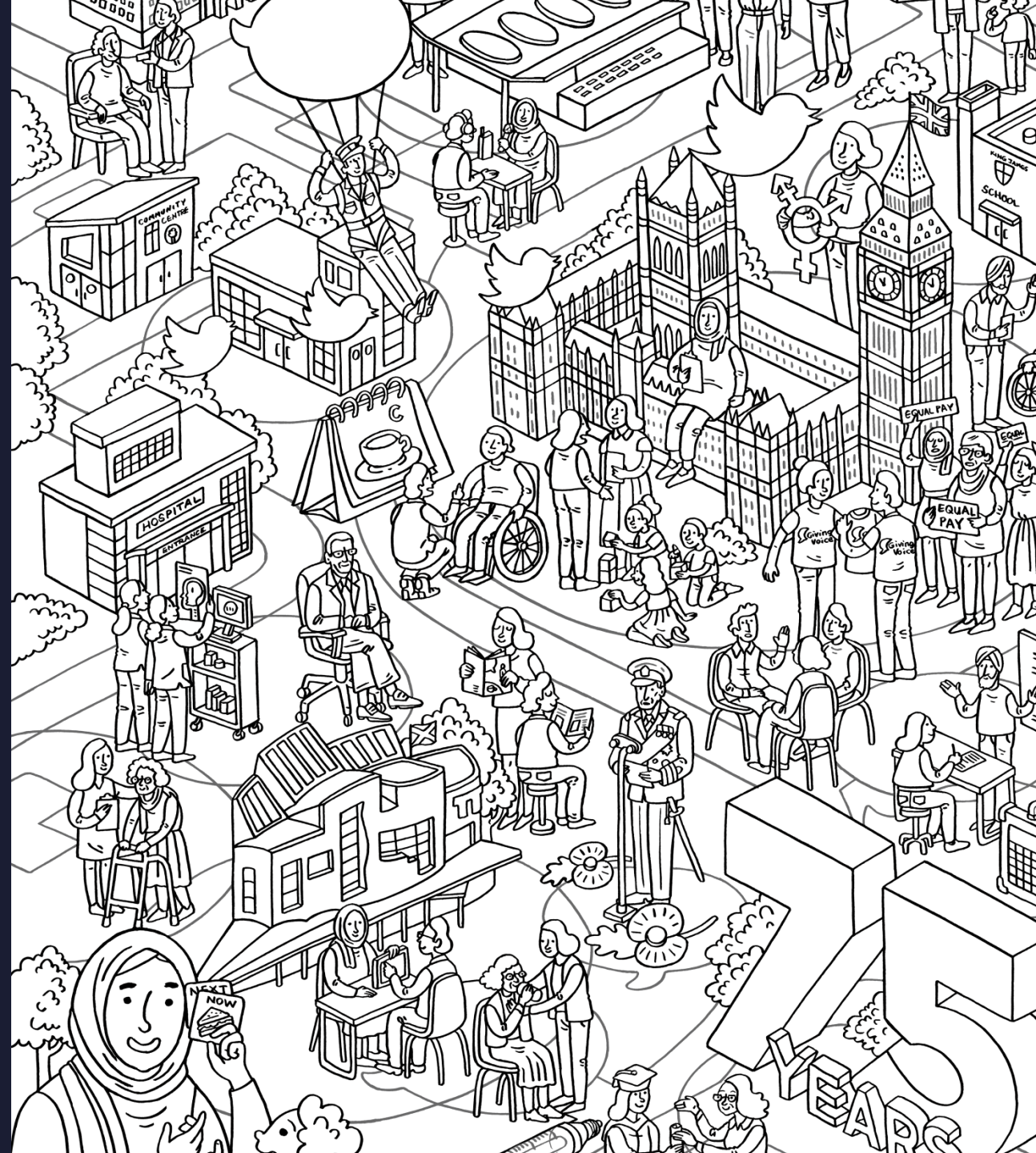




Giving Voice to trans people webinar

Monday 29th March

1pm – 2pm



Chair

Kamini Gadhok MBE
CEO, RCSLT



Presenters



Dr Sean Pert

Senior clinical lecturer and consultant SLT, the University of Manchester and Indigo Gender Service



Zane Robinson

Community programmes manager and Trans programme coordinator, LGBT Foundation

Housekeeping

- RCSLT staff are on hand to help with any technical queries, you can get in touch with them via the chat button
- You can send in questions to our speakers today by using the Q&A button
- This event is being recorded and will be made available on the RCSLT website along with the presentation slides
- We would be very grateful if you would fill out the evaluation form that will pop up in a new window once the webinar window closes.

