

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY (SLP) INFORMATION HANDOUT

Voice Feminization & Masculinization Training: Information Sheet

Is there a Cost?

- No. Services are offered by the WRHA Outpatient SLP program which is supported by Manitoba Health.

What is required of me?

- Regular attendance and participation in home exercises is expected. Be prepared to participate in daily homework drills (30 minutes minimum) for the duration of the training period.
- Clients must have some way to measure pitch (e.g. free software options, smart phone apps, a guitar tuner, sing along to a CD). The therapist will discuss options at the assessment session.
- Factors that may contribute to a successful outcome:
 - Ability to attend appointments regularly
 - Time and motivation to practice
 - Willingness to attempt to use new voice skills routinely in a variety of contexts
 - Living full time as a female / male
 - Ability to produce sounds in the target pitch range
 - Basic pitch-matching skills (however a good singing voice is not required)
- If there is an underlying vocal pathology present or suspected, laryngeal assessment by an otolaryngologist must be completed before voice training starts.

What happens in voice training?

- Exercises and drills often focus on:
 - Speaking pitch
 - Changing the position of the vocal tract (the “tube” above the voice box—the throat and mouth).
 - Endurance and flexibility of the vocal cords and surrounding muscles
 - Breath support exercises
 - Other drills may include altering breathiness, intonation, articulatory patterns.
- Vocal care, stretching and relaxation of the head and neck muscles, and managing vocal strain will be reviewed.

How long is the training process?

- This depends on the goals. Generally it ranges from 4-12 sessions, assuming regular attendance and practice.
- Expect it to take a number of months or up to a year to consistently incorporate voice skills into conversations. Continued refinements/changes can happen long after formal training sessions.

Risks and benefits:

- There is a risk of vocal fatigue and strain. This can usually be managed by monitoring vocal quality and making adjustments to the home practice program.
- Sometimes excess voice use can lead to chronic hoarseness and strain, in which case an assessment by an Ear Nose Throat doctor would be recommended.
- Benefits of voice therapy include: an opportunity to learn and practice new voice and speech patterns, improved control and self-awareness of voice, and increased satisfaction as one masters vocal techniques and uses them in every-day situations.

What if I need to miss an appointment?

- If you cannot attend an appointment for any reason, **please call 204 831 – 2526 (or your clinician) and let us know.**