

# Part Two: An Introduction to Accepting Voices

Hearing distressing voices is one of the most common experiences of people diagnosed with a psychotic disorder. Research has shown that many people continue to hear voices even after prolonged use of medication. As a consequence, people who hear voices commonly live lives that are low in quality and high in distress. In the last two decades, voices hearers around the world, working with understanding allies, have organised, to bring together ideas and strategies for a more effective response to these difficulties.

This course has been designed to bring these ideas and strategies to practitioners, voices hearers, family members and friends, so you can understand the experience of hearing voices and interventions that can be used to enable the voice hearers to take control of their experience.

*“...to assist people to cope we should not give them therapy that does not work. We should let people decide for themselves what helps or not. It takes time for people to accept that hearing voices is something that belongs to them.”* **Professor Marius Romme**

This is Part Two of a two part course. Part One concerns the development of the hearing voices movement and the underpinning values and theories that inform the hearing voices approach. This part of the course focuses on the research and practice of accepting and working with voices and considers ways in which you can introduce them into your life or workplace. Today in twenty-six countries across the world, voice hearers, nurses, psychiatrists and psychologists are developing techniques to assist people who hear voices focus on their experience, get to know their voices better and learn to cope with them.

This course provides an introduction to the hearing voices approach, a challenging and innovative way of working with people who hear voices. This approach takes the position that it is no longer sustainable to think of hearing voices as part of a disease, such as schizophrenia. Instead, it is argued that hearing voices should be regarded as a meaningful real, although sometimes painful, fearful or overwhelming experience, that speaks to the person in a metaphorical way about their lives, emotions and environments.

The course will provide an overview of the important work and an introduction to a different way of thinking about the meaning of “hearing voices” based on twenty-five years of work by voice hearers and mental health workers and researchers from around the world, including the pioneering work of the psychiatrist Professor Marius Romme and Dr. Sandra Escher.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Develop an awareness of what it feels like to hear voices.
- Explore why do people hear voices?
- Examine the theory and practice around accepting voices.
- Learn about ways to support someone who is finding their voices overwhelming – or if a voice hearer know what to do when voices are overwhelming.
- Explore the approach of structuring contact with voices.
- Gain a firm foundation on how to work with voices.
- Develop confidence so you can start supporting a voice hearer or for voice hearers to better understand your experience and decide what to do next.

## Outline of the Course

**Module 1** – What do Voices Mean?

**Module 2** – What to do about Voices that causes Problems

**Module 3** – Assisting people who Hear Voices in their Recovery Journey

**Module 4** – Involving Family Members and Friends

**Module 5** – Working with Voices

**Module 6** – Introducing the Hearing Voices Approach into your Life / Workplace

The course will take students up to **29 hours** to complete, please see below for breakdown of this time.

## Course Description

Module	Description	Length
<b><u>Module 1</u></b> <b>What do Voices Mean?</b>	<p>In this module, we provide an introduction to the major themes and issues raised by the hearing voices approach and their relevance to the lives of people who hear voices. The module looks at the overview of the philosophy; research and practice; core concepts and values that underpin the hearing voices approach; explore what makes this approach so distinctive. By the end of this module you will have developed a theoretical understanding of the hearing voices approach and how it can be applied in your life an Hearing voices is not generally talked about because it is thought of as a socially stigmatising and unwanted experience. Because of these prevailing attitudes, it is important to point out that this has by no means always been the case. In fact there are many people who hear voices who can cope with their voices and regard them as a positive part of their lives. Neither is it the case that voices have always been regarded as a negative experience, throughout history and even today there are people who hear voices who find their voices inspirational and comforting. These are facts, that on the face of it are hard to square with the extremely negative ways that the experience is regarded by psychiatry. However, it is also the case that voices can and do have a very disturbing effect, both for the person who hears voices, and their family members/friends. The voices can be hostile, controlling and seek to undermine the voice hearers own self esteem. Many people feel overwhelmed by the consequences of the experience and end up seeking medical assistance. It often seems as if there is little that people themselves and the people around them can do to regain control of their lives. The sense of powerlessness that this can bring seems to be an almost inevitable feature of the experience and is reinforced by the fact that most medical advice presumes that the person suffering from the experience of hearing voices is a passive victim of the experience and generally avoids talking about voices at all. The hearing voices approach has shown that this does not need to be the case. In this module we explore the voice hearing experience in terms of its significance and the changing ideas about the meaning. We also provide an opportunity to experience what it is like to hear voices.</p>	<b>6 hours of learning time</b>