Aims and objectives

By attending this webinar, delegates will:

- Hear about how speech and language therapists work with and can support trans people
- Learn about what the LGBT Foundation are doing to bring about change for the better
- Hear first-hand the experience of accessing speech and language therapy

Dr Sean Pert

Senior clinical lecturer and
consultant SLT, the
University of Manchester
and Indigo Gender Service



Working with trans and non-binary people: Voice & communication change

Dr Sean Pert

PhD, PGDip, PGCert, BSc (Hons), mRCSLT, HCPC Registered, SFHEA
Senior Clinical Lecturer and Consultant Speech and Language Therapist

Discrimination and prejudice

- Two in five trans people (41 per cent) and three in ten non-binary people (31 per cent) have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months.
- More than a quarter of trans people (28 per cent) in a relationship in the last year have faced domestic abuse from a partner.
- One in four trans people (25 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.
- One in eight trans employees (12 per cent) have been physically attacked by colleagues or customers in the last year.
- More than a third of trans university students (36 per cent) in higher education have experienced negative comments or behaviour from staff in the last year.
- (Stonewall, 2017: 6)

Challenges accessing healthcare

- Long waiting lists
- May access non-professional advice
- Lack of awareness of voice & communication change, especially for trans men/ transmasculine people
- Pandemic impact
 - 17% felt unsafe where they are living
 - 57% of trans people and 60% of non-binary people want access to mental health support services
 - 76% of trans people would rather receive support from an LGBT specific organisation
 - (LGBT Foundation, 2020)



Cisheteronormativity



- It is often assumed that trans people want to change from one gender to another.
- The best possible result, it is assumed, is to “pass” as a man or a woman.
- This is **not** the aim of voice and communication therapy (unless this is what the client decides on)
- People wish to have a voice that matches their identity and personality.
- This may include aspects from both male spectrum / typical masculine vocal identity and female spectrum / typical feminine vocal communication, or anywhere along the continuum.

Update!

- NHS England commissioned 3 new Primary Care Gender Services
 - Greater Manchester's Indigo Gender Service
 - London's TransPlus
 - Cheshire and Merseyside Adult Gender Identity Collaborative (CMAGIC)

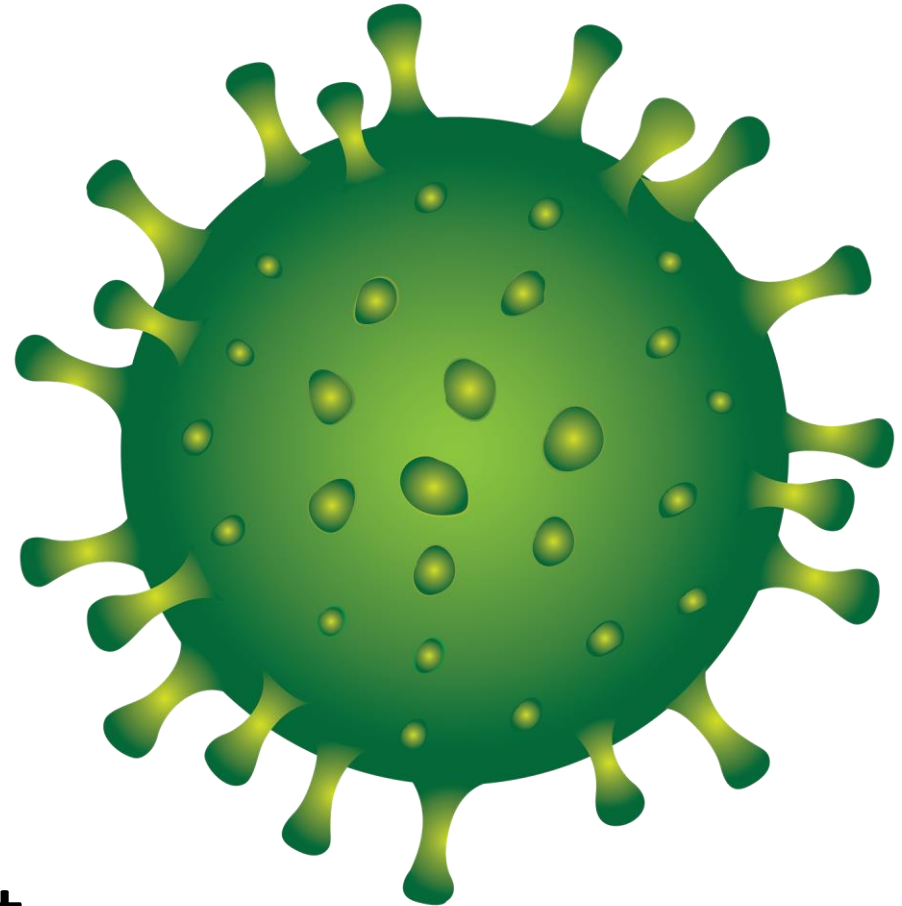


TransPlus



Impact of the pandemic on clinical practice

- Telehealth
- Use of technology
- Apps
- Videos
- Confidentiality and space to experiment
- Anxiety and access to support



