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

• Hearing voices is as common as left-handedness, it’s a human trait

• 10% of population hears voices that others do not
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 that 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
“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 compete 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

- 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

http://www.hearing-voices.org/
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.
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 at 732-780-1175, Ext. 2502