

12TH WORLD HEARING VOICES CONGRESS



Solidarity in Times of Adversity

CORK

1 - 3 Sept 2021



The Global Voice Hearing Community Reconnecting

Book of Abstracts

***SOLIDARITY IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY: THE GLOBAL VOICE
HEARING COMMUNITY RECONNECTING***

1 – 3 SEPTEMBER 2021

12th Annual Conference (Online)

Organised by

HEARING VOICES NETWORK IRELAND

In Partnership with

Intervoice: The International Hearing Voices Network

Onlinevents.co.uk

Cork Convention Bureau

Welcome

You are all very welcome to the 12th World Hearing Voices Congress. Although we had hoped to welcome the HV 'tribe' in person in Cork, Ireland, this did not prove possible, for reasons we are all well too familiar with!

We do hope that you will still feel closely connected during the Congress in the virtual space on offer. We think we have managed to create a varied and exciting Congress, with opportunities for learning, sharing and networking, and virtual hugging!

Please familiarise yourself with the Book of Abstracts as it contains useful information to help you navigate through the Congress. We would in particular like to draw your attention to the Intervoice Community Agreement, and also to the way the programme schedule has been organised.

The people at Onlinevents, who manage and look after the Zoom platform, will also provide detailed information, so no one hopefully gets 'lost'.

In case you do need assistance and support, then please contact info@hearingvoicesnetworkireland.ie or mobile +353 85755400 (Harry Gijbels' mobile)

Congress 2021 Facebook group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/260892309178493>

This is a group for those attending the Congress. If we were in person, we'd have plenty of in-between spaces to connect with each other ... but, as it is online, we have to be a bit more creative. It is time-limited - closing on 3 October - but until then it gives us another space to connect.

This space can be used for:

- Getting to know each other (inc non-voice-related topics)
- Sharing what you're hoping for, excited about or concerned about in the run up to the Congress (with others attendees - if you have a specific concern do email the organisers)
- Reflecting on some of the talks/workshops that you've attended ... sharing your thoughts, feelings and ideas
- Sharing news you'd like to share from your group/network
- Sharing some of your culture, or something that is important to you about where you're from
- Tips for visiting Cork in the future (when travel is more of a possibility)
- Anything else you like to share with fellow attendees :)

When using this space, please bear in mind the Intervoice Community Agreement (see below) and treat all members with respect - as we would if we were in person together.

Book of Abstracts Lay Out

The Book of Abstracts is organised in chronological order starting with the keynote presentations of each day, followed by the concurrent sessions on that day. Details are provided on the presenter(s),

the presentation title, presentation information and the presenter(s)' background(s), as provided by them.

Programme Schedule and Concurrent Sessions

A separate Programme Schedule provides a quick overview of what is on offer during the 3 days. In addition to the Intervoice Day activities and the 6 key note presentations, there are also 5 concurrent sessions (A, B, C, D and E) scheduled across the 2 Congress Days (2 on 2 September, 3 on 3 September). Each concurrent session has 7/8 presentations. The presentations in each concurrent session vary in duration (30-, 45- and 90- minutes' presentations). The Programme Schedule/Book of Abstracts clearly identify the time slots of each presentation within the concurrent session, so for example on Thursday 2 September in the **11.45 -13.15 Concurrent Session A (30-, 45- and 90-minutes' sessions)** there are 7 presentations. You can either attend a WHOLE SESSION 90 minutes' presentation), or attend one presentation from PART A and one presentation from PART B (see page 10).

Recordings of Presentations

All presentations, where presenters have given their consent, will be available as soon as is possible after the Congress at <https://hearingvoicesnetworkireland.ie/intervoice-congress-2021/> and at <https://www.onlineevents.co.uk/library/>

Intervoice Community Agreement

This agreement applies to any event or space hosted by Intervoice. We ask that you read it, and do your best to implement it whenever you are taking part in an Intervoice activity. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact: info@intervoiceonline.org

As members of the Hearing Voices Movement, we are inspired by the way Hearing Voices Groups offer a safe space for people to share their experiences, beliefs and ideas in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. These groups can, at their best, be special spaces where members accept a diversity of experiences, being curious about difference rather than defending a particular standpoint.

