

Voices Vic



Information Pack

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Voices Vic



What is Voices Vic?

Uniting's Voices Vic is an award winning and research supported specialist program improving the wellbeing and recovery of people who hear voices. Led by peers with lived experience, Voices Vic provides dynamic recovery groups and one-on-one support. Our team also facilitates training across Australia for organisations and individuals who work with voice hearers.

Hearing Voices Approach:

- Hearing voices is a common human experience
- Recovery is about changing the relationship with the voices and transforming the voice hearers' experiences to acceptance
- The experience of hearing voices is meaningful
- We define 'hearing voices' as an umbrella term used to refer to auditory, visual, olfactory sensory experiences, and beliefs that others around them do not experience

Our Services

Voices Vic has been delivering training, information sessions, one on one sessions and providing support to the voice hearing community in Australia for over ten years. Our team of peer work professionals have lived experience of hearing voices and recovery, and are highly experienced within the facilitation field. We offer a range of training for individuals, mental health professionals, peer workers, voice hearers and family members. We also offer specialised external training packages for clinics, hospitals and other health organisations.

'The Hearing Voices Approach' training is endorsed by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) and the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) for contribution towards their professional development.

Our trainings are delivered in person and online.

To enquire about Voices Vic training please contact: vvtraining@uniting.org

Information Sessions

We offer a free half hour Information Session via Skype or in person (depending on location).

Introduction Workshop

We offer a two-hour Introduction Workshop which includes:

- Q&A with one of our peer workers with lived experience
- Brief introduction to the Hearing Voices Approach
- Practical coping skills voice-hearers and professionals can use to reduce distress

Training Calendar



The Hearing Voices Approach Training

3 Days

July

14, 15, 21

Online

September

15, 16, 22

TBC

November

10, 11, 17

TBC

This course is the foundation to the *Hearing Voices Approach*. The first two days will give you a solid understanding of applying the approach in many practical settings, either for yourself, in your work as a mental health professional or in your family/home environment.

The final day covers *Voice Profiling* - a set of accessible strategies that help build greater awareness and understanding of a person's voices. By the end of this training you will have more tools and confidence to work with people's voice hearing experiences.

Hearing Voices Group Setup Training

4 Days

August

11, 12, 18, 19

Online

October

20, 21, 27, 28

TBC

This interactive 4-day training is for people wanting to start and/or (co-) facilitate a Hearing Voices Support Group. The first two days will cover an in-depth understanding of the *Hearing Voices Approach* and the second half of the training will cover *Voice Profiling* and the setup tools & strategies for getting a Hearing Voices support group started.

Hearing Voices Facilitation Training

4 Days

This training will be offered in 2021

This interactive training is ideal for any current or aspiring peer workers & facilitators wanting to build upon their facilitation skills in creative approaches to group facilitation & learning how to *Use Your Story* to lead recovery based, peer-led support groups.

By the end of this training you will have greater knowledge and awareness on how to deliver talks, share and adapt your story to relevant audiences & facilitate groups engaging creative approaches.

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Additional Support Package

We offer an additional support package to those who have completed our Hearing Voices Group Setup Training.

Our Support Package includes:

- 6 x hours of private mentoring with one of our facilitators
- 20% discount to attend our Hearing Voices Advanced Facilitation Training
- 1 x contact visit of group in person or via 'Microsoft Teams'
- PDF Resource Kit
- Phone and email support
- 6 monthly progress report
- Opportunity to visit our Hearing Voices groups twice

Hearing Voices Groups

We provide peer led recovery groups for voice hearers to share their experience, learn new coping strategies and explore ways to grow and change the relationship with their voices. The groups provide an open space for the voice hearer to feel comfortable and give a sense of hope and possibility. Individuals can also use their NDIS packages to access the groups.

Our Hearing Voices Groups are delivered in person and online.

Topics in groups include:

- What the voices have been saying this week
- Past experiences with voices
- Associated thoughts and emotions
- Setting boundaries with voices
- Finding meaning and making sense of the voice hearing experience
- Sharing recovery stories
- Exploring hopes and dreams

Hearing Voices groups have been running around the world since 1987 and are currently active in 30 countries. We support and work in partnership with other Hearing Voices networks in Australia and globally. Voices Vic was established by Uniting in 2009 after successfully running Hearing Voices groups since 2005. We currently offer NDIS groups for eligible participants.

NDIS Hearing Voices Groups



Uniting Voices Vic now offers **Hearing Voices Groups** for NDIS participants. These Hearing Voices Groups are also peer facilitated support groups for people who hear voices.

NDIS Pricing and Package offers

If you want to use NDIS funding, the group falls under Capacity Building – Increased Social and Community Participation.

Support Category Name	Increased social and community participation
Support Item Number	09_007_0117_6_3
Support Item Name	Skills Development In A Group
National Non-Remote (MMM 1-5)	\$29.26 per hour

Voices Vic will be offering the following Hearing Voices Group packages:

- **New to Hearing Voices Groups package (4 sessions):** The package includes 4 Hearing Voices Group sessions, run weekly for 1.5 hours.
- **3-Month package (12 sessions):** The package includes 12 Hearing Voices Group sessions, run weekly for 1.5 hours.