The role of the SLT with trans individuals

- None!
- Aligning voice and communication to self-image
- Avoiding stereotyping and cisheteronormativity
- Partnership working
- Multi-disciplinary team
- Sign-posting



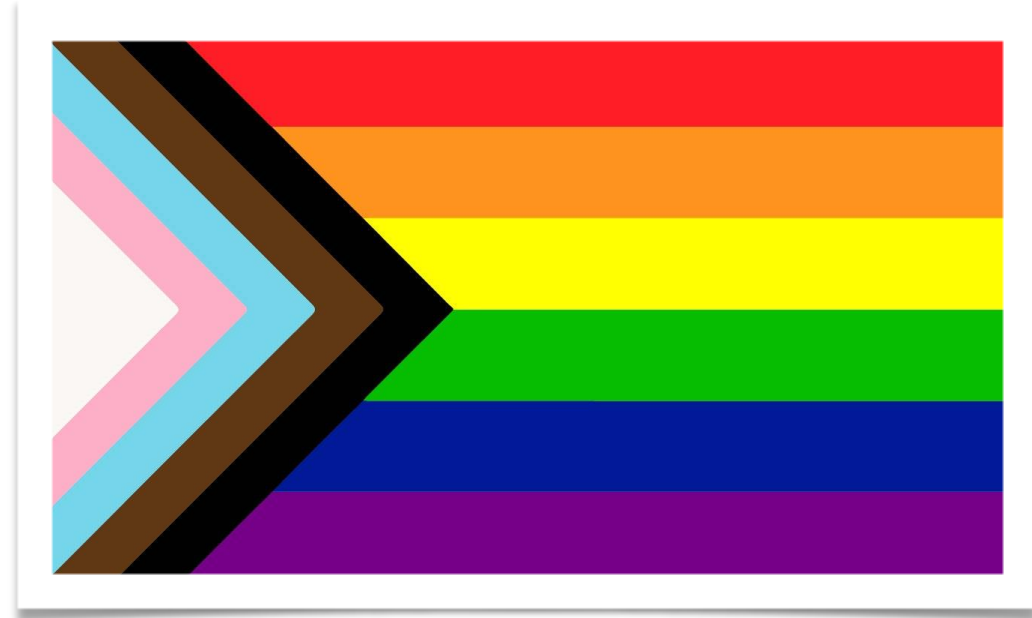
Specialist training and competencies

- Specialist voice experience and/or voice coaching
- Cultural competence
- RCSLT Trans and Gender-Diverse Voice & Communication Competency Framework (2019)
- Clinical supervision
- PG Dip / PG Cert in Gender Identity Healthcare Practice



