NATIONAL PARANOIA NETWORK

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The articles are the views of the contributors and not necessarily those of NPN.

Depression

One manic depression sufferer shares her tips on how to cope with the highs and the lows

What to do when I'm feeling high:

- The first thing I do is go and see my doctor. She may or may not give me extra medication, but usually asks me to make another appointment soon so she can check I've come down all right.
- I try to keep as down to earth as possible; I'm helped by the fact that when I'm high I often also feel anxious and my heart flutters, so the experience has unpleasant aspects and the idea of keeping level can be very attractive. I try to stick to a basic routine, doing chores like housework and gardening, which use up some energy without revving me up and which require little concentration.
- I try to get enough sleep. If it goes below four hours a night for more than a couple of nights, I go back to the doctor, it's an important thing to monitor.
- I listen to a talking radio station rather than music. When I'm high, music really feeds my emotions in a destructive way.
- The pull to fantasize and spend hours daydreaming is incredibly strong. Again, something like Radio 4 or TV soaps are good at blocking this desire, but it takes a lot of determination. I've nothing against fantasy when I'm stable, but it takes on an enmeshing quality when I feel high and its good for me to avoid fantasy under these circumstances.

- I try not to do too much socializing especially as when I'm high all the wrong people can end up looking like my favourite pin up.
- Medium length walks can be very centering, particularly if I try and notice mundane things around me like people's gardens.
- I try never to act on 'great' ideas. If the urge is strong, I discuss them with a sensible friend who has known me for a long time.

What I do when I'm feeling low:

Depression is, for me is more common experience and I've built up strong ways of dealing with it. I try and take action as soon as I feel depressed.



- I keep a 'pleasure' list and a 'displeasure' list to try and use them to build up cheering activities and minimize depressing activities where possible.
- I get out of commitments I find too tiring while trying very hard to hold onto commitments I can manage, because structure is helpful.
- I stop listening to the news and watching depressing documentaries on radio and television. Instead, I make a point of trying to watch comedies – the sillier the better.
- I try and take 15 minutes exercise every day. Usually just a walk around the block.

- I have, for some time kept an index file of cards on which I've written extracts from various books. When I'm low I pick out cards that are meaningful and encouraging to how I feel, and I read them every morning.
- I sometimes write a list of chores as I do them, even the minor things. It gives me a sense of achievement and stops me feeling that I've done nothing all day.
- I try and always answer the phone.
- I write notes about specific worries, fears and feelings and I stick them on the door. It stops me blanketing everything with "I'm depressed." It seems that when my problems are on the door, I can keep in touch with them without having to think about them all the time or alternatively without trying to ignore them. It also helps me prioritize.
- I make an effort to look after myself, keeping warm enough and getting to bed at a reasonable time so I don't feel wrecked the next day. I also try and eat regularly and in response to hunger. I hate putting on more weight, but I always do when I'm depressed, and I've learnt to accept it.
- When I'm particularly upset about an event, I write about it to work it out of my system.
- I try and remember that coming out of a depression takes time and I need patience.

Everyone's experience is different.

OTHER EXPERIENCES
BEYOND HEARING VOICES

Your experience is real and valid.

There are many ways people can experience the world.
These experiences can occur in different mental health conditions –
or sometimes in people with no mental illness.



SEEING THINGS
Seeing people, shapes, shadows, lights, or scenes that others don't see.



FEELING THINGS
Sensation on or under the skin, tingling, pressure, pain or movement that others don't feel.



SMELLING OR TASTING THINGS
Smelling or tasting odours or flavours that others can't detect.



HEARING SOUNDS
Hearing music, buzzing, whispers, ringing or other sounds instead of voices.



SENSE OF PRESENCE
Feeling that someone is nearby or watching, even when no one is there.



THOUGHT BROADCASTING
Feeling as though others can hear or know your thoughts.



THOUGHT INSERTION
Feeling that thoughts have been placed into your mind by an outside force.



THOUGHT WITHDRAWAL
Feeling that thoughts are being taken away or removed from your mind.



DELUSIONS OF REFERENCE
Believing that TV, radio, social media, or strangers are sending you personal messages.



PARANOIA
Feeling watched, followed, spied on or targeted in some way.



GRANDIOSE BELIEFS
Believing you have special powers, abilities or an important mission.



PASSIVITY EXPERIENCES
Feeling that your actions, emotions, or body are being controlled by an outside force.



DEREALISATION
Feeling that the world around you seems unreal, distant or dreamlike.



DEPERSONALISATION
Feeling detached from yourself, as if you're observing yourself from the outside.



INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS
Unwanted, repetitive thoughts that feel difficult to dismiss.



DISSOCIATION
Feeling disconnected from your thoughts, memories, identity or surroundings.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE (IF YOU CHOOSE TO SHARE)

- What experiences have you had besides hearing voices?
- Have you ever experienced unusual sights, smells, sensations, or a strong sense of presence?
- Have you ever felt that your thoughts or perceptions worked differently from those around you?
- Which experiences have been the hardest to explain to other people?
- What has helped you make sense of these experiences?
- What do you wish mental health professionals understood about your experiences?





