

Voices Vic Fact Sheet 4

Information to help voice hearers, carers/family, and workers to help reduce distress that can be associated with hearing voices.

To learn more, attend our training, visit our website or read some of the recommended books.



Relationship to Life Experiences

Increasingly research shows a relationship between hearing voices and life experience, particularly trauma.

Often, thinking about what was happening in your life when you first heard voices will reveal a context for the voices. When the content of what voices say – of the characteristics of the voices – are considered metaphorically in relation to life experience, they can often start to make a great deal of sense.

How are your voices related to your life experiences? Does the content of the voices make more sense when considered in this way?

This can be a powerful experience – but should also be handled with care. Detailed examination of traumatic experiences can sometimes be retraumatising. It's important to talk with people you trust – or to find someone you can trust – when working through trauma. There are lots of free counselling services available should you need them – contact Voices Vic or Lifeline (131114) for more information.

See Romme, M., et al (2009) 'Living with Voices: Fifty Stories of Recovery' (chapter 4, and recovery stories, eg. Jacqui Dillon).

Changing the Power Balance

The hearing voices approach suggests this is an imperative part of recovery for voice hearers. You don't have to be a victim of your voices! Explore the idea of power, and work with others to look at different strategies for shifting the power:

Take back the power - set times when you will listen to the voices. Stick to these times firmly. Decide what you are prepared to listen to from the voices, and what is unreasonable – talking with people you trust can help to work this out.

Refuse to be a victim – think about whether you are taking responsibility for yourself... and how do you do this?

Challenge the power of the voices – test their claims, check for lies. If they make a threat, dare them to carry it out and see what happens. This can be scary at first, but also very liberating! Try starting with very small challenges so you feel safe.

Address demons of the past – deal with past traumas, get help.

See Romme, M., et al (2009) 'Living with Voices: Fifty Stories of Recovery' (pg 16-17).

Voices Vic is a consumer-led initiative of Prahran Mission

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At Voices Vic we believe **everyone** can recover!