Location & Time: Please contact us to find out more

Research conducted in Australia by Bevan (2016) showed that the majority of people who attended a Hearing Voices Group:

- Had fewer hospital admissions
- Felt less isolated
- Were better able to talk about their experiences
- Were less afraid of their voices
- Some people found that their voices became more positive

The emphasis is not on eliminating the voices, but rather on transforming the voice hearer's experiences from confusion and fear to acceptance and recovery. This aims to provide the skills to shift the power balance in a positive direction.

To enquire about Voices Vic Hearing Voices Group please contact: vvadmin@uniting.org

Voices Vic



One on One Peer Support

We offer sessions of individual peer support with a highly experienced trained peer worker who also has lived experience of hearing voices and recovery.

Focus for the sessions can include:

Telling Your Story:

- Being the expert on your own experiences
- Looking at voices in the context of your life story with help of timelines

Changing The Relationship:

- Learning new ways to cope with your voices
- Dealing with possible distress
- Learning to set boundaries with the voices
- Respectfully challenging the voices

Making Sense Of The Voices:

- Looking for metaphors and the meaning of your experiences
- Accepting the voices are real

Speaking Engagements

Our team members regularly get invited to speak at conferences and events to share their recovery journey and raise awareness of the Hearing Voices Approach.

To book one of our speakers, please contact: vvadmin@vt.uniting.org

Volunteering with Voices Vic

You can volunteer your time and skills to Voices Vic and help support people who hear voices.

Coping Skills for Voice Hearers



It's not about getting rid of your voices. It's about changing your relationship with them.

It's helpful to listen to your voices – but not all the time. Set a reasonable time limit for listening (e.g. one hour per day), and stick to it.

Listen, but don't obey your voices. Your actions must always be your choice.

You always have more control than the voices – without you they wouldn't exist.

Talk with your voices as well as listening. A good relationship takes two (at least)!

Speak to your voices with compassion and respect – how you wish they spoke to you.

It can help to remember that voices usually have good intentions. They give voice to a part of you that is hurting and can't express itself any other way. In a way, they are like a hurt child, crying out.

Challenge your voices if they make threats. Threats can be frightening but remember that voices lie about their power. To prove this to yourself, set them a simple task such as "go and wash the dishes" or "trim my nails". We think they'll fail. If it feels scary to challenge the voices, ask someone you trust to sit with you.

How to change your relationship with your voices.

Read other people's recovery stories.

Don't argue with voices – they usually win!

Don't take your voices too literally. Voices often don't mean what they say, or they talk in metaphors. E.g., violent suggestions from voices could mean you need to change something that's not right in your life or that you're feeling angry or scared.

Do your voices have names? If not, find out what their names are and use them - you'll reduce your fear and increase your control. If the voices won't tell you, then you can give them names.

Recognise trauma from your past. Most voice hearers have difficult experiences in their past – you are not alone. What was happening in your life when you first started hearing voices? Your voices may be a sign that it's time to try counselling, or to talk with someone you trust.

Join a Hearing Voices group. Share your experiences and learn with others who have been there too. Don't be alone.

Give yourself time and hope. We know these are not easy changes to make. It takes heaps of practice and support. But you can do it. Believing in yourself is the first step.

Coping Skills for Voice Hearers



Strategies and techniques for managing voices.

Make a deal - tell the voices you'll listen later if they give you peace now. Try writing down their messages to clear your head and read later when you feel stronger.

Set boundaries - Respect: Tell the voices you will only listen if they speak to you with respect. Time: Set a time limit, they only have 5 minutes and then the rest of the time is for you.

Distraction techniques - Listen to different styles of music using headphones, wear ear plugs, call or visit a friend, talk to others in a support group, watch TV, read a book, do housework, puzzles, cook a nice meal for yourself, or take a shower or bath.

Creative release approach – Put on music and dance it out, write poetry or other creative writing, draw, paint, make something out of clay, go to an exercise class, go for a walk or run, watch a movie you love.

My own strategies...

Resources



Information for Friends, Family & Carers

Being the friend, family member or carer of someone who hears voices can feel confusing, frightening and isolating. Here are some tools and ideas using the philosophy of the Hearing Voices approach we recommend for thinking about voices:

Accept The Voices Are Real:

- Denying the reality of a voice hearer or advising the voice hearer to ignore them promotes denial – whereas acceptance of their reality gives permission to start actively dealing with them and experiencing recovery.

Self-Care:

- We believe that no person can do the recovery work for another, no matter how much we love them. As friends, family members and carers, we need to ensure we have support, people to share and debrief with, an ability to let go and have a healthy balanced life.

Changing The Relationship To The Voices:

- Focus on helping the person to build understanding and get control, rather than only focusing on getting rid of the voices. Many voice hearers have learnt to focus on their positive voices, set strong boundaries with their voices or found new ways to interpret and make sense of what the voices say.

Other Resources

The International Hearing Voices Network

www.intervoiceonline.org

Strategies for Coping Skills by Indigo Daya (founding member of Voices Vic)

[Download PDF](#)

Working to Recovery UK – books and personal recovery stories

www.workingtorecovery.co.uk

Rufus May – Holistic Approaches to Mental Health

www.rufusmay.com

The Voice Collective – Young Voice Hearers

<http://www.voicecollective.co.uk/>

Contact us



Learn More

www.unitingvictas.org.au

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