YOU ARE NOT ALONE.
Your experiences matter. You deserve to be heard, respected and supported – exactly as you are.



Be kind to yourself.
Take what you need.
One step at a time.

This is general information, not a diagnosis. If you are concerned about your mental health, please reach out to a trusted professional.

Defusion: How to Detangle from Thoughts & Feelings

Do you ever feel as if your thoughts dictate how your day goes?
Or how you interact with others?
Does it sometimes feel exhausting trying to shut off your thoughts?

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), poses an interesting idea for thoughts; instead of trying to change, fight, or repress our inner experiences (e.g., thoughts, emotions, sensations, etc.), we can focus on changing how we relate to them.

Our minds tell us different stories because that's what minds do. Using an ACT framework, the content of the thought is not problematic, it's how we relate to it that can create a problem.

For example, if a person has the thought "I'm useless," and is completely fused with it (i.e., giving it their full attention, believing it, getting caught up in it), then they might feel sad or bad about themselves and avoid doing things that are important and/or meaningful to them.

When we are fused with our thoughts, we might believe them as an absolute truth thus, thoughts dictate/rule our behaviour. Believing thoughts such as "I'm useless" is not helpful and it will not be conducive to living as we want.

Additionally, while fused with our thoughts/emotions, we have difficulty separating them from reality and our direct experience; which leads to labelling, evaluating, categorizing, judging, comparing, etc. On the contrary, viewing thoughts for what they are (i.e., passing words, pictures, sensations), facilitates letting them go and being able to be present and focus on your broader experience. This is what the skill of defusion is essentially about.

What is defusion?

Defusion is a skill or technique that is primarily used to detach, separate, or get some distance from our thoughts and emotions. Please note that when we use the word 'thought' it also encompasses other internal experiences such as beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, memories, etc.

Cognitive defusion is:

- Looking *at* thoughts rather than from thoughts
- Noticing thoughts rather than becoming caught up in thoughts
- Letting thoughts come and go rather than holding on to them

"You cannot stop the waves, but you can learn to surf"

The aim of defusion is to:

- Decrease our attachment to our inner experiences

- Reduce the believability of thoughts
- Decrease the influence of thoughts on our behaviours and experiences
- Increase our ability to be present and take effective action
- Facilitate psychological flexibility

With defusion techniques you do not battle difficult thoughts, instead, you choose how much attention you pay to them. It also helps to ask yourself:

- Is holding on to this thought/belief helpful?
- Is doing so causing me suffering or keeping me from being effective?
- Am I being pushed around by my thoughts?

These questions aid in better understanding the workability concept. This is assessing if what we are doing is working to live a meaningful life, and it's also choosing to take action based on what works instead of what is true.

Here is an experiential example to better understand the concepts of fusion and defusion.

How Defusion Works: Hands as Thoughts Metaphor

Put your hands together, palms facing upwards, as if they were pages on an open book. Imagine that your hands are your thoughts. Now, slowly raise your hands up toward your face until you are covering your eyes and can only see through the gaps of your fingers.

Take a look around and notice how this impacts your view and connection with your environment.

Notice it is difficult to see much other than your hands (thoughts), so what would it be like to go through your day this way? Would you be limited or miss out on things? Would it be challenging to respond to others or the world around you?

This is a good representation of fusion. We become so entangled with our thoughts that we get disconnected from our environment and the present (here and now) experience. Similarly, our thoughts also have a big impact on our behaviour and capacity to be effective.

Now, slowly begin lowering your hands and notice the difference.

Notice as the distance from your hands (thoughts) and your eyes increase, you are able to take in more information and it is easier to connect with others or your environment.

This is a good representation *of* defusion. Your hands (thoughts) are still there, and you can look at them without becoming entangled with them. If the thoughts are useful/workable you may use them; if they are not, you notice them and let them sit there. This aids in becoming flexible and taking effective behaviour.

Defusion Techniques

You may feel silly at first but these defusion techniques work. Try them and see for yourself. You can use whichever technique or techniques work for you. These are not meant to be done in order.

1. **Just Noticing**

   Saying to yourself "I notice I'm having a thought of…"

   You may use labels to describe your inner experience. For example, "there is that 'I'm unlovable' thought," or "I see you [mind] catastrophizing again," etc.

2. **Thanking the Mind**

   Telling your mind "Thanks for the feedback," or "Thank you for this interesting thought" when having difficult thoughts.

   It aids if you do it in a somewhat sarcastic manner so that you don't take your thoughts too seriously. Remember that your goal is to change your relationship to our thoughts.

3. **Mindful Watching**

   Looking at your thoughts with curiosity and openness, just noticing how they come and go

(flow), without attempting to control or change them.

