



**Uniting**

# Voices Vic Info Pack 2025

## **Who are 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 & living experience in hearing voices and mental health, Voices Vic provides dynamic recovery groups for adults & youth. We also facilitate trainings across Australia for organisations and individuals who work and care for voice hearers and voice hearers themselves.

## **What We Offer**

### **Training and Peer-led Groups for Youth and Adults using the 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



## Award-winning Lived Experience Specialist Program



### Training Information

Voices Vic has been delivering extensive training, workshops and providing mentoring support to the voice hearing community in Australia for over 15 years. Our team of professionals have lived & living experience of hearing voices and mental health recovery. We offer a range of trainings for mental health professionals, peer workers, voice hearers and family, friends & carers.

Participants will receive training workbooks and other resources to guide their participation in the training sessions. Participants will receive a certificate upon completion of the training. Our online trainings are delivered live via Zoom. Face-to-face trainings are delivered at Uniting locations.

#### Information Sessions

We offer monthly free 30-minute Information Sessions via Microsoft Teams. We provide an overview of our services at Voices Vic and specific information about the training offerings as well as groups.

#### 2 Hour Introduction Workshops

This workshop is an opportunity for mental health professionals and organisations to learn about The Hearing Voices Approach.

Participants will learn:

- A brief introduction to the foundations of the Hearing Voices Approach
- Practical skills on how voice hearers and mental health professionals can utilise the approach
- Some coping skills to reduce distress for voice hearers
- Q&A with one of our peer workers with lived & living experience

## Multi-day Training Program:

### Day 1:

#### Foundations of The Hearing Voices Approach

This training covers the history & foundations of the Hearing Voices Approach.

Participants will learn about:

- The origins of the Hearing Voices Approach & Global Network
- The consumer perspective of someone who lives with voices
- Fears & myths around voice hearing
- Ways we can work with voices & pathways of recovery

### Day 2:

#### Skills Building for Hearing Voices Approach

This training teaches the skills, knowledge and techniques on how to apply the Hearing Voices Approach in many practical settings.

Participants will learn about:

- Coping skills & strategies to reduce distress for voice hearers
- How to make sense of voices & their meaning
- The importance of validating and empowering voice hearers' experiences

### Day 3:

#### Voice Profiling

This training teaches the technique of Voice Profiling, a useful tool to build greater awareness and understanding of a person's voices. Must complete day 1 & 2 before commencing.

Participants will learn about:

- The principles of the Voice Profiling technique & how to apply them when supporting a voice hearer
- Building confidence and compassion when working with people's voice hearing experiences
- The process and benefits of creating a mind-map & other strategies for voice hearers

### Day 4:

#### Hearing Voices Group Facilitation Training

This training teaches the foundations of setting up and facilitating a Hearing Voices Support group using the Hearing Voices Approach. We encourage those with and without voice hearing experience to facilitate groups. Must complete all 3 prior days before commencing.

Participants will learn about:

- Hearing Voices Groups and the benefits of attending groups
- The Facilitators role, what to talk about in groups and The Facilitators Toolkit
- Non-English-speaking voice hearers and interpreters

To book into our trainings go to: <https://events.humanitix.com/host/voices-vic>

## Training Calendar Dates

	Nov '24	Dec '24	Jan '25	Feb '25	March '25	April '25	May '25	June '25
30 min Info Session	26th	FULLY BOOKED		4th		1st	6th	2nd
2-hour Intro Workshop				25th			27th	
2-Day Training		3rd, 4th			4th, 5th			3rd, 4th
3-Day Training	FULLY BOOKED		14th, 15th, 21st, 29th		11th, 12th, 18th			17th, 18th, 24th
4-Day Complete Training				FULLY BOOKED		8th, 9th, 15th, 16th	13th, 14th, 20th, 21st	

**We typically book out well in advance, so it is best to register early.**

### **Funding Eligibility:**

Voices Vic has been fortunate to receive funding from the Victorian Department of Health to offer subsidised places to people. There are a number of free places we can offer to Victorians who:

- Have lived or living experience as a voice hearer
- Are a family member, friend or unpaid carer of a voice hearer
- Are a concession card holder
- Are a peer worker in a mental health service, or
- Work in a public health or community service that supports voice hearers

\*Residents of Victoria who do not meet these requirements will be required to pay \$50 (excl. GST) per person per day for trainings & workshops.