Professional organisations

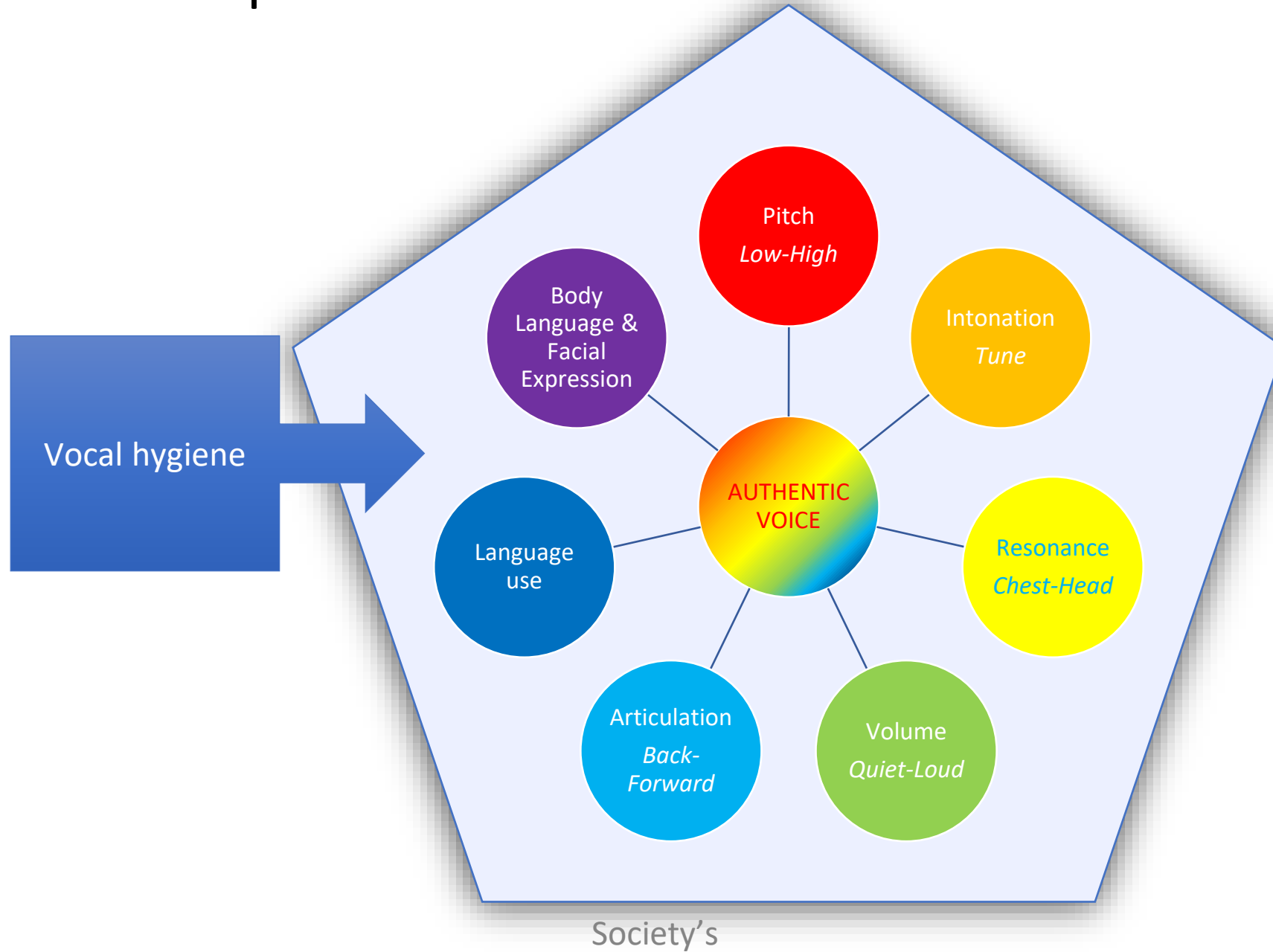
- British Association of Gender Identity Specialists (BAGIS)
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)
Trans and Gender Diverse Voice & Communication Clinical Excellence Network (CEN)
- World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH)



Authentic voice

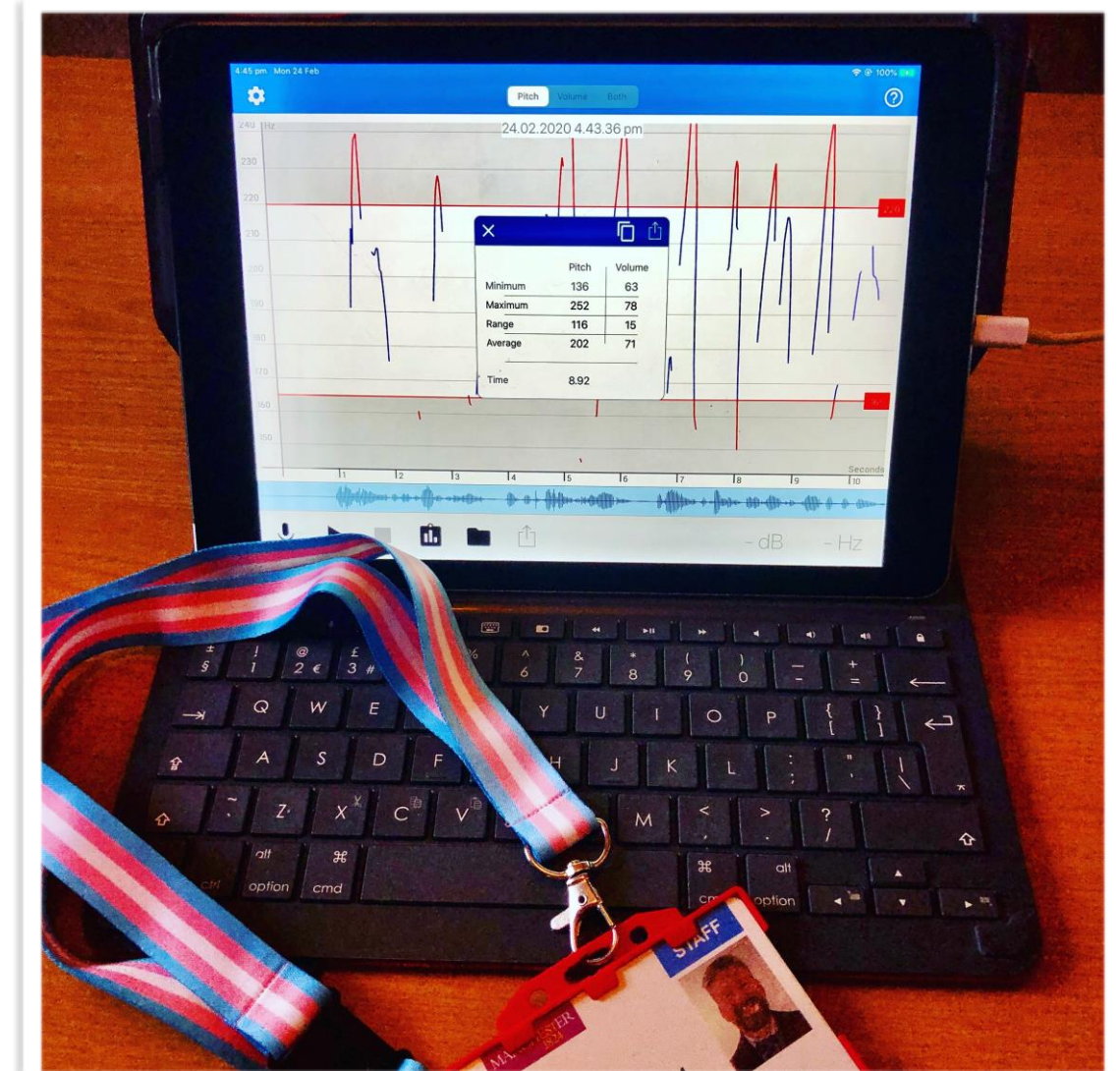
- The client should aim to achieve **authentic voice**
- This is a voice that:
 - They can use safely and without effort
 - Reflects how they want to sound
 - Includes aspects they find appealing
 - Does not include aspects that may bring on feelings of gender dysphoria
- This may change over time