Here is a helpful exercise for mindful watching using imagery: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1C8hwj5LXw

4. **Repeating the Thought**

   Use a silly voice when repeating the thoughts out loud (e.g., using Bugs Bunny's voice), sing your thoughts, or repeat the thoughts out loud and over and over until only sound remains.

Who would benefit from defusion skills?

Anyone who struggles with recurring 'negative' thoughts, or thoughts that significantly impact mood and behaviour.

Defusion is a particularly helpful technique for those who struggle with depressive and anxiety symptoms. Furthermore, this actually is a skill that is useful for anyone, regardless of having or not having a psychological condition, as it is not uncommon to get tangled up and fused with our thoughts from time to time.

Dr. Jonice Webb

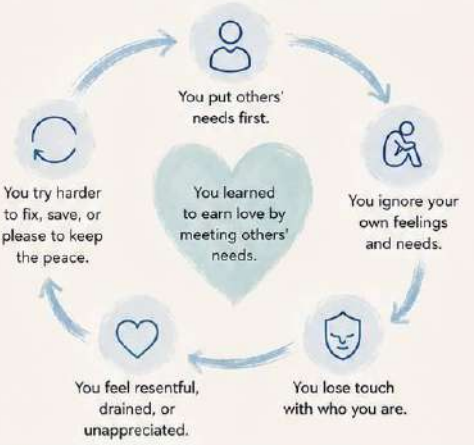
CHILDHOOD EMOTIONAL NEGLECT and Codependent Relationships

When your emotional needs were overlooked in childhood, you may have learned to **focus on others instead of yourself.** **This can lead to codependent patterns in relationships.**

These patterns once helped you survive.
But they can keep you from the connection and fulfillment you truly deserve.

> "You are not too much.
> You were not the problem.
> *You were not given enough.*"

THE CYCLE OF CODEPENDENCY



SIGNS YOU MAY STRUGGLE WITH CODEPENDENT PATTERNS

- You feel responsible for other people's feelings and choices.
- You have a hard time saying no.
- You ignore red flags to avoid conflict or abandonment.
- You feel anxious when others pull away or are upset with you.
- You often feel unimportant or taken for granted.
- You stay in relationships that leave you feeling empty or unseen.

A NEW WAY FORWARD

- Notice your feelings and value them.
- Learn to care for yourself with compassion.
- Set boundaries that honor your needs.
- Build healthier, more reciprocal relationships.
- Reconnect with your worth and your voice.

Healing from Childhood Emotional Neglect helps you break free from old patterns and create relationships where you are seen, valued, and respected, just as you are.

You deserve relationships that feel safe, supportive, and real.

You deserve you.

emotionalneglect.com

Empowerment
What are two words that start with “ch” and end with “ces”?
Both have seven letters
One you make and one you take:
CHOICES AND CHANCES

We have many choices in life. It is up to us to make each one. We may feel that we have no choices left: yet we must exercise our power to choose. We can choose our attitude and our thoughts. We have more freedom than we may realize. We can choose good for our lives or stay in the same routine. Sometimes by not choosing, we are making a choice to stick with what we know best.

Taking chances is a part of life. We all have a different risk tolerance and need to be able to accept these consequences of the chances we take. Some of us are more of a risk taker – it is a matter of time till we get bitten by our chances. We need to be careful.

Others of us may have gotten stuck in a negative rut. We need to take some action to take a chance, perhaps leave the house or talk to someone. Feel and be empowered with the choices you make and the chances you take. Intend to have good consequences in your life.

Live with the consequences of your choices. Consider the cost, seek the counsel of others that you trust to help you

with decisions. Learn to gain more independence in your life to look after yourself. Remember the power you have with every choice you make and every chance you take.

You deserve good in your life. Don't get stuck in a rut – make choices and take a chance on getting out of your rut – if you are in one. Is there anything holding you back form accepting good in your life? Is there something that you need to let go of? Learn to grow and cultivate good in your life. Cultivate good thoughts. Be kind to yourself with the choices you make and the chances you take.



How Much Conflict to Tolerate in Relationships

A GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WITH Childhood Emotional Neglect



If your emotional needs were often overlooked growing up, you may have learned to avoid conflict, tolerate too much, or blame yourself when things feel off. Learning the difference between healthy conflict and harmful patterns can help you protect your self-respect and build safer, more fulfilling relationships.

The goal is not to avoid all conflict. The goal is to stay in connection without abandoning yourself.

CONFLICT IS NORMAL

All relationships have differences. Healthy conflict is part of growth and connection when both people feel safe, respected, and heard.

CONFLICT BECOMES HARMFUL WHEN IT...

- Leaves you feeling anxious, ashamed, or unseen
- Turns into blame, contempt, or name-calling
- Is used to control, silence, or punish
- Gets repetitive with no willingness to repair
- Makes you doubt your worth, reality, or memory
- You are walking on eggshells most of the time

A HELPFUL GUIDE: WHEN TO TOLERATE VS. WHEN TO SET A BOUNDARY

YOU CAN TOLERATE IT WHEN...

