

# Voices Vic Fact Sheet 4

Information to help voice hearers, carers/family, and workers to help reduce distress that can be associated with hearing voices.

To learn more, attend our training, visit our website or read some of the recommended books.



## Relationship to Life Experiences

Increasingly research shows a relationship between hearing voices and life experience, particularly trauma.

Often, thinking about what was happening in your life when you first heard voices will reveal a context for the voices. When the content of what voices say – of the characteristics of the voices – are considered metaphorically in relation to life experience, they can often start to make a great deal of sense.

*How are your voices related to your life experiences? Does the content of the voices make more sense when considered in this way?*

This can be a powerful experience – but should also be handled with care. Detailed examination of traumatic experiences can sometimes be retraumatising. It's important to talk with people you trust – or to find someone you can trust – when working through trauma. There are lots of free counselling services available should you need them – contact Voices Vic or Lifeline (131114) for more information.

See Romme, M., et al (2009) 'Living with Voices: Fifty Stories of Recovery' (chapter 4, and recovery stories, eg. Jacqui Dillon).

## Changing the Power Balance

The hearing voices approach suggests this is an imperative part of recovery for voice hearers. You don't have to be a victim of your voices! Explore the idea of power, and work with others to look at different strategies for shifting the power:

**Take back the power** - set times when you will listen to the voices. Stick to these times firmly. Decide what you are prepared to listen to from the voices, and what is unreasonable – talking with people you trust can help to work this out.

**Refuse to be a victim** – think about whether you are taking responsibility for yourself... and how do you do this?

**Challenge the power of the voices** – test their claims, check for lies. If they make a threat, dare them to carry it out and see what happens. This can be scary at first, but also very liberating! Try starting with very small challenges so you feel safe.

**Address demons of the past** – deal with past traumas, get help.

See Romme, M., et al (2009) 'Living with Voices: Fifty Stories of Recovery' (pg 16-17).

Voices Vic is a consumer-led initiative of Prahran Mission

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At Voices Vic we believe **everyone** can recover!