Aspects of authentic voice: A model



Voice pitch

- **Voice pitch (frequency)**
- Male spectrum / Typical masculine vocal identity (100-140 Hz)
- Gender neutral spectrum / mid-range (145-175 Hz)
- Female spectrum / Typical feminine vocal identity (180-220 Hz)
- Link to prosody (word stress and intonation) to avoid mono-pitch
 - (Davies, Papp & Antoni, 2015)



Resonance

- Resonance is when the voice

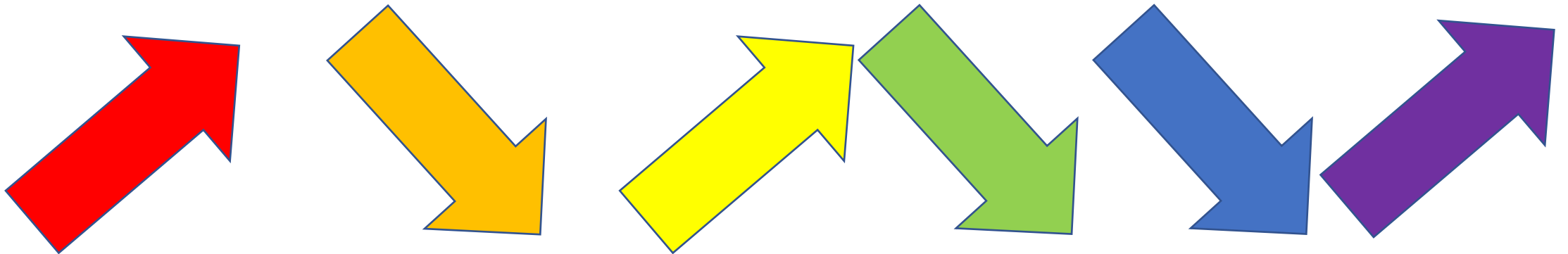
“...passes through a series of filters (the vocal tract) that dampen and enhance the sound and make each voice unique and distinctive to the owner of the voice”

- (Stemple, Glaze, & Klaben, 2010: 5)
- Masculine - Chest resonance
- Feminine - Head resonance
- Adds authenticity to the voice