- It's a one-time incident, not a pattern
- It's a minor annoyance, not a core value
- The person takes responsibility and repairs
- It doesn't leave you feeling small or unsafe
- You can bring it up and feel heard
- It's something you can let go of without resentment building

Choose your peace. Not everything needs a reaction.



IT'S TIME TO SET A BOUNDARY WHEN...

- It happens repeatedly and drains you
- You've asked for change, but nothing shifts
- It disrespects your feelings, needs, or limits
- You feel anxious, tense, or on edge often
- You abandon your needs to keep the peace
- It chips away at your self-respect

A boundary is not punishment. It's self-respect in action.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- Am I being honest with myself about how this makes me feel?
- Is this conflict helping us grow closer or pulling us further apart?
- Do I feel safe, respected, and valued in this relationship?
- Have I been ignoring my needs or hoping they will change?
- What do I need right now to feel supported and at ease?

WHAT YOU DESERVE

- You deserve to be heard without being belittled.
- You deserve kindness even during disagreements.
- You deserve relationships where you can be yourself.
- You deserve peace as much as you give.

A GENTLE REMINDER

If you grew up with Childhood Emotional Neglect, it can be hard to know what is too much to tolerate. The more you listen to your feelings and honor your needs, the easier it becomes to trust yourself, set loving boundaries, and create relationships where you feel safe, seen, and valued.

YOU ARE LEARNING A NEW WAY

Trust yourself. Honor your needs. You are allowed to choose you.

Helping Someone Who Is Paranoid

You may be able to tell when someone is paranoid. The person may accuse others of trying to harm him or her or may look around fearfully. The person may talk about protecting himself or herself from attack.

Here are ways to help the person who is paranoid:

- Don't argue. Ask questions about the person's fears and talk to the person about the paranoia if the person wants to listen to you.
- Use simple directions, if needed. Tell the person that no harm will come to him or her and that you can help. For example, "Sit down, and let's talk about it."
- Give the person enough personal space so that he or she does not feel trapped or surrounded. Stay with the person but at a distance that is comfortable for him or her and you. Stay more than an arm's reach away.
- Call for help if you think anyone is in danger.
- Move the person away from the cause of the fear or from noise and activity, if possible. Ask the person to tell you what is

causing the fear. Make a direct statement that you are not afraid.

- Focus the person on what is real.
- Tell the person everything you are going to do before you do it. For example, "I'm going take out my cell phone."

To help with situations that may cause paranoia:

- Help the person avoid things he or she fears. For example, if the person is afraid of dogs, avoid them.
- Keep lights turned on if the person tells you that this makes him or her less scared.
- Talk about the person's fears when he or she is not paranoid and make a plan for handling the fears when they occur.
- Help the person make a list of his or her fears. At the end, consider asking the person to write, "These things are not going to hurt me. They will go away if I seek help." Don't insist that the person does this. Doing so may make the person include you as part of the paranoid belief.

How to Distract Yourself from Difficult Emotions

There are a number of things you can try to distract yourself. Listed below are some common distraction techniques.

- Call or write a letter to a good friend or family member.
- Count backward from a large number by sevens or some other number (for example, 856, 849, 842, 835, etc.).
- Do some chores, such as cleaning the house, doing laundry, or washing dishes.
- Do something creative. Draw a picture or build a model.
- Exercise.
- Focus your attention on your environment. Name all the colours in the room. Try to memorize and recall all the objects that you see in a room.
- Go out shopping (even if it is just window shopping).
- Practice mindfulness. Focus on your breathing.
- Read a good book or watch a funny movie.
- Take part in a fun and challenging game that requires some level of attention, such as a crossword puzzle or Sudoku.

Travel & Voice Hearing

You can explore the world and look after your mental health.

Travel can be exciting, meaningful and a chance for new experiences. Changes in routine, stress, jet lag and unfamiliar environments can sometimes make voices louder or more frequent. Planning ahead and using your coping tools can help you feel more confident and in control.



TIPS FOR TRAVELLING WITH VOICES

1. PLAN YOUR MEDICATION

Take enough medication for your whole trip, plus extra in case of delays. Keep it in your carry-on luggage with you at all times.

2. PRIORITISE SLEEP

Jet lag and lack of sleep can increase distress from voices. Adjust gradually to the new time zone and rest whenever you can.

3. KEEP A ROUTINE

Eat regular meals, stay hydrated and maintain parts of your normal daily routine where you can.

4. KNOW YOUR TRIGGERS

Airports, crowds, sensory overload or travel stress can affect some people. Have a plan for managing these situations.

5. PACK YOUR COPING TOOLS

Noise-cancelling headphones, calming music, grounding objects, fidget tools, audiobooks or mindfulness apps can help.

6. STAY CONNECTED

Let a trusted friend or family member know your itinerary and check in with them if needed.

7. HAVE A CRISIS PLAN

Know who you would contact if you became overwhelmed, and keep important phone numbers easily accessible.

