

### Who are Voice Hearers?

A person who is 'a voice hearer' is defined by the Hearing Voices Network as someone who undergoes hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and/or feeling something that others around them do not.

### Hearing Voices is a Common Experience and Does not have to be a Problem

- Many people experience voices without being significantly distressed whilst living healthy, normal and productive lives has been a central element of Hearing Voices work and research (Escher & Romme, 1989).
- The University of Wollongong in New South Wales presents research that hearing voices and other 'extreme experiences' are more common an occasion than thought, with 5-28% of the population experiencing auditory hallucinations, of which 25% meet diagnostic criteria for a mental disorder, whilst 75% are normally functioning (Barkus & Leede-Smith 2013).
- Hearing voices can be a destructive and intrusive experience where the individual can feel isolated and panicked. However, when the person begins to understand their triggers and can associate meaning to the voices, empowerment and healing can take place where social relationships and stable employment can once again be an option (Corstens, Escher, & Romme, 2009).
- 2015 research on participants of Hearing Voices Groups within the Hearing Voices Network of New South Wales state many voice hearers' using the approach find that their lives are actually enriched by the experience of voice hearing, and are not distressed by the voice hearing experiences (Beaven & Santos, 2015).

### Voice Hearing Experience is often Linked to a History of Trauma

- In 2013, a survey on the link between life history and the experience of hearing voices displayed that 89% of voice-hearers have had either family conflict, neglect, physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse and bullying in childhood (Corstens & Longden, 2013).

### Benefits of Hearing Voices Approach Peer Support

Voice hearer's also, after firstly connecting with hearing voices groups and reducing their own isolation and stigmatization, often go on to reconnect with their family and former social circles (Beaven, et al, 2016).

In 2004, Voice Hearer Peer Support outcomes and recovery from Hearing Voices Groups research over 18 months in the Sussex Coast in England displayed amazing results for attendees. The results for the research are as follows on the next page, (Collins, et al, 2004)

# Voices Vic

## Managers and Clinicians Fact Sheet

In 2016, Australian Hearing Voices Network Peer Support Outcome Research from New South Wales showcased the following results for attendees (Beaven, Jager & Santos, 2016).

Hearing Voices Groups Attendance Outcomes	Improvement
Feeling understood	75%
Less isolation	68%
Self-esteem	68%
Coping strategies	43%
Fewer hospital admissions	61%
Hopefulness about the future	68%
Less emergency assistance	57%
Openness to talk about their voices	75%

In addition, 2004 Voice Hearer Peer Support outcomes and recovery from Hearing Voices Groups research of over 18 months in the Sussex Coast in England displayed remarkable results for attendees (Collins, et al, 2004). After attending hearing voices groups, research outcomes for group members included-

- Hospital Bed Use decreased- attendees spent far less days in hospital from an average of 39 days per year, down to just 8 days per year average after joining the groups
- People used far more coping strategies, from 2.9 to 5.7 strategies each
- People's sense of empowerment dramatically increased
- Self Esteem was much higher, as well as feeling a greater sense of control of their lives
- People heard voices less often
- The voices were perceived as less powerful to the person you experienced hearing them
- People felt much better about being able to cope with their voices
- More people were employed, volunteering or gaining education after attending groups, from one person out of thirteen, to six people
- 24% of people also experienced a significant reduction in hospital admissions.

### References

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