

HEARING VOICES

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FOCUS POINTS

- **INTRODUCTION**
- **VOICES?**
- **HEARING VOICES MOVEMENT**
- **HEARING VOICES NETWORK (HVN) GROUPS**
- **RECOVERY**
- **QUESTIONS**

WHAT ARE VOICES?

- **Someone that hears, sees or senses something that others around them do not**
- **10% of population hears voices that others do not**
- **Hearing voices is as common as left-handedness, it's a human trait**

WHY DO PEOPLE HEAR VOICES?

(THEORIES AND IDEAS)

- A special gift or sensitivity
- Result of trauma
- Biochemical cause
- Paranormal experience
- Emotional distress
- Physical health problems

ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT VOICES

- Between 70 and 90 percent of people across the world hear voices.
- Voices can be male, female, without gender, child, adult, human or non-human.
- People may hear one voice or many. Most report that one dominates above the others
- Voices can be experienced in the head, in the ears, outside the head or in the environment.

ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT VOICES

- Voice hearing is often seen as a prime symptom of psychosis (American Psychiatric Association, 1994)
- Hearing voices in itself is not a symptom of an illness.
- One in three people who hear voices become a psychiatric patient – two in three people can cope well and are in no need of psychiatric care.
- There are more people in society who hear voices, who have never been psychiatric patients than there are people who hear voices and become psychiatric patients.
- (Romme & Escher, 2001)

Hearing Voices Attitudes

- The meaning and causes of hearing voices that others can not hear has been debated for thousands of years.
- Voice hearing has been both revered and condemned, understood as a symptom of disease as well as a source of other worldly communication.
- People who report hearing voices have been viewed as mystics, potential psychiatric patients or simply people with unusual experiences.
- Power, politics, gender, medicine, and religion have shaped the meaning of hearing voices

Hearing Voices Debate

- The traditional attitude in mental health systems has been to attempt to eradicate the voices.
- There is a belief that talking about the voices is harmful to people.
- In Western civilization, hearing voices is generally considered as abnormal.
- New research indicates that voices should be viewed as a meaningful experience, linked to a person's life story and are only a problem when the person hearing them has difficulty in coping with them.

Famous People

- Gandhi
- Brian Wilson (Beach Boys)
- Freud
- John Nash (Nobel prize winner)
- Socrates
- Charles Dickens
- Anthony Hopkins

HEARING VOICES MOVEMENT PHILOSOPHY

- **“Voice hearing should be thought of not as a pathological phenomenon in need of eradications, but as a meaningful, interpretable experience, intimately linked to a hearer’s life story and more commonly than not, to unresolved personal trauma.”**



Position of Hearing Voices Network (HVN)

- Hearing voices is not in itself a sign of mental illness.
- Hearing voices is often related to problems in life history.
- If hearing voices cause distress, the person who hears the voices can learn strategies to cope with the experience.
- Some people report hearing comforting and positive voices.


Key Principles of HVN

- Acceptance and validation
- Respect
- Promote hope
- Independence and empowerment
- Safety and courage
- Collaboration
- Recovery

HVN MISSION

- The primary objective of HVN is to establish, facilitate and support self help groups for voice hearers.
- HVN further aims to act as a source of information to voice hearers, care givers, and the general community.
- Collaborative approach between voice hearers, care givers and service providers.

HEARING VOICES GROUPS



WHATEVER YOUR
EXPERIENCE,
HOWEVER YOU
UNDERSTAND IT –
YOU'RE WELCOME
HERE.

<http://www.hearing-voices.org/>

- **First HVN group in 1987 – England**
- **First group in USA - 2006**
- **26 countries on 5 continents have HVN groups**
- **HVN Groups are self help groups**

Goals and Objectives of HVN Groups

- To raise awareness of voices, tactile sensations and other sensory experiences
- To give men, women, friends, family members, service providers and caregivers opportunity to talk freely about this together.
- To support anyone with these experiences seeking to understand, learn and grow in their own way.

R E C O V E R Y

RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

- **RECOVERY IS** living the life you choose, not the life others choose for you.
- Remember **RECOVERY IS** a Journey.
- The largest barrier to recovery is the belief that **RECOVERY IS NOT** possible.

Interested in attending or starting a group?

**Please contact Melissa McLean or Lois Miller
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