8. BE KIND TO YOURSELF

It's okay to take breaks, spend quiet time at your accommodation, or change your plans if you need to.

9. ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE

Many people who hear voices travel successfully. Hearing voices doesn't mean you can't explore the world.

TRAVEL CAN ALSO HAVE POSITIVE EFFECTS

- New environments can bring fresh perspective
- Enjoyable activities and experiences boost mood
- Nature and exploration can be grounding
- Meeting new people can build connection
- You may find more confidence in yourself

Your voice hearing is just one part of you. It doesn't define your journey.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What helps your voices stay in the background when you're away from home?

What would help you feel confident enough to travel while hearing voices?

OTHER REMINDERS

- [ ] Stay hydrated
- [ ] Eat nourishing food
- [ ] Limit alcohol and other substances
- [ ] Allow extra time for airports and transport
- [ ] Listen to your body and your voices
- [ ] Ask for support when you need it

You deserve adventure, connection and joy. Wherever you go, take care of you.

You are stronger than you think.

Communicate with your voices

Changing how you communicate with your voices might help you:

- Feel like you have more control over them
- Build a more positive relationship with them
- Stop them having as much power over your life

It's not always easy to communicate with your voices, especially if they're controlling or aggressive. There are different approaches you can try, depending on the type of voice and how you're feeling.

Challenge your voices

This may help you feel more in control. You could try to:

- Stand up to them – tell them they have no power over you
- Be assertive – imagine what you'd say or do if you weren't afraid of your voices and practice until that feels more natural
- Ignore their commands or threats – tell them you're not going to listen or do what they say

Be kind to your voices

Sometimes it's more helpful to treat your voices with kindness and compassion.

- Ask them what they need – trying to understand them may help you feel more in control
- Remember where they come from – angry or frightening voices may be coming from a place of fear, pain or trauma
- Thank them for trying to keep you safe by reminding you of your fears – but tell them you're not going to listen right now
- Practise treating them kindly – it may feel hard at first, but after time it can become more natural
- Be kind to yourself about what they're saying – if your voices are saying things you find offensive remember it isn't a reflection of who you are

React neutrally to your voices

Sometimes, reacting neutrally to voices can be the most helpful way to communicate with them. You could try to:

- Acknowledge what they say without agreeing or disagreeing
- Use neutral phrases to reply, for example, ‘okay' or 'sure’
- Keep your responses short and simple
- Distract yourself and get on with your day once you've responded

Negotiate with your voices

It may help to set boundaries with your voices. You could try to:

- Give your voices times when you'll pay attention – and when you won't
- Tell them you'd like to wait before you do what they say
- Gradually spend less time on your voices, building this up each day
- Set alarms or timers to limit the time you spend on your voices

Communicate in your own way

There's no right or wrong way to communicate with your voices. You could try to:

- Practice ignoring the voices you don't like and focusing on ones you find easier to listen to – this can get easier with time
- Speak aloud to your voices – if you're in public, you might find speaking into your phone helps separate the voice and gives you something physical to speak to
- Journal or write down your responses to your voices, if writing things down works best for you
- Switch how you communicate depending on the voice – some voices might be easier to challenge, and some better to ignore
- Use creative activities like art or music – this may help you express your voices in a way that feels separate from yourself
- Go at your own pace – it's ok to go slowly and take whatever time you need

Social Anxiety & Voice Hearing

You are not alone. You are more than your voices.

HOW THEY CAN AFFECT EACH OTHER

Voices may criticize, mock, or predict that others are judging you.

The fear of embarrassment can make social situations feel overwhelming.

Crowded or noisy places can make voices seem louder or harder to ignore.

Avoiding social situations may bring short-term relief but can increase anxiety and isolation over time.



YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Many people who hear voices also experience social anxiety.

It is real, it is valid, and support can make a big difference.



STRATEGIES THAT CAN HELP

PREPARE
Plan ahead. Think of a few conversation starters or identify a quiet place to take a break if needed.

GROUND
Use your senses or focus on your breathing to stay in the present.

RESPOND
Remind yourself: "These are my voices speaking—they don't get to decide what I do."

CONNECT
Spend time with people who are kind, accepting, and make you feel safe.

TAKE SMALL STEPS
Build confidence gradually. Try staying at an event for 10 minutes before deciding to leave.

GET SUPPORT
Talk to a mental health professional. CBT and ACT can help build skills and confidence.

You don't have to wait for the voices or anxiety to disappear before living your life.

Courage is taking the next small step, even when they're still there.

LET'S TALK

How has social anxiety affected your experience of hearing voices? What has helped you feel more confident or connected with other people?

Yoga Section

Welcome back to our embodied journey through the chakras. Apologies for the lack of music from the last month – it was not included as we went to press and therefore you guys missed out on a very useful song. If you're interested to revisit muladhara chakra, please refer to last month's newsletter and follow this link to listen to the accompanying music.

Now we're all caught up, where were we?