The issues discussed at Intervoice do not exist in a bubble, separate from the world. They have deep personal, social, ethical and political significance and, as such, often involve passion and emotion. Many of us, whether we have experienced voices/visions or not, came to this movement because of a desire for change. Equally, many of us have experience of being unheard, excluded, belittled, invalidated, victimised, hurt and oppressed. The passion that drives this movement is amazing, but we also recognise the need for us to continually work together as a movement to ensure we create safe spaces that enable us to explore the issues that matter to us in a way that is respectful and validating.

After reflecting on the values that underpin the movement, the Intervoice board are keen to encourage a similar atmosphere within any event or meeting that is held in our name. We feel it is important that the values we all hold so close to our heart are carried with us into all of our activities.

To support this, we ask that people attending events hosted or supported by Intervoice (online or in person):

- Keep warmth, compassion and empathy at the heart of our discussions.

- Ask questions, challenge ideas and remember that you have a voice as an individual within this movement. We are stronger because we are diverse.
- Listen to one another and respect the beliefs and experiences of us all
- Be curious about differences of opinion, rather than defending our own perspective.
- We encourage people to take responsibility and ownership for their actions and reactions, creating a safe and welcoming space for all.
- If at any time, someone doesn't feel safe within our events, it is our collective responsibility to address any issues that contribute to this.

Hashtag for the Congress

#WHVC2021

Open Mic:

All Congresses have a social event, and this one is no different. This year we will be running 2 'Open Mic' events where we can share songs, poems and our creativity. You are welcome whether you would like to perform or simply listen and connect with other attendees. The events will be taking place on Zoom. If you something you'd like to perform, please email Rai Waddingham (rachel@behindthelabel.co.uk) to book a slot. As the Open Mic session is running twice, be sure to say which time you'd like to play. It'll be an informal event ... so don't feel you need to be concert-ready. We welcome anyone who is willing to have a go.

Open Mic #1 (Evening): Wednesday 1st September 19.00 -20.30 pm UK/Ireland Time (UTC +1)

Open Mic #2 (Morning): Friday 3rd September 07.00 - 08.30 am UK/Ireland Time (UTC +1)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following for their support in making this Congress possible:

- HVNI Board members and others recruited to form the Congress preparation team, and who have given so generously of their time over the last year to get this Congress realised
- The Cork Convention Bureau, initially in assisting to prepare the bid document, and subsequently through their presence and expertise in supporting conference hosting
- The Intervoice Board members, for their initial trust in HVNI to organise the annual Congress, and subsequently through their insights and expertise in assisting the host
- University College Cork for their interest in hosting the Congress on site. Unfortunately, this did not prove possible due to the ongoing Covid 19 uncertainty around travel, physical distancing and other related regulations
- John Wilson and his team at Onlinevents.co.uk for providing the online platform and ensuring a smooth running of the Congress

Members of the Organising Committee (in no particular order!):

Ciara McEnteggart, Maura O'Donovan, Rai Waddingham, Katy Desmond, Eoin Toomey, Mike Ryan, Pete Brown, Mary Farrelly, Teresa Tuohy, Peter Bullimore, Evelyn O'Sullivan, Jeremy Murray, Louise McCall, Tian Herbert, Dirk Corstens, John Wilson, Aubrey May Santiago, Kellie Stastny, Harry Gijbels, Lisa Forestell.

We hope you enjoy the Congress.

Please note that all times are in Irish / UK time (UTC +1).

Wednesday 1 September

Intervoice Day

09.30 - 17.30 Welcome to the 12th World Hearing Voices Congress. This day is organised by the Intervoice Board. We will honour Sandra Escher, hear testimonies from Itay, Denmark and Brazil, get updates on national networks from Iceland, Australia and USA, listen to keynotes from Brazil, Hearing the Voice and Rory and Anne from Vancouver, hear from online groups and provide an Open Space session for delegates. The final part of the Intervoice Day offers an opportunity to meet, and connect with, the Intervoice Board (inc Q&A)!

