 2021)

Care pathway

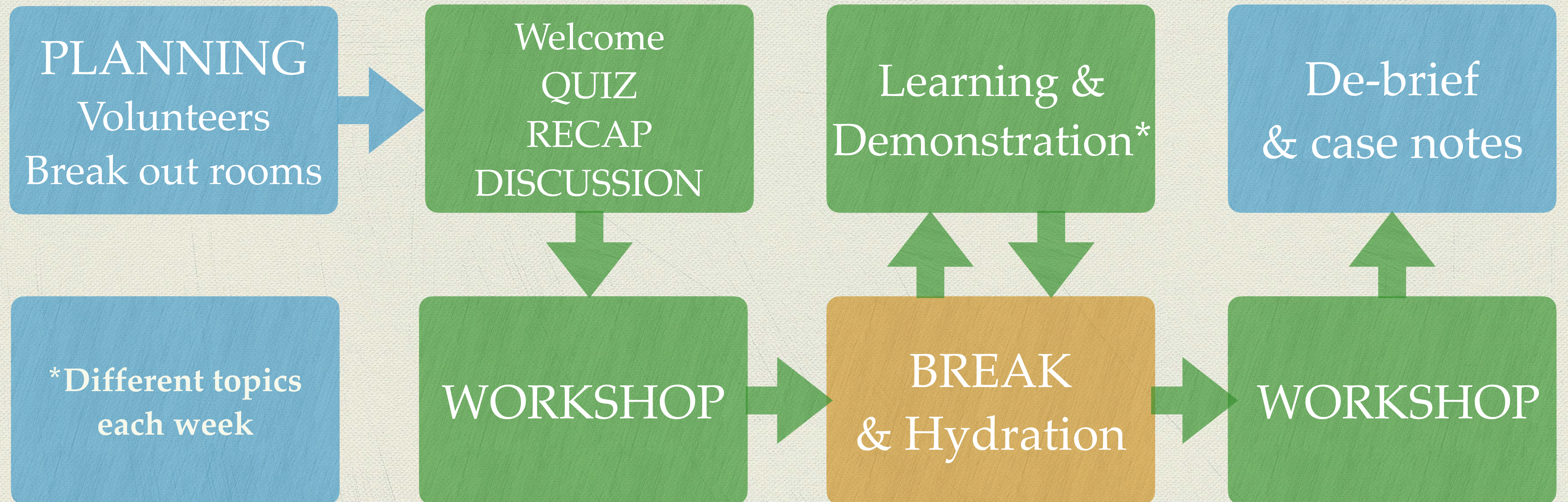


Online group delivery

- ◆ emis for patient records and integrated accuRx for text message reminders to improve attendance
- ◆ **Zoom:** Screen sharing, Spotlight, Breakout rooms
- ◆ Volunteers facilitate service users in breakout rooms
- ◆ Staff support volunteers and service users
- ◆ **Nearpod** quizzes to check learning levels
- ◆ **Padlet** for service users' questions



Group “sandwich” format



Volunteers

- ◆ Enhanced DBS
- ◆ Registered on a UK, HCPC approved speech and language therapy degree programme
- ◆ Training session on how to **facilitate**
- ◆ Encourage service users to engage in workshop elements in Zoom breakout rooms
- ◆ De-brief after each session
- ◆ Supervision of case note writing



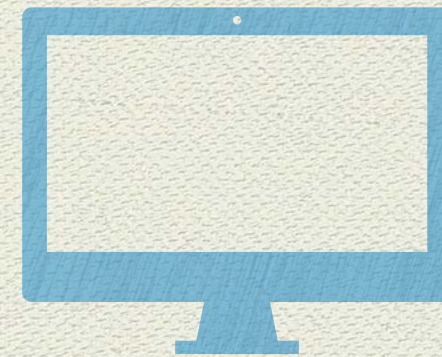
Service user feedback (4 Groups)

GROUP	NUMBER OF SERVICE USERS	FRIENDS & FAMILY TEST
Evenings (4 groups)	28	26 / 28 (93%)
Weekends (3 groups)	19	19 / 19 (100%)
TOTAL	47	96%



Service user feedback themes

- ☑ Time saved on travel
- ☑ Easy to access
- ☑ Workshops and volunteers
- ☑ Meeting other trans people
- ☑ Improvements in own voice & communication aims



- 📌 Technical problems
- 📌 More workshops
- 📌 E-mail follow-up
- 📌 Forgot to / Didn't read the pre-reading



Only 2/47 service users mentioned in-person would be better

Future

- ◆ Hybrid model of intervention
- ◆ Developing closer relationships with the multi-disciplinary team and external providers such as ENT
- ◆ Co-production with those with lived experience



Keeping the best aspects of telehealth and blended learning

- ◆ Pre-reading
- ◆ Online videos and information increase confidence and self-reliance (Cheng, 2020)
- ◆ Allow service users to focus on their goals and problem solving their difficulties with activities and exercises
- ◆ Self-help group

Conclusions

- ◆ Almost all service users would recommend the online format
- ◆ Similar outcomes to in-person sessions
- ◆ More uptake of online evening groups versus in-person weekend groups
- ◆ Volunteers acceptable and gain insight, skills and enthusiasm for working with trans people
- ◆ Breaks, different ways to learn and opportunities to chat are important

Thank you! Any questions?



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