Ah, yes, *swadisthana* chakra. This is one of the most difficult for people with traumatic experiences to balances as it references personal identity, sexuality and creativity. Located in the pelvis in the reproductive organs, this particular chakra is often unbalanced for those dealing with paranoid experiences as we know they are frequently caused by sexual abuse. This abuse can have long term if not lifetime consequences, from whatever age it was encountered. People who experience sexual abuse often suffer an ego death – a sort of dissolution of personal identity as a survival response to that particular invasion.

And those are just the emotional consequences. If we look purely at the physical, the long-term disease associated with sexual assault can be STIs, UTIs, pelvic inflammatory disorder, ED, vaginismus – all diseases that doctors often link to the emotional side of such a cataclysmically destructive trauma but often have route causes in disruption to the microbiome, which without proper care can last for decades. In both men and women.

It's with no small amount of trepidation I share my own experience here and that following multiple assaults I have had to spend years battling and self-treating endless infections and imbalances.

The residual genetic and micro biotic material create a long-term bond to your attacker which cause you to lose a part of your own identity. This is backed up in quantum physics where particles that vibrate at the same frequency share information over any distance or time, creating a long-term psychic link to the person who has harmed you. It is my belief that no rapist is in good health and that the desire to and the act of rape is caused by disease – but that the action needs long term quarantine.

Finding your own personal style, likes, dislikes and the felt sense of your own individuality is a battle that all victims know. Paranoid experiences is often a very common symptom afterwards and can last for the rest of our lives.

Yoga, and many branches of yoga tantra do not recommend practice for people with severe disturbances like these. In fact, with the psychiatric medications and mood-swings they often actively recommend *against* a yogic practice. This is what lead me into a mixed modality that combines non-dual tantra with therapy. We need extra special care. My "aha" moment came a few years ago, when, like many adults, I realised that I could not remember a lot of my childhood and that under advisement of my therapist I began to look after myself as though something very disturbing had occurred in early childhood.

I'm offering that to you now. If you don't have any adult trauma (although I doubt it) and can't remember if anything happened to you in early childhood I want you to start for the next whole month, to choose to treat yourself as though "something bad happened".

For me, this was a practice that changed my attitude to work (choosing to take time off to integrate and heal and accept a basic stipend on benefits), to self-care (making sure I prioritised my body needs), to family (saying no whenever I felt off) and even to household chores (buying a cleaning robot to making sure the floors are always clean.)

Sometimes this can be hard to think for yourself what it is that you need so it might be easier to think of a friend or someone you care about and ask?

If this person was this injured, what do they need?

- What foods are good for them to eat?
- How much sleep do they need?
- Do they need any medical intervention for their mental or physical health?
- What brings them joy in their day?
- Are they showing any signs of physical or emotional discomfort?
- And what might alleviate that?
- Do I need to call someone else who can help take care of them?

Now let's bring the "I" back in -

- What foods do I need to eat to nourish my body?
- How much sleep do I need / am I getting enough sleep?
- Do I need to see a doctor? Is there anything over-the-counter that can treat my symptoms?
- Am I doing enough things to bring me joy?
- Am I actually happy?
- And if not, how can I cheer myself up?
- Should I call a friend?

Using Embodied Flow ™ to metabolise difficult emotions in swadhistana

As a watery chakra, movement can often be fluid and gentle but also you might find at any moment areas of stuckness where trauma is held. This can be a triggering area, but a very expansive place to move from.

Practice

Stand feet hip distance and soften the knees
Feel your weight sink through your hips and legs into the feet
Imagine a waterfall pouring from above your crown through your body, into the pelvic bowl and trickling down the legs into the earth
Start to pour from that bowl by tipping the pelvis slowly forward and backwards

Play this song here →

And keep that tipping motion, like a standing cat-cow, inhaling as we pour the pelvis forward, exhaling as we pull it back in

Stay in this motion for as long as you need, and as big as you need
If more variation or different movement comes in – let it for the duration of this song

At the end of the song take a moment to journal or note at least one observation about how you feel now, and who you are with the statement:

My name is _____ and I am _____.

After that practice I feel _____.

Spend a moment breathing silently, before coming back to the room around you.

I hope this helps!

Love, Jazmin

jazminali.com

If you love micropractices like these you can visit my Amazon Author page and purchase activity books with colouring pages, meditations, yoga prompts, puzzles and more!

Embarrassing Situations with Voice Hearing

You're not alone. You're not weak. You're human.

Hearing voices can lead to moments that feel awkward, embarrassing, or confusing—especially when others don't understand what's happening.
It's okay. Many people experience this.



