

# How Can the Way You Communicate Affirm Your Gender?

By consistently doing exercises that work on:

- Changing social communication skills
- Vocabulary, directness, emotional expression, etc.
- Changing aspects of non-verbal communication
- Articulation
- Pitch
- Duration
- Intonation
- Resonance
- Voice quality

It is often popular to focus on changing only the pitch of the voice. However, many aspects of your communication can be changed that can be helpful to your transitioning, in order to develop a voice that reflects your identity.



## transgender voice

This pamphlet contains a brief summary of transgender voice changes and other additional information. Feel free to contact us regarding any questions you may have.

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## Why Speech Therapy?

Voice therapy can modify frequencies and pitch into the authentic female range.

Speech language pathology ensures that the transgender client does not produce an effortful speech pattern and place a large amount of tension on the vocal mechanism.

Transgender clients are generally satisfied with their voice following voice therapy, changing how you speak can take years, and changes can feel unfamiliar and even uncomfortable in the beginning.

Transgender voice therapy depends on your needs. A specialist can help you determine your goals and create an individualised plan, as well as show you how to avoid vocal damage as you change your voice and speech.

## Surgical Options

Transgender voice therapy can lessen the discomfort or distress that might accompany gender dysphoria.

Vocal surgery is a complicated and delicate procedure, which must be done by an ear, nose, throat surgeon who has years of experience in this type of procedure. Transgender voice surgery typically focuses on pitch changes. There is a risk that your voice could become too high or even become hoarse, strained or breathy, if the surgery is not done correctly. This could make communication difficult. The results of these surgeries are permanent. Your speech therapist will advise and guide you in making the right decisions about your vocal technique and the need for surgery.

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## Why Brainworx?

With years of experience, we understand how to work with our patients to ensure they receive the best care possible. Our thoughtful and personalised approach means we are fully committed to the health and well-being of all our patients.

For years, patients have depended on us to provide this valuable service. We offer this and other specialized options to anyone in need of a Speech Therapist they can trust. Voice feminisation and masculinisation is a unique and specialised service and we are dedicated to building long-lasting relationships based on trust and medical integrity with every single patient.

## How to Maintain a Healthy Voice

- Reducing or eliminating smoking
- Reducing or eliminating alcohol and caffeine
- Drinking enough water and staying hydrated
- Treating acid reflux or heart burn if necessary
- Reducing excessive use of your voice on a daily basis
- Avoiding voice strain
- Resting your voice when necessary



## How Voice Therapy Can Help:

Voice and speech therapy can help transform identity and aid in gender affirmation.

- Voice is a gender signifier
- Transition can include modification of voice
- Reduce distress and unhappiness from hearing your own voice
- Reduce a trigger for gender dysphoria
- Aim for a natural sounding voice that matches your gender expression

Although testosterone can thicken and lengthen vocal cords - making the voice deeper, oestrogen does not help the voice change pitch.



# Focus Areas

Targets of speech therapy include:

## Pitch

The average speaking fundamental frequency of adult cisgender males is about 107 to 120 Hz.

For cisgender females, it's 189 to 224 Hz. To be perceived as male, it would be helpful for the vocal frequency to stay below 165 Hz, and above 165 Hz for female.

## Prosody

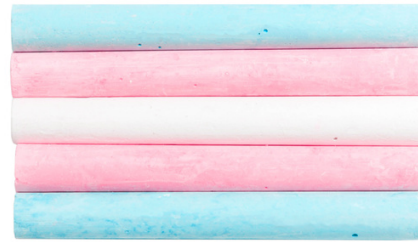
Prosody is the melody of speech and includes loudness, pitch and stress changes. For example, males tend to use stress or loudness for emphasis, which females often use greater pitch variability.

## Vocal Resonance

This refers to the perception of vibrations when using the voice. The resonance does not necessarily depend on gender, but a speech-language pathologist can help you find a healthy resonance that reflects who you are

## Additional focus areas may be

- Voice quality
- Articulation
- Speech rate and phrasing
- Nonverbal communication



# Risks

Voice, speech, and communication changes involve using the voice production system in new, nonhabitual and often unfamiliar ways. Your speech language pathologist will work with you to help prevent vocal trauma.

# How to Prepare:

Your speech-language pathologist should talk to you about your goals, such as what communication behaviours, vocal and non-vocal, you would like to acquire. If you don't have specific goals, your speech-language pathologist will explain and help you explore options.



# Results

Your results will depend on what techniques are used, as well as the effort you put into practicing changing your voice.

Finding a voice that matches your gender identity is an individual process. Some people report that it is difficult to maintain their new voice around loved ones or people who knew them before transitioning.

## Why it's Done

Transgender individuals who seek voice therapy want to adapt their voices to communicate according to their gender identity. Transgender voice therapy can lessen the discomfort or distress that might accompany a gender dysmorphia.

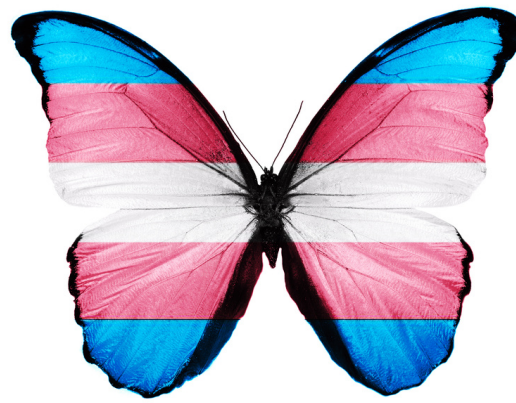
By having a voice that matches your gender identity, safety issues such as harassment can be reduced.

Transgender voice therapy and surgery isn't for everyone. Some may prefer their current voice or a more gender expansive voice, that can alternate between masculine, gender-neutral and feminine voices.



## What is a Transition?

The process of changing one's gender presentation and/or sex characteristics to accord with one's internal sense of gender identity. This includes social, legal, and sometimes medical changes.



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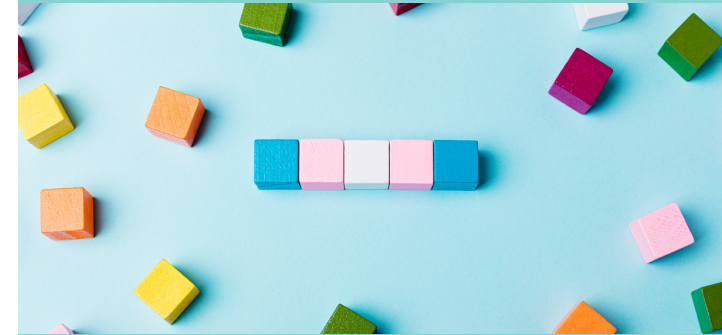
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## How to Avoid Triggers for Trans Individuals

- Use a person's correct pronouns
- Don't dead name
- Do not bring up anything along the lines of "I never would've guessed"/ "You don't look like a man/woman"
- Don't ask what gender they were born as
- Do not refer to them as "a transgender" or "become transgendered" etc.
- Do NOT tell them it's "just a phase"

## How to Support an Individual Transitioning

- Educate yourself about the transgender community
- Ask about their pronouns and use them correctly
- Give yourself permission to go through the adjustment period
- Ask the transitioning individual what they need from you and how you can best support them
- Let them know that you are able to provide them with a safe space
- And most importantly: remember that your loved one's identity doesn't define the relationship that you have with them.



## Transgender 101

Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity or gender expression does not conform to the one typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth.

However, not everyone whose appearance or behaviour is gender-nonconforming will identify as a transgender individual. Being transgender is not a "fad" or a "phase".