

## Seattle voice lab

People transitioning from male to female (MTF) gender seek speech–language pathology services when they feel their voice is betraying their genuine self or perhaps is the last obstacle to representing their authentic gender. Speaking fundamental frequency (pitch) and resonance are most often targets in treatment because the combination of these two voice characteristics can account for the majority of how listeners perceive a speaker's gender. Intonation, voice quality, pragmatics and non-verbal communication contribute to a lesser extent but are usually recommended in treatment guidelines. There are few examples of effective treatment with male-to-female transgender individuals in the literature. Due to a small number of reports, it remains unclear how closely clinical practice follows recommended approaches and the extent to which gains may be expected. Many people are looking for the [Seattle voice lab](#).

### Aims

The purpose of this study was to examine retrospectively 5 years' worth of cases of voice feminization treatment at a university clinic in order to describe a unique clinical population and report treatment techniques and outcomes.

For transgender and gender non-binary persons, experts at the Grabscheid Voice and Swallowing Center of Mount Sinai specialize in helping them to find the voice that is uniquely theirs. Our laryngologists and dedicated voice and speech therapists work with each of our patients to fine-tune their voices to comfortably and effectively do their jobs, and live their lives. Our team members all have specialized interest and training in evaluating and working with transgender patients to provide behavioral and medical/surgical interventions, including tracheal shave surgery and Wendler glottoplasty. Additionally we are part of Mount Sinai's Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery and work together to ensure seamless care for each patient.

### Voice Feminization and Masculinization

Voice feminization makes use of a team approach involving you, a laryngologist, and a voice therapist. As a team (patient, physician, therapist) we determine how to help you achieve your voice and communication goals. Our specially-trained voice and speech therapists help you to learn those communication patterns that signal a feminine speaker. After these new behaviors have been maximized, then consideration can be given to surgery to alter pitch. While the surgery is designed to eliminate the lowest portions of a voice's pitch range and elevate the common speaking pitch closer to an average feminine range, the behaviors learned in the voice therapy are necessary to communicate gender identity. Physicians at the Grabscheid Voice and Swallowing Center can also perform voice box modification to alter the appearance of the Adam's apple.

### Why is voice feminization surgery done?

You may choose to have voice feminization surgery if you:

- Are a transgender woman (male transitioning to female).
- Have a disorder of sex differentiation (born with both male and female sex organs).
- Have disorders that require androgen (male sex hormone) therapy as treatment.
- Have ovarian cancer where tumors produce androgens.

### **What is voice feminization therapy?**

Many people choose to have voice feminization therapy before and after surgery. In addition to adjusting the pitch of your voice, a speech-language pathologist helps you feminize:

- Intonation (adapting the sound of your voice to express emotions).
- Loudness.
- Nonverbal communication, such as eye contact, gestures, articulation and pausing.
- Resonance (how you pass air through your vocal folds to control the intensity of your voice).

### **How common is voice feminization surgery?**

About 1% of transgender women have voice feminization surgery. More women (about 14%) choose to have nonsurgical voice feminization therapy instead.

### **Who performs voice feminization surgery?**

A laryngologist performs voice feminization surgery. This type of healthcare provider specializes in surgery for the voice box and throat.

Transgender voice therapy and surgery, also known as gender affirming voice care, involves treatments to help transgender individuals adapt their voices to achieve communication patterns that match their gender identity. Treatments can help change vocal characteristics and nonverbal communication patterns.

Style of speech, voice and choice of language style is highly personal. Changing how you speak can take years, and changes can feel unfamiliar or even uncomfortable in the beginning.

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