EXAMPLES OF EMBARRASSING SITUATIONS

- Responding out loud to a voice without realising others can hear
- Laughing, reacting, or becoming emotional during conversations because of something the voices said
- Difficulty concentrating in meetings, classes, or social settings
- Looking distracted or appearing to "zone out"
- Voices commenting on personal or private things in public
- Feeling unsure whether something was said externally or internally
- Asking people to repeat themselves multiple times because voices interrupted attention
- Avoiding social situations out of fear the voices might become louder or more distressing
- Feeling exposed when voices say critical, sexual, aggressive, or humiliating things
- Worrying others will judge, misunderstand, or label the experience
- Trying to hide coping strategies (like humming, using headphones, grounding techniques, or self-talk)

THE EMBARRASSMENT OFTEN COMES LESS FROM THE VOICES, AND MORE FROM:

- stigma
- fear of judgement
- misunderstanding from others
- pressure to appear "normal"

Having unusual experiences does not make you weak, dangerous, unintelligent, or broken.

Many people live meaningful, connected, professional, and creative lives while hearing voices.

You can too.



HELPFUL WAYS TO MANAGE EMBARRASSING SITUATIONS

- Have a trusted explanation ready ("Sorry, I got distracted for a second")
- Use grounding tools discreetly (breathing, 5 senses, counting)
- Wear earbuds/ headphones in public
- Build self-compassion instead of shame
- Connect with other voice hearers
- Learn patterns and triggers of voices
- Choose carefully who feels safe to disclose to

The more shame decreases, the less power embarrassment often has.

REMEMBER

- You are not alone.
- Your experiences are valid.
- It is not your fault.
- You deserve respect, understanding, and support.

Be kind to yourself. You're doing the best you can.

YOU MATTER

Voices can be challenging.
But you are still you.
Your life has value.
Your story isn't over.

There is hope. There is help. There is recovery.

You are more than your experiences. You are a whole person.
Keep connecting. Keep going. You are not alone.

NEED SUPPORT?

Reach out to a trusted person, peer support service, or mental health professional.
You don't have to do this alone.

This is a story of a boy named Ben who had a difficult childhood, he didn't tell his parents what was happening and he then started to hear voices. It has been made by the Melissa Roberts Foundation in Sydney Australia and the National Paranoia Network UK

: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cJ2yl5grLKiO_iVL3EXhDyEf7lHRGXni/view?usp=drive_link

Maastricht INTERVIEW FOR PROBLEMATIC THOUGHTS, BELIEFS & PARANOIA



MAYFAIR COMMUNITY CENTRE
CHURCH STRETTON, ENGLAND

WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER – THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER
9:30 AM – 4:30 PM

OVERVIEW

Join us in Maastricht for a professional, in-person training event exploring tricky thoughts, beliefs, and paranoia. This event offers an opportunity to learn from leading experts, engage in meaningful discussion, and develop a deeper understanding of complex thinking patterns in a supportive and respectful environment.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Engage in meaningful discussions about tricky and confusing thought patterns
- Learn from world leading experts in the field of paranoia and problematic beliefs
- Share insights and experiences in a supportive and respectful environment
- Gain practical perspectives to better understand and make sense of your own experiences

ABOUT THE EVENT

Join the Maastricht Interview for Problematic Thoughts, Beliefs, and Paranoia

Looking to understand and explore thought patterns that might be tricky or confusing? This in-person event in Maastricht is your chance to dive deep into how we think, especially when paranoia and unusual beliefs pop up.

The training is offered in a supportive environment which allows us to chat , learn from world leading experts, and share insights with others interested in the challenging topics of Paranoia and Problematic Beliefs.

Don't miss out on this eye-opening experience with Peter Bullimore and his team, in partnership with Neuro SENter.

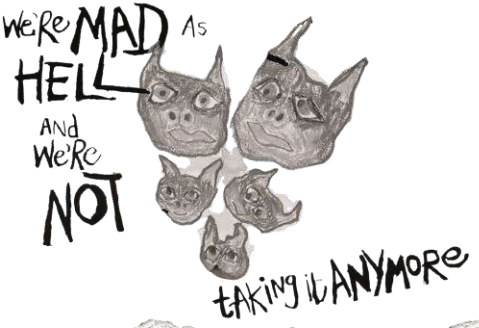
BOOK YOUR PLACE!

TICKETS & INFO:
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/maastricht-interview-for-problematic-thoughts-beliefs-and-paranoia-tickets-1986715969947?aff=ebdssbdestsearch

Come as you are. Leave with new perspectives. Let's explore the mind—together.

Asylum

the radical mental health magazine



"Makes any other mental health magazine look like Women's Weekly"
-Dolly Sen, activist, artist, and author of DSM69

"One of the most consistently thought-provoking voices on mental health in the UK... And still a bit Punk."
-Vaughan Bell

- What: We publish voices that the system ignores. Your perspective is the substance of this magazine.
- Who: We welcome contributions from service users, survivors, activists, friends, family members and frontline workers.
- Content: Critiques, poetry, creative writing, artwork, cartoons, and personal experiences regarding mental health policy and practice.
- Privacy: Contributions can remain anonymous.
- Support: Email us at editors@asylummagazine.org.