19.00 – 20.30 *Open Mic #1*. MCs: Rai Waddingham and Kellie Stastny, supported by others. A social event to share songs, poems and our creativity. If you something you'd like to perform, please email Rai (rachel@behindthelabel.co.uk) to book a slot. It'll be an informal event ... so don't feel you need to be concert-ready. We welcome anyone who is willing to have a go.

Thursday 2 September

Opening Address



10.00 -10.30 Jacquie Dillon: *Solidarity in Times of Adversity (30 minutes)*

The annual conference is an important event in the voice hearing diary, an opportunity for people who hear voices, their friends, families, allies and professionals who work alongside them, to get together and share the wonderful work they have been doing from across the globe.

Now in its 12th year, the World Hearing Voices Congress showcases innovative approaches to hearing voices, research and development work internationally, with presentations from experts by experience and experts by profession, working together to increase acceptance and understanding of hearing voices. For many, it is an opportunity to meet like-minded people, share ideas and information and make connections in a safe, stimulating and friendly environment.

As my family originate from this fine city, Cork holds a special place in my heart. Having facilitated numerous training courses, talks and seminars to help develop groups across Ireland leading to the formation of HVNI, I am thrilled to be attending this year's Congress.

After the unprecedented time that we as a global community have faced, now more than ever, the opportunity to reconnect with each other, whether in person or virtually, to share our diverse, unique voices, has never been so vital. I hope you will join me.

Keynote Presentations



10.45 - 11.30 Rachel Waddingham: *(How) Does Meaning Matter? (45 minutes)*

Over the years I have had different ways of making sense of the voices I hear, the visions I see and the beliefs that I have. I've linked them to different traumas in my lives, viewed them as emotional metaphors and fitted myself into different narrative boxes. It is only recently that I have recognised that, for me, it has been crucial to step away from these frameworks and just 'be with' my experiences in all their unfinalised messiness. The question of who or what my voices represent now has jagged edges. In this presentation I will draw from my lived experience and my work as a practitioner to explore some of the complexities around meaning making. Crucially, I will explore some of the ways we can create and nurture spaces that enable people to find their own voice(s) in their own way at their own pace.

Rai is an Open Dialogue Practitioner, international trainer and has experience of creating, establishing and managing innovative Hearing Voices Movements and influenced peer support-based projects in a range of contexts, including youth, prison, forensic, inpatient and community. She has personal experience of hearing voices, psychosis, trauma, self-harm and hospitalisation. Lived experience, and the collective wisdom developed within the Hearing Voices Network and Survivor Movement(s) are the lenses through which she approaches all of her work. These are her

guiding lights. As a trainer, Rai has facilitated courses and workshops in many countries including USA, Ireland, Bosnia, Serbia, Czech Republic, Israel and Australia. Rai is engaged in research and currently undertaking a PhD in survivor knowledge. Attending a Hearing Voices Group, back in 2000, was a pivotal moment without which she feels she would probably still be stuck in a cycle of hospital admissions with little hope.



14.30 -15.15 Cindy Hadge: *The Search for Meaning, Purpose and Connection in Pandemic Times (45 minutes)*

Cindy Hadge will speak to adversity during pandemic times, and how this shared peril has negatively impacted so many while at the same time sparking new opportunities and connections. Knowing that the Hearing Voices Movement changed and transformed her life and the lives of so many others, Cindy feels that it is imperative to carry the message of possibilities forward, beyond diagnosis and prognosis and through any hardship. She will reflect on her experiences during COVID with voice hearer and family and friend groups, and training experiences with service providers, attorneys and beyond, all the while speaking to her hope that this collective trauma may provide new inroads to greater compassion for a range of human experience. The reality is that many voice hearers are well practiced at surviving life-disrupting lockdown and isolation as generated by the mental health system and other circumstances. Some of us have been kept company by our voices through these dark periods. For others, the isolation, disconnection, and disruption in meaning and purpose has been a newer experience that may have even spawned new voices or new messages from existing ones. More than a year after a global emergency was declared, we can finally begin to look back and start learning from what we've survived. This has been a period when psychiatric facilities banned visitors and spread COVID within their walls. Some perished from this new illness or its ripple effects without ever having their own voices heard. And yet, during the same period, many new on-line groups and communities sprung up, people made discoveries about themselves, and some people were able to access Hearing Voices supports for the first time ever (sometimes while still locked on a psychiatric ward). And so, perhaps some lives were saved as well. Cindy will explore all this and more.