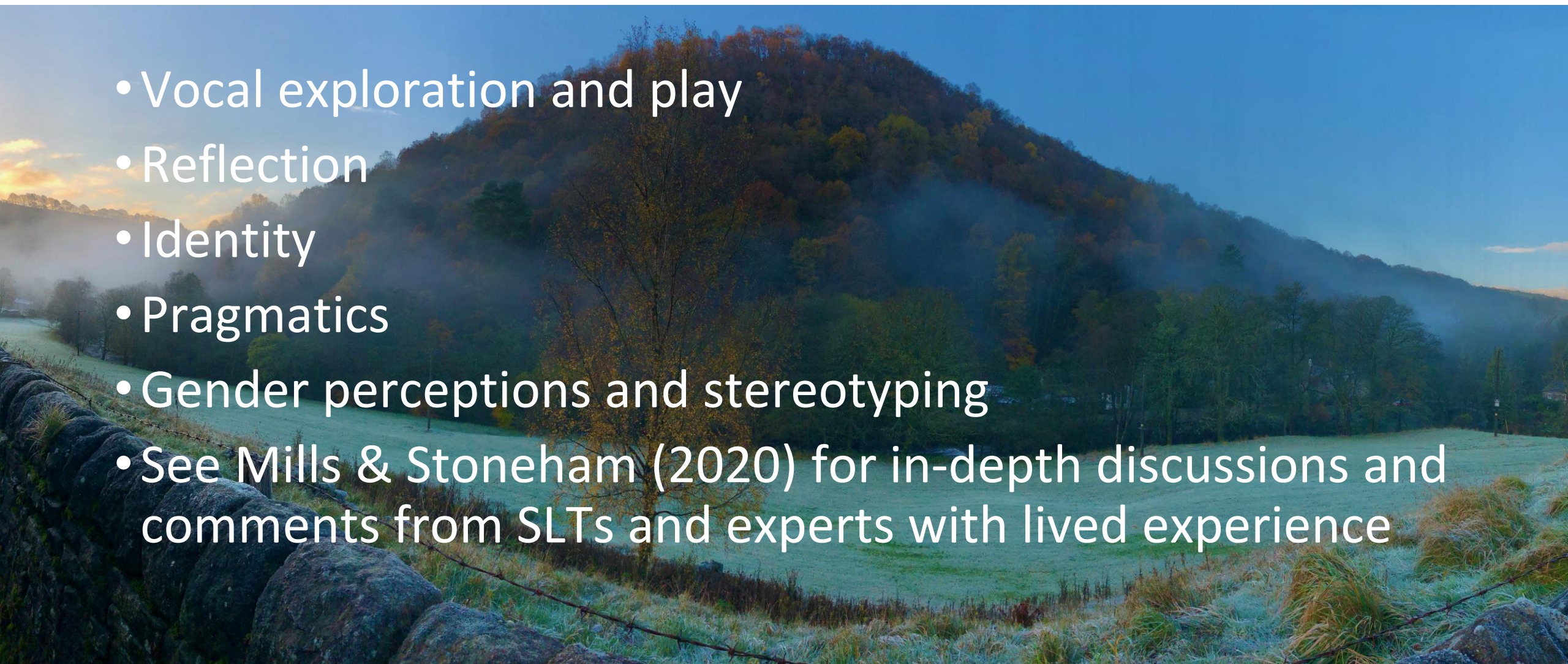
Intonation

- The 'tune' of the spoken sentence
- The voice moves up and down within a comfortable range
- Provides emphasis and meaning at phrase / sentence level
- When pitch has changed, avoid flat or monotone voice



More than technical change

- Vocal exploration and play
- Reflection
- Identity
- Pragmatics
- Gender perceptions and stereotyping
- See Mills & Stoneham (2020) for in-depth discussions and comments from SLTs and experts with lived experience



Individual or group work?

- Trans and non-binary people may feel very anxious about commencing therapy.
- Greeting people as they come into the clinical space is important.
- Services may offer individual and group work
- Almost all clients are anxious about working in a group *prior to doing so*.
- All clients reported that group work was acceptable,
 - “Being in a group helped with anxiety”



Should I include students?

- All 71 clients who provided feedback reported that they enjoyed working with student speech and language therapists.
 - “Fabulous experience. Glad to ‘Give back’”
 - “Lovely people; very kind and ‘giving’.”
- Students reported that they developed clinical skills, including:
 - Assessment
 - Intervention



Working in a multi-disciplinary team

- Specialist GPs
- Psychiatrists
- Talking Therapies
- Care Navigators
- Prescribing
- Endocrinology
- Surgery
- LGBTQ+ charities
 - Mentors
 - Social programmes
 - Keep fit



- Local services
 - GPs
 - Adult SLT
 - Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT)
 - Smoking cessation