<p><b><u>Module 2</u></b></p> <p><b>What to do about Voices that cause Problems</b></p>	<p>If you hear voices you can use your own experiences, your own contacts with services, with mental health workers you trust and with other people who hear voices to start talking about and listening to other people's experiences. If you are a worker, you could start by accepting the experience as a reality and ask what has happened in the life of the voice hearer that could possibly relate to their problems and to begin to explore the life issue or complaint that first led to the experiences. In this module we explore ways that people with overwhelming voices can develop ways of living with and accepting voices as part of themselves.</p>	<p><b>5 hours of learning time</b></p>
<p><b><u>Module 3</u></b></p> <p><b>Assisting people who Hear Voices in their Recovery Journey</b></p>	<p>In this module you will explore ways in which you can begin to use the methods and techniques provided, in order to build your confidence in working with people who hear voices or on changing your relationships with your own voices.</p>	<p><b>4 ½ hours of learning time</b></p>
<p><b><u>Module 4</u></b></p> <p><b>Involving Family Members and Friends</b></p>	<p>People who hear voices say that supportive family members and friends play a very important part in assisting them in their recovery journey. Unfortunately there is little information about the hearing voices approach available for families, and services sometimes do not seek to involve them. It is helpful for the person who hear voices, their family and friends - to be aware of the causes and meaning of hearing voices and the ways that they can help. In this module we consider how to assist family members and friends become part of the recovery journey.</p>	<p><b>4 hours of learning time</b></p>
<p><b><u>Module 5</u></b></p> <p><b>Working with Voices</b></p>	<p>In this module we listen to voice hearers and draw on the experience of the hearing voices approach to consider implications for practice. Amongst the issues that we will address are the following – 1) How to develop positive attitudes to voice hearers, respecting their expertise and experience as valid; 2) How to understand the role of childhood trauma, particularly abuse and neglect in the development of voices; 3) How to develop skills so as to work with voices hearers and their voices. On completion of this module, you will be familiar with the concepts and techniques needed to help a voice hearer work with their voices.</p>	<p><b>5 ½ hours of learning time</b></p>
<p><b><u>Module 6</u></b></p> <p><b>Introducing the Hearing Voices Approach into your Life / Workplace</b></p>	<p>As you come to the end of the course, we now would like you to consider how you could develop some first steps of a Personal Plan, for working with your own voices or people who are hearing voices. We will guide you through developing an Action Plan for taking your learning forward. The module includes a video of Paul Baker (Course Leader) and Ron Coleman, discussing the hearing voices approach at an open meeting in Eugene, Oregon, USA. This will provide a useful conclusion to the course.</p>	<p><b>2 ½ hours of learning time</b></p>
<p><b><u>Course Test &amp; Student Documentation</u></b></p>	<p>In order to receive a certificate (either '<i>Certificate of Course Completion</i>' or '<i>Continual Professional Development Certificate</i>') you will need to complete the course test and relevant student documentation.</p>	<p><b>1 ½ hours to complete</b></p>

### **Course Leader**

The course leader is Paul Baker, who has extensive experience in this area. Paul has worked for over 30 years within the Hearing Voices Movement, since its conception to the present. He has talked and run workshops in this area extensively around the world.

See a full description of Paul Baker below:

**Paul Baker** was one of the founding members of the Hearing Voices Network in England and is currently co-ordinator of INTERVOICE, the influential co-ordinating body for the International Hearing Voices Movement. He also specialises in assisting organisations in harnessing developing online communities to complement and support their work. Paul has published books and written book chapters for many publications on mental health issues, including *The Voice Inside: A practical guide for and about people who hear voices* (2010).

**This course was written by Paul Baker.**

## Certificate of Attendance

This course and all our Foundation Courses were CPD Approved in 2015. Although we no longer provide CPD Accredited Certificate for the completion of this course, the certificate we provide for the completion of this course is acceptable for portfolios.

Within the course fees, we offer a signed Certificate of Attendance which shows you have completed the course, the number of learning hours you have spent on the course and demonstrates that you have completed all learning and activities of the course (see example below).

Instructions on what specific areas you need to cover within the course and how to receive the certificate is available with the Course Handbook:

## Sample of the Course Certificate