Cindy Hadge is a person who experienced physical, emotional, sexual trauma as a child. She experienced voices and visions (some comforting and some distressing). As a young adult she turned to alcohol and street drugs in an effort to make life liveable. Eventually she ended up in mental health services where the unprescribed drugs were replaced by prescribed ones. She remained stuck for decades, until finding her way within Hearing Voices Groups and the support of the Wildflower Alliance (formerly known as the Western Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community). In recent years, Cindy has found the meaning, purpose and connection by transforming her tragedies into treasures by being healed when creating space for others to heal. Cindy is a Lead Trainer for The Wildflower Alliance, offering Hearing Voices Network trainings across the United States and beyond. Cindy has also offered trainings on trauma, self-injury and the Alternatives to Suicide Approach (developed by The Wildflower Alliance). Since 2019 Cindy has also supported HVN Family and Friends groups, knowing that family members can benefit with support offered within HVN values, and that family and friends can play a powerful role with loved ones. Cindy is gender non-conforming and has presented both as Cindy and Marty and received an Intervoice Award for

Education and Training for her work helping to increase awareness of and access to the Hearing Voices approach across the United States. Cindy is also in the film, "Beyond Possible: How the Hearing Voices Approach Transforms Lives" available at www.beyondpossiblefilm.info



15.30 -16.15 Adi Hasanbašić: *Human dignity and creativity in the times of uncertainty: Personal reflection on war, COVID-19 and Hearing Voices community (45 minutes)*

During unknown, traumatic, and overwhelming situations, we, as humans, can be very creative in order to survive, and our basic human solidarity and empathy can be the most important tool kit that we need. But on the other hand, surviving harsh times can be painful, stressful and we can easily lose our sense of dignity when fearing for our lives. I will reflect on my personal experiences from the war and COVID period, amongst others, to emphasize need for dignity and potential that has for creativity and change. Special emphasis will be on the Hearing Voices community and how we can (re)connect to our basic human values in these times of uncertainty.

Adi Hasanbašić comes from Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) but for the last 5 years he has been living and working in Prague (Czech Republic). He finished studies of Psychology and Social and cultural anthropology. He also completed training in Gestalt Therapy, Open Dialogue and recently got his Masters' degree in Gestalt Therapy. He was a founder and director of the NGO Metanoia (Sarajevo) which had a focus on mental health in the community while developing different outlooks and projects concerning mental health topics. He helped create and develop the Hearing Voices Network for Western Balkan and connected colleagues from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia in their joint efforts. Adi also helped spread across the Western Balkan an idea about a radio show regarding mental health called "Voice of Madness Live on Air", which got him an award for contribution in developing mental health awareness in Bosnia. The radio show got a lot of attention, including Al Jazeera's documentary about it. Currently, he is working in the Center for mental health in Prague and has a private therapy practice. Also, he is a main coordinator and co-founder of the Hearing Voices Network for Czech Republic and facilitator of the Hearing Voices groups in Prague. He is also a proud recipient of the award from Intervoice for supporting the development of HV groups. He translated several books about mental health into Bosnian language and published articles about psychotherapy and mental health in general. Adi's main interests are critical psychology and psychiatry, psychiatric anthropology, psychotherapy, Open Dialogue and Hearing Voices approach. As his main intellectual inspiration and reason for studying psychology he mentions the work of Ronald David Laing. Adi is happily married and recently became a father of a beautiful girl. Beside his family, he can't imagine his life without tea, books and traveling.