Since 1986, Asylum Magazine has provided a forum for discussing mental health politics, practice, and policy, influenced by democratic psychiatry and progressive social movements, including psychiatric survivor and Mad liberation movements.

Design by Maximilian Pogrzeba, adapting Nicola Field's art cover for Asylum Winter 2025.

Asylum Magazine is volunteer-run, and not-for-profit. We depend on your support and subscriptions.

Receive the magazine in hard copy or digital via PCCS Books:
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Visit asylummagazine.org to access back issues and sample articles for free.


Every person
is a story
Copenhagen 2026
17 & 18 November
Intervoice
World Hearing Voices
Congress

Manchester Hearing Voices Group

Thursday 3pm -4.30pm with Paul

Meeting ID 88460268952 Password 375878

Sundays: HVN USA on ZOOM 6:30p - 8:00p USA Time with Cindee.

11.30pm – 1.00 am UK Time Meeting ID 827 5463 8654 No Password Needed

Saturdays Texas USA HVN Meeting on ZOOM

10am-11.30 USA Time with Paul

4pm-5.30pm UK Time

Meeting ID 85737775621 No Password Needed

Families/friends can contact families@usahearingvoices.org for support groups.

Sheffield Hearing Voices & Paranoia Support Group.
The group runs face to face every Monday
11.00am-12.00pm at the Gardner's Rest
105 Neepsend Lane,
Sheffield S3 8AT
Contact peterbullimore@yahoo.co.uk Tel 0759083769

Online Hearing Voices Group in Ireland

An online group for people who hear voices or experience paranoia and unusual beliefs. Please contact derekpwalsh.dw@gmail.com for further information. The group meet every Sunday at 6.15pm over Zoom.

The group link https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81086179561

Unusual beliefs group St Mungo's

Every Thursday 2.30-3.30

93 Shirland Road, London W9 2EL

Contact Helen Claire Taylor (tayloh15@lsbu.ac.uk)

Hearing Voices Group – Hull & East Yorkshire
Every first Monday of the month

- 11:00am – 1:00pm
- Townend Court (Old Building), Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 8QR

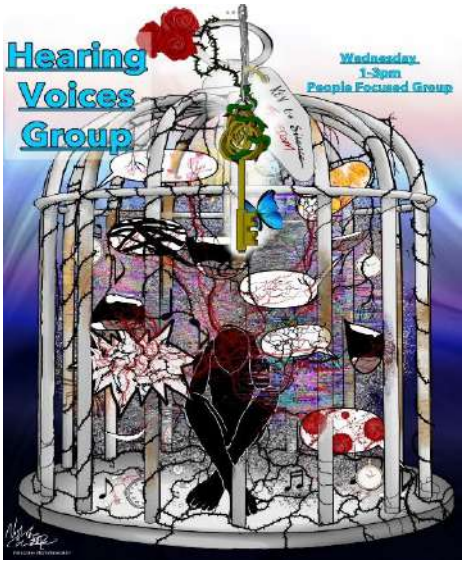
The group is open to any adult who hears voices or has similar sensory experiences and follows Hearing Voices Network principles. Sessions are non-clinical and focused on shared understanding and peer support.

- Maximum group size: 12 people per session
- Ages 18+
- Booking required in advance, session by session

- Book via the Humber Recovery College website once registered: https://humberrecoverycollege.nhs.uk

📞 For enquiries or help with booking: 01482 335959
This group replaces the previous "Talking Heads" listing for Hull.

Doncaster Hearing Voices Group
The Wellness Centre
45 Montrose Avenue
Intake
Doncaster
DN2 6PL
Tel: 01302618507



The MuslimVoice.org.uk
At The Muslim Voice UK, we strive to be a dynamic and inclusive platform amplifying the voices, stories, and perspectives of Muslims across the world (we've had attendees from Colorado).
Our mission is to foster understanding within and beyond Muslim communities, challenge stereotypes, and ensure that authentic narratives are heard from a mental health perspective. The Muslim Voice UK invites you to engage, explore, and connect.
Join us. Be part of a movement where voices are heard, stories matter, and change begins.

Info@themuslimvoice.org.uk

Tennessee Voices and Paranoia Collective
Meeting location: Nashville Public Library Bellevue Branch,
720 Baugh Rd,
Nashville,
TN, 37221
Time: Tuesdays at 3:30 starting on March 4th.

The group will be a hybrid meeting. Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83043345272?pwd=QkVETKEJ5lZtVz32kUa6xXMWvazdpE.1

Meeting ID: 830 4334 5272
Passcode: 095416

Brave Brothers is a community-led organization with a mission to **redefine men's mental health and wellness**, placing emphasis on suicide prevention, domestic and family violence awareness, and holistic well-being inclusive of voice hearers. The charity strives to **break down stigma**, promote healthy mindsets, and advocate for integrating mental health into overall wellness. All of this underpins their broader goal of advancing health, social, and community welfare.

The Brave Brothers motto reflects a proactive, compassionate stance: **"listening to and working with men... before it's too late."** bravebrothers.org

