Trans women to access voice feminisation, at the touch of a button

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A new app ensures trans women, who are having difficulty gaining access to experienced speech and language therapists, can now get one-to-one tuition with the UK's leading expert – via their mobile.

Christella Antoni (http://www.christellaantoni.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/christella-antoni_large.jpg), a consultant speech and language therapist, has been helping transgender women with voice feminisation for 20 years and has teamed up with Speech Tools, a specialist in the development in speech therapy apps, to launch the Christella VoiceUp App (https://itunes.apple.com/app/christella-voiceup/id1124464717).

As the number of transgender patients accessing NHS treatment to support their transition continues to rise, so will the demand for speech therapy, which is listed as a core treatment procedure. Patients often cite authentic voice modification as the most important aspect of transition, as it allows for effective social functioning and assists in reducing discrimination.

Antoni explained: "One of the key barriers to acceptance, particularly for male to female patients, is voice. Our app has been designed to provide instant access to tried and tested techniques used daily in my clinic."

Sam Brady, specialist speech and language therapist and founder of Speech Tools, added: "Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with users recording an increase in pitch of more than 25Hz on average. This makes a significant difference to how trans women sound which positively impacts not only how they feel, but how they are perceived by others."

Specialist speech and language therapy for transgender patients is varied across the UK, due to the location of the Gender Identity Clinics (GICs), of which there are a total of seven, and the limited availability of specialist speech therapists elsewhere. Since 2002, Christella Antoni has run the only training course in the UK for speech and language therapists wishing to gain specific skills in teaching their male to female patients to feminise their voice.

Brady explained: "The rapid increase in transgender individuals seeking treatment has led to a huge rise in demand for specialist speech therapy and this has had a knock on effect on increasing waiting times. The app gives people a clear structured voice therapy program to follow and the ability to measure change in pitch over time".

Users have access to almost two hours of audio and video therapy lessons with Antoni, in which she walks them through each of her four core voice techniques at beginner, intermediate and advanced level. The user can track the progress of their voice through the same proven voice analysis software available in the Speech Tools 'Voice Analyst' app, which has been downloaded more than half a million times in over 120 countries.

Christella VoiceUp is the only transgender voice therapy app widely available on both iOS

(https://itunes.apple.com/app/christella-voiceup/id1124464717) and Android (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=co.speechtools.christellamtf).

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Interviews available on request. Contact Aby Hawker at Falcon PR m: 07795593706 e: abyhawker@falconpr.co.uk

Notes to editors

About Speech Tools

Speech Tools (www.speechtools.co) was set up by husband and wife team Sam and Garry Brady. As a speech therapist, Sam found that the technologies available to support patients while effective, were often difficult to access, due to cost, and, cumbersome due to the technology being out dated.

Speech Tools was borne out of the recognition that innovations in technology could deliver quicker, sleeker and more effective results, straight to your mobile. Speech Tools has been creating apps for over six years, specifically to help people with their speech and language needs.

Android
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=co.speechtools.christellamtf

Apple
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