\*\*We also offer subsidised places to voice hearers, family, friends and carers, who reside in other Australian states or territories.

\*\*\* Participants outside of Victoria are required to pay full price for training. If you are interested to join outside of Victoria please contact the Training email to enquire: [vvtraining@vt.uniting.org](mailto:vvtraining@vt.uniting.org)



This initiative has been made possible with funding from the Department of Health

## 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. In 2025, we are offering support groups for young adults between 16–25 and adults 25+\*.

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.

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

\*Our 25+ Hearing Voices Group is proudly supported by the Ralph & Betty Sims Fund, a sub-fund of Australian Communities Foundation.

## Youth Program

The Voices Vic Youth Program is dedicated to improving well-being and recovery among young people, aged 16-25, who experience voice hearing in Melbourne and regional Victoria. Our comprehensive offerings include youth support groups, youth resources, group facilitator mentoring, and informative training sessions tailored for individuals, mental health professionals, workers, voice hearers, and family members.

## 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 helps 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. 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.

## 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.

## 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](http://www.intervoiceonline.org)

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

[More info here](#)

Working to Recovery UK – books and personal recovery stories

[www.workingto\\_recovery.co.uk](http://www.workingto_recovery.co.uk)

Rufus May – Holistic Approaches to Mental Health

[www.rufusmay.com](http://www.rufusmay.com)

The Voice Collective – Young Voice Hearers

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

The Lived Experience Branch Victoria: LLEWs

[LLEWs Website](#)

## **FAQ's**

**How do I refer myself or someone else to a program?**

Voices Vic accepts email or phone referrals. This can either be a self-referral or referral from a service provider or family member on behalf of the participant.

See relevant Voices Vic contact details below.

**What to include in my referral to join a program?**

Due to the current structure of our programs, we often ask participants to include the following:

- Contact number - referrer or referee
- Name & age of potential participant
- What service it is regarding - 1:1 support, youth program, group program, training
- An email address - so we can provide information about the service of interest for the referrer or referee

**What if I am not sure which part of the program I fit into?**

For general enquiries the best way to enquire is to send email to: [vvadmin@vt.uniting.org](mailto:vvadmin@vt.uniting.org).

We will then contact you with further information & support regarding your enquiry.

## Connect with Voices Vic

Newsletter Sign Up for the Latest Updates

Learn more: [www.unitingvictas.org.au](http://www.unitingvictas.org.au)

Phone: 04 03 947 910

General Enquiries: [vvadmin@vt.uniting.org](mailto:vvadmin@vt.uniting.org)

Training Enquiries: [vvtraining@vt.uniting.org](mailto:vvtraining@vt.uniting.org)

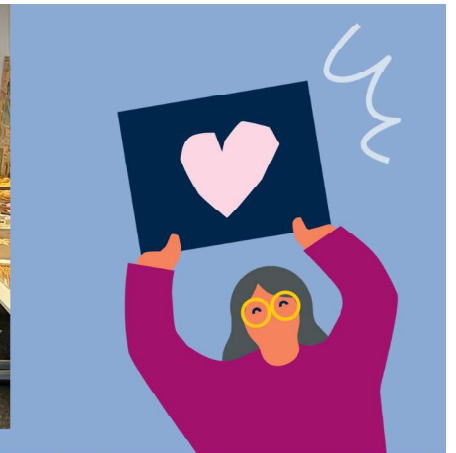
Youth Enquiries: [vyouth@vt.uniting.org](mailto:vyouth@vt.uniting.org)

## Speaking Engagements

Our team members regularly speak at conferences and events sharing their recovery journey and the Hearing Voices Approach. To book one of our speakers, please contact: [vvadmin@vt.uniting.org](mailto: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.



**The Hearing Voices  
Approach**  
Brought to you by Voices Vic