How to learn and develop your clinical skills

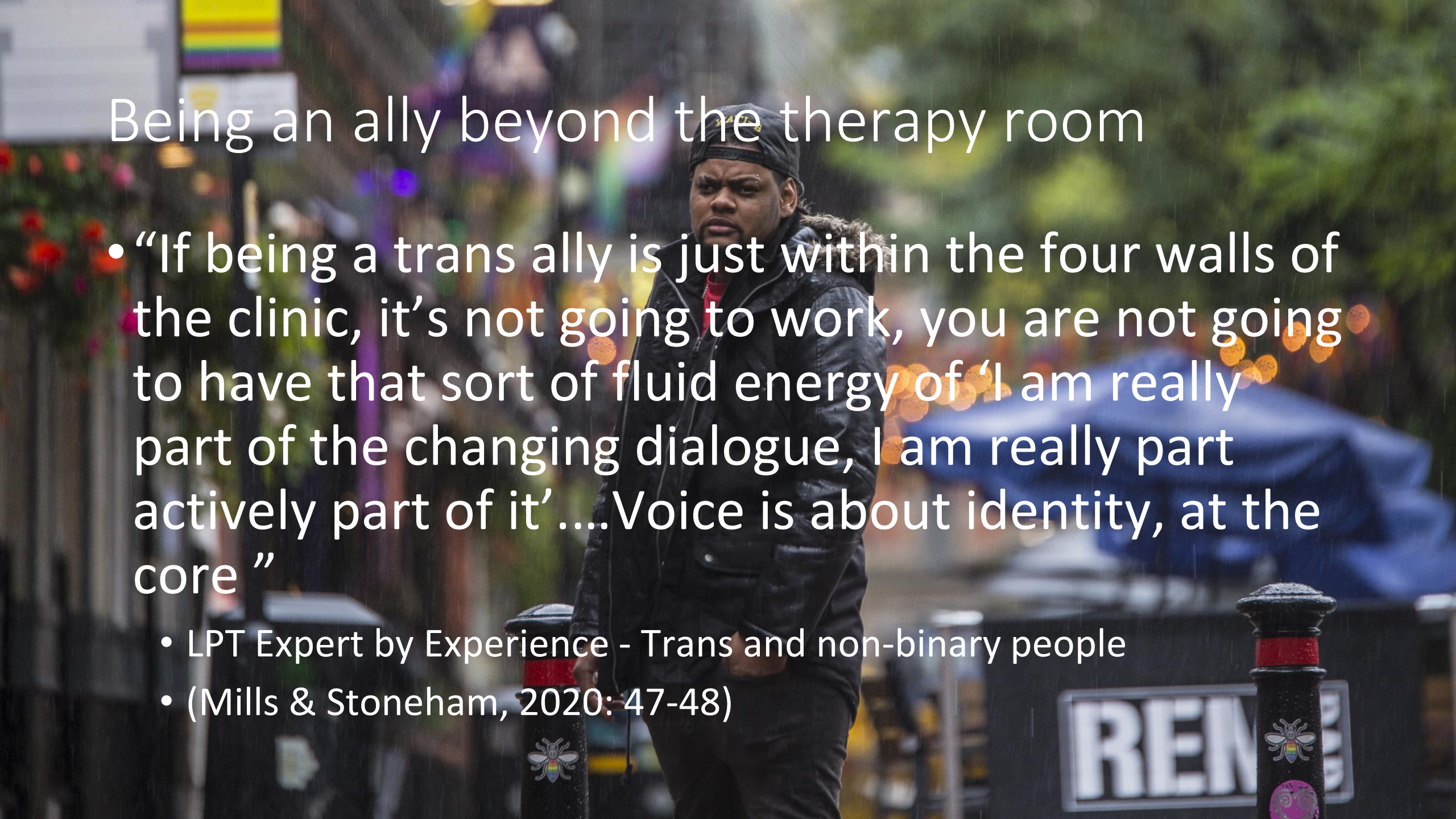
- ✓ Become a trans and non-binary ally
- ✓ Join the RCSLT Trans and Gender-Diverse Clinical Excellence Network (CEN) – It's free!
- ✓ Download the competency framework
- ✓ Develop voice skills in assessment and intervention
- ✓ Attend training and read about LGBT+ awareness
- ✓ Volunteer with services or LGBT organisations



Being an ally beyond the therapy room

- “If being a trans ally is just within the four walls of the clinic, it’s not going to work, you are not going to have that sort of fluid energy of ‘I am really part of the changing dialogue, I am really part actively part of it’....Voice is about identity, at the core ”

- LPT Expert by Experience - Trans and non-binary people
- (Mills & Stoneham, 2020: 47-48)



Thank you!



References and further reading

- Davies, S., Papp, V.G. and Antoni, C. (2015). Voice and Communication Change for Gender Nonconforming Individuals: Giving Voice to the Person Inside. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 16 (3), 117-159, DOI: 10.1080/15532739.2015.1075931
- LGBT Foundation (2020). *Hidden Figures: The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on LGBT Communities in the UK*, May 2020 - 3rd Edition. LGBT Foundation: Manchester. Retrieved from <https://lgbt.foundation/publications>
- LGBT Foundation (2019). *How to be an ally to trans people*. Manchester: LGBT Foundation. Retrieved from <https://lgbt.foundation/news/how-to-be-an-ally-to-trans-people/298>
- Mills, M., & Stoneham, G. (2020). *Voice and Communication Therapy with Trans and Non-Binary People: sharing the Clinical Space*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Mills, M., Stoneham, G., Robinson, P., & Hotchkiss, M. (2017). *The Voice Book for Trans and Non Binary People: A Practical Guide to Creating and Sustaining Authentic Voice and Communication*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (2019). *Trans and Gender-Diverse Voice & Communication Therapy Competency Framework*. London: Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. Retrieved from <https://www.rcslt.org/wp-content/uploads/media/Project/RCSLT/rcslt-trans-and-gender-diverse-voice-communication-therapy-2019.pdf>

Web sites

- British Association of Gender Identity Specialists (BAGIS): <https://bagis.co.uk/>
- The Cheshire and Merseyside Adult Gender Identity Collaborative (CMAGIC): <https://www.merseycare.nhs.uk/our-services/physical-health-services/cmagic-cheshire-and-merseyside-adult-gender-identity-collaborative/>
- Indigo Gender Service: <https://indigogenderservice.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/voice-and-communication-therapy>
- TransPlus integrated NHS Gender Dysphoria, Sexual Health and HIV service: <https://wearetransplus.co.uk/>
- World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH): <https://www.wpath.org/>

Zane Robinson

Community programmes
manager and trans
programme coordinator,
LGBT Foundation



Zane Robinson

Community Programmes Manager
Trans Programme Coordinator



The Trans Programme

The Trans Programme was established 1st October 2015 following a consultation with local trans stakeholders and community groups

The programme was established with funding from the National Lottery Community Fund (then Big Lottery), and has continually evolved to meet the needs of the communities it aims to serve



The Trans Programme

We see well over 1,000 trans, non-binary, and intersex service users each year through our events and services across LGBT Foundation, and the Trans Programme supports this inclusive delivery

We host a range of events to increase skills and confidence, and reduce isolation for our community members, as well as to upskill professionals and service providers to include trans, non-binary, and intersex people



LGBT
foundation

My SLT Experience

I first accessed Speech and Language Therapy in 2014 prior to receiving a prescription for testosterone the following year

Though I attended most of the course I was offered, I eventually dropped out early

I was 18 at the time and without familial support

My SLT Experience

Positives:

- Shown better posture, which helped with chronic pain
- Breathing techniques that were mindful of my chest binding
- Techniques to lower the pitch of the voice prior to testosterone

My SLT Experience

Why I didn't complete the course:

- The process was not collaborative – I was told what I was supposed to sound like
- Casual homophobia – “you don't want to sound like a gay man”
- Misgendered the moment I walked into the room, and this was blamed on my voice
- Inappropriate comments about whether I “passed”, including criticisms about my clothing and bag

My SLT Experience

The Result:

- I became distrustful of SLT services
- Emotional impact and fear of being open to health professionals in general
- Losing my voice frequently after extensive speaking, e.g. delivering training
- Trans communities speak to each other, so the service can gain a reputation for being exclusionary quickly

My SLT Experience

What I needed:

- Collaborative approach to developing goals
- Competency in LGBT+ and specifically trans and non-binary awareness
- Non-assumptive and compassionate approach

RCSLT UPDATES

[RCSLT Trans & gender-diverse voice & communication](#) (online guidance, 2018) includes:

- [Role of speech and language therapy in supporting trans and gender-diverse people](#)
- [Best Practice Guidelines](#)
- [National policy, protocol and documentation](#)
- [UK-wide policy](#)
- [Articles](#)

This guidance was developed in collaboration with the National Clinical Excellence Network (CEN) in Transgender Voice and Communication and gender specialists.

RCSLT UPDATES

[RCSLT Trans and Gender Diverse Voice and Communication Therapy Competency Framework](#) (2018)

The aims of this framework include supporting:

- the delivery of services with a more equitable provision for trans and gender diverse clients nationally
- individual SLTs working with trans and gender diverse people in developing the necessary competencies to operate safely and effectively in this specialist field, and make the case for access to appropriate supervision and support
- the development of the speech and language therapy workforce in this field.

This framework was developed for the RCSLT by the Transgender Voice and Communication and gender specialists CEN.

RCSLT: diversity in the profession

- Workshop in June 2019 [“Towards a diverse profession”](#) re-energised the discussion on the diversity of the profession
- The Black Lives Matter movement brought an extra impetus to the work on anti-racism and ethnicity
- We are embedding consideration of diversity and anti-racism issues within our own processes, in our promotion of SLT and influencing the wider NHS system eg [new placement guidance](#)
- Recognition that all our work needs an intersectional lens.
- We are pleased to be involved in and support SLT pride.

SLT Pride Network

Started as a celebration of LGBTQ history month – *This is what a LGBTQ+ SLT looks like*

Grassroots network has now held 2 virtual meetings

Now nominating and assigning roles for network committee

Have developed a trial digital space for networking via **discord**

Aims to support and represent SLTs from all minority sexual orientations and gender identities through education, providing support, training, raising awareness, advocacy, visibility, mentorship and friendship.

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#LGBTQSLT



Your questions



Join us for the next webinar

www.rcslt.org/events/



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