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# The Importance of Speech Therapy in the Transgender Community

by VocoVision on ~~October 19, 2018~~



The transgender community lives with more stigma, harassment, and discrimination than the general population, regardless of what stage of transition they're in. Despite the hurdles that men and women endure during the transition period, there has been a significant increase in the number of people transitioning. In 2016 it was estimated that nearly 1.4 billion people identified as transgender.

Besides the physical changes a person's body must go through to complete the transitioning process, so must the voice. Voice Modification Therapy (VMT) has become more accepted over the last decade and has created a need for more specialized speech-language therapy.

## *Closing the Voice Therapy Gap*

One of the problems we see with the transgender community is the lack of voice therapy clinics available. Teletherapy helps close the gap of [voice modification](#) therapy. It's a safe space for those who aren't comfortable speaking while they're in the middle of their transition and it's an alternative way to seek often necessary voice therapy when there isn't an available clinic.

The number of adolescents and young adults beginning their gender transitioning journey is increasing; many as young as 12 and 13. This generation of transgender people continues to grow. With the ability to provide [in-home teletherapy](#), we are able to meet clients wherever they are.

## *The Voice is an Important Piece of Identity*

VMT has existed since the 1980s but has only begun to gain significance in recent years, largely due to the growth of the transgender community. Without proper voice modification therapy, we leave the transgender community to deal with the stress of finding a missing piece to their identity.

Gender dysphoria is a real and valid concern for those in the transgender community. Gender dysphoria has the ability to impact a person's sense of self, their confidence, ability to navigate social situations and affect their mental well-being. The voice is very important to who we are. We express ourselves through our voice and communication.

## *Getting the Right Voice*

VMT is as unique and individualized as is our voice. Men and women alike will have different reasons for undergoing voice therapy; some may do so in order to better identify with the gender they're transitioning to, while others may do it in order to feel more safe and secure.

For a female to male transition, hormone therapy may aid in the process of voice therapy because the hormones administered aid in the lowering of the voice; expanding the vocal folds. Conversely, hormone therapy doesn't have the same effect on male to female transitioning due to the fact that vocal folds are unable to shrink in the way they expand for female to male transitioning. It's because of this that many trans women may seek out vocal surgery to aid in voice modification.

While vocal surgeries may help with [voice modification](#), it's not an exact science and may not achieve the desired results. As [SLPs](#), we know that voice modification isn't only about changing the sound of a voice; voice modification includes pitch, articulation, resonance, volume, speaking rate, and even the words used. It's also important that we prioritize the vocal health; something that can be cause for concern after vocal surgery.