Thursday 2 September

Concurrent Presentations

Artwork presented in some of the intervals across the two Congress days:

Megan McNicholas: *Artwork Based on my Experiences of Hearing Voices*

I am a 22-year-old girl from Dublin, Ireland. I have a great experience of hearing voices and having strange beliefs. I think my artwork and poems would really give people an insight into the experience of hearing voices. My poems will be included in a session lead by Mary Farrelly (see page 18)

11.45 - 13.15 Concurrent Session A

You can select one 90-minute presentation/workshop OR two presentations/workshops (one from Part A and one from Part B)

WHOLE SESSION	
11.45 – 13.15	<i>Developing principles of practice for health practitioners in working with people who hear voices (90 minutes)</i> Neil Thomas, Kriti Sharma, Bridget Bowe, Sarah Parry, Mark Hayward, Nev Jones and Eleanor Longden, Australia, USA and UK
PART A	
11.45 – 12.30	<i>Her voice first. Exploring women’s first-person accounts of involuntary mental health treatment, resistance, and hopeful alternatives (45 minutes)</i> Emma Tseris, Scarlett Franks, & Anon, Australia
11.45 – 12.15	<i>Friend or Foe: Reflections on Facilitating a Hearing Voices Group with a Psychiatrist (30 minutes)</i> Fauzia Khan and Samina Allie, UK
11.45 – 12.15	<i>The Magician: Memoires of a Fool (30 minutes)</i> Vincent Swierstra, Netherlands
PART B	
12.45 – 13.15	<i>Cannabis and Hearing Voices (30 minutes)</i> Nikki Mattocks, UK
12.45 – 13.15	<i>My experience of seeing visions and hearing voices (30 minutes)</i> T (wishes to remain anonymous), Ireland
12.45 – 13.15	<i>Voice-hearers on their own terms: a qualitative analysis of voice-hearing experiences in a “non-clinical” British sample and a call for new questions (30 minutes)</i> Ariel Swyer, UK

WHOLE SESSION

11.45 – 13.15 Neil Thomas, Kriti Sharma, Bridget Bowe, Sarah Parry, Mark Hayward, Nev Jones and Eleanor Longden: *Developing principles of practice for health practitioners in working with people who hear voices (90 minutes)*

This session will be an interactive forum in which we discuss work in progress to develop principles of practice for health practitioners in working with people who experience hearing voices and related experiences. We will structure a group discussion by reporting on a series of component research projects conducted so far to identify the key elements of effective practice in helping people with voice hearing in day-to-day mental health settings.

Neil Thomas will start by introducing this research program, and present findings from qualitative interviews with people who hear voices about what they have found helpful vs unhelpful in

interactions with health practitioners. Following discussion of this topic, **Kriti Sharma** will go on to present a survey of UK National Health Service practitioners about how they approach interactions with people about their voices. Following discussion, we will then consider findings from a qualitative study by **Bridget Bowe** of lived experience perspectives on the terms “auditory hallucinations”, “hearing voices”, and “voice hearer”. We will then discuss findings from consultations by **Sarah Parry** with children who hear voices and their families about their needs from services. Finally, we will hear from our session discussants **Nev Jones, Mark Hayward** and **Eleanor Longden** about their reflections on the overall discussion. Throughout, we will encourage practitioners and people with lived experience to share their own expertise. Attendees will gain an understanding of some of the particular needs that people who hear voices have during health care interactions, and ideas on effective practice and potential pitfalls.

Associate Professor Neil Thomas, Deputy Director, Centre for Mental Health, Swinburne University; and Consultant Clinical Psychologist, AlfredHealth, Melbourne, Australia. Neil heads Melbourne’s pioneering Voices Clinic and leads a team conducting research into therapeutic approaches for people who hear voices.

Kriti Sharma, PhD Student, Swinburne University, Melbourne, Australia. Kriti is a PhD student working on a research program to develop principles for practice in working with people who hear voices.

Bridget Bowe, Glow Centre, Queensland; and Swinburne University, Australia. Bridget qualitative research during her masters’ degree with people with lived experience about their experiences of language used to refer to “auditory hallucinations” or “hearing voices”.

Dr Sarah Parry, Practice Fellow, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. Sarah is a clinical psychologist and researcher working with children and young people who hear voices and their families.

Dr Mark Hayward, Director of Research, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and University of Sussex, UK. Mark leads the Sussex Voices Clinic and a research program into developing more accessible therapeutic approaches for people who are distressed by hearing voices.

Dr Nev Jones, University of Pittsburgh, USA. Nev Jones PhD is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh and lived experience researcher focused on psychosis.

Dr Eleanor Longden, Service-User Research Manager, Psychosis Research Unit and Co-Director Complex Trauma and Resilience Unit, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (GMMH); and Honorary Research Fellow, University of Manchester.

PART A

11.45 – 12.30 Emma Tseris, Scarlett Franks, & Anon. *Her voice first. Exploring women’s first-person accounts of involuntary mental health treatment, resistance, and hopeful alternatives (45 minutes)*

This presentation outlines findings of a research project exploring women’s experiences of involuntary mental health services.

A solidarity team of women set out to prioritise the voices of women who have received compulsory treatment alongside experiences of distress, voice-hearing, visions, unique beliefs, alternative realities, and institutional and interpersonal betrayal.

Findings include:

- Significant skills of women survivors in responding to both gendered violence and harmful “treatment” in mental health services
- Mental health services pathologising women’s responses to gender inequality and disempowerment
- Silencing and problematizing of women’s roles as mothers/friends/carers
- Lack of access to safe, caring and gender-segregated spaces
- Coercion and violation of women’s human rights within mental health services, often replicating previous abuse experiences/dynamics
- Psychiatric labelling of women, contributing to discrimination and stigmatized identities upon returning to their homes/communities
- A lack of trauma-informed practice, and lack of trauma and dissociation literacy among mental health workers, contributing to institutional betrayal, epistemic injustice, and re-traumatisation.

Women with lived experiences of seeking help, psychiatric coercion and violence in mental health treatment co-designed the project, co-facilitating and co-analysing the interviews. Arts-based approaches enabled women’s stories, strengths, and wisdom to be heard from the margins. This collaboration and creativity added richness to the research findings, with multiple implications for our lives and work. The research engaged in solidarity across feminist aims to end violence and coercion against women and the hearing voices movement’s determination to develop understandings beyond the biomedical model. In doing this work, helpful and hopeful ways of responding with women are made possible.

Emma Tseris is a senior lecturer in social work and policy studies at the University of Sydney. Emma is passionate about exploring the intersections between gender and psychiatry and undoing the harmful reliance on coercion as a response to women’s mental distress. Her current research aims to develop alternative approaches to distress, despair, or ‘madness’, in ways that uphold human rights and social justice.

Scarlett Franks is a complex trauma survivor and researcher at the University of Sydney and an advocate for survivors with dissociative identity adaptations to organized child sexual abuse, coercive control, and domestic and sexual violence. She is passionate about illuminating the relationships between structural oppression, interpersonal oppression, and intrapsychic (or structural) dissociation. Her research, advocacy, and volunteering aim to elevate the epistemic status of women with stigmatised adaptations to trauma. Scarlett lives with her partner Rachel and their fifteen rescued foster kittens.

Anon is a psychiatric survivor-peer researcher with Social Work and Social Policy Studies at the University of Sydney, with a Master’s in Public Health, Indigenous Health and Wellbeing. I aspire to work in solidarity to nurture healing and justice in our world. I am an intergenerational survivor of gendered violence and human rights violations in psychiatric treatment. We gave back the psychiatric diagnoses placed on my life. We also left our local community and home to protect, recover and reclaim our lives. We received an apology and small recognition payment from a mental health service for harm and injuries sustained in treatment. This payment enabled us to participate in an International Hearing Voices Congress. I consider the contributions of the hearing voices approach, First Nation’s people’s knowledge, narrative therapy and the feminist movement,

emancipatory and healing. I am interested in ethical, compassionate and non-violent alternatives outside of mental health to generate hopeful ways for traversing the storms of life.

11.45 – 12.15 Fauzia Khan and Samina Allie: *Friend or Foe: Reflections on Facilitating a Hearing Voices Group with a Psychiatrist (30 minutes)*

The aim of this presentation is to detail a Hearing Voices Group that was facilitated by psychologists in an inpatient psychiatric hospital setting in the NHS. The presentation will detail the psychologists' experience of co-facilitating the group with a psychiatrist and will explore the challenges and barriers that they experienced throughout the process, and the clash of approaches between the medical model and the hearing voices movement approach that they encountered throughout the group. The experiences and anxieties of the Psychiatrist will also be drawn upon, as well as the way in which the group shaped and informed their clinical practice.

Ms Samina Allie CPsychol AFBPsS. Samina is a Principal Chartered Counselling Psychologist, currently working at