



national

hearing
voices
network

**LOTS OF PEOPLE HEAR VOICES OR
SEE VISIONS. LET'S TALK ABOUT IT.**

Creating spaces where people who hear voices, see visions or have other extra-sensory experiences can talk openly. Championing rights-based respectful support when needed.

TAKING A POSITIVE APPROACH TO HEARING VOICES ...

Despite being relatively common, many people who hear voices, see visions or have similar experiences feel alone. Fear of prejudice, discrimination, and being dismissed as 'crazy' can keep people silent.

At a time when we are told that it is 'time to talk', it is important that anyone courageous enough to speak out is met with respect and empathy.

"I am so incredibly grateful to have found this site, to know that I am not alone and reaffirm that I am not insane"

~ Nick

Once a topic even mental health professionals would shy away from, things are beginning to change. An growing body of testimonial, clinical and research evidence shows that hearing voices is a diverse experience that is not necessarily linked to illness. In fact, the majority of people who hear voices are not diagnosed with any illness at all. Some find voices and visions an important part of their life.

"The voices I hear can be a nightmare, but they've taught me a lot about the things I need to change in my life"

~ Catherine

Voices and visions are personally meaningful experiences that happen in the context of people's lives. This context can include spiritual practice or religion, culture, traumatic life experiences, social injustice, physical illness and/or other difficulties. Our lives are not always easy, and living with voices can be very difficult too.

Whatever the origin of someone's voices or visions, the relationship they have with them is key. Voices or visions that frighten or overwhelm us are harder to deal with than those that we simply find a little annoying, or even enjoy listening to. With help, people can find some new ways of relating to and dealing with difficult experiences.

To us, there's no such thing as a 'hopeless case'. People of all ages and backgrounds have found ways of living with voices and visions. That's why we focus on creating respectful and empowering spaces, whilst challenging the inequalities & oppressive practices that hold people back.

AT HVN WE RECOGNISE THAT ...

Hearing Voices* is a relatively common diverse human experience that has many different causes. It is not necessarily linked to illness.

People have a right to define their own experiences, whatever they believe the origin of the voices to be.

It is important for people's experiences to be accepted, validated, valued and believed - even when they challenge societal norms.

Hearing Voices Groups - spaces where people come together to share experiences of voices & visions - can be an important part of finding ways to talk about and live with them.

Family members, friends, allies, academics and professional supporters need spaces to learn about, and talk about, voices* too.

We do not exist inside a bubble. Whatever their origin, voices* are linked to our relational, social, cultural, spiritual, historical and political worlds. Addressing inequalities, isolation, discrimination, trauma and societal problems is a key part supporting people who hear voices.

When people are distressed or confused by their voices* or visions, they should be able to access a choice of rights-based support that helps them make sense of and manage their experiences.

Access to a range of good quality information can be empowering.

* 'hearing voices' is used as an umbrella term and includes seeing visions and having other similar experiences (including touch, taste and smell).

WHAT DOES NATIONAL HVN DO?

We are a small national charity whose work is mostly carried out by volunteers (including the trustees).



OUR AIMS ARE TO:

Raise awareness of the diversity of voices, visions and similar experiences

Challenge negative stereotypes, stigma and discrimination

Help create more spaces for people of all ages and backgrounds to talk freely about voice-hearing, visions and similar sensory experiences

Raise awareness of a range of different ways to manage distressing, confusing or difficult voices*

Encourage a more positive response to voice-hearing* and related experiences in healthcare settings and wider society

SOME OF THE THINGS WE DO:

Sharing information and free resources through our website, social media, e-bulletin, newsletter and email information service

Engaging with the media to present realistic and hopeful perspectives

Offering workshops, training and events, subject to resources

Supporting members who want to set up a Hearing Voices Group

SOME OF THE THINGS WE DON'T DO:

Run groups directly (we provide guidance & networking)

Provide crisis or long-term support (we connect people with resources)

WHAT ARE HEARING VOICES GROUPS?



Hearing Voices Groups offer people who hear voices, see visions or have similar sensory experiences the chance to meet and support each other. They can become a safe haven where people feel accepted, valued and understood.

People come to Hearing Voices Groups for lots of different reasons, including:

- ✦ Meeting people with similar experiences
- ✦ Using experiences to challenge stigma and discrimination
- ✦ Being supported, and using experiences to support others
- ✦ Talking with people about other issues that impact on their life (e.g. relationships, benefits, self-harm, work, navigating mental health system, study, medication, discrimination)
- ✦ Learning new ways of managing difficult experiences (coping)
- ✦ Making sense of experiences

All Hearing Voices Groups run independently of National HVN. Groups run in voluntary organisations, community centres, mental health centres, hospitals, prisons, youth organisations, hospitals & immigration removal centres (IRCs).

“The group helped me find MY voice. I wouldn’t be here without them”
~ Rachel

Every group is different. Please speak to the facilitators before attending to work out if it’s the right group for you. Ask questions if you want to.

PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

We are a proud member of the International Hearing Voices Movement and Intervoice – the charity set up to support it. We have links with networks around the world, with past and present members helping to develop networks in other countries (including: USA, Australia, Uganda, Czech Republic, Italy, Brazil and Serbia). See: www.intervoiceonline.org.



SUPPORTING NATIONAL HVN

As a small charity, donations and membership subscriptions make a real difference to us. These acts of generosity enable us to provide our baseline service, leaving any larger donations or grants for specific pieces of work or projects to further our aims. However, we do not – and will not – accept money from pharmaceutical companies.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO SUPPORT US, YOU CAN:

Become a member (as a group, organisation or individual)

Follow us on social media

Share our information with friends, family and/or colleagues

Encourage your organisation or company to get training from us

Celebrate World Hearing Voices Day (14 September)

Host a fundraising event. Previous events have included a sponsored swim and wedding collection See: www.justgiving.com/hearingvoices

Make a donation via PayPal Giving. We get 100% of funds, no fees. See: www.paypal.com/gb/fundraiser/charity/3172744

Make us your favourite charity on eBay. Donate when you buy or sell.

Shop via Amazon Smile (www.smile.amazon.co.uk). If you choose us as your charity we get 0.5% of net purchase price.

CONTACT US / FIND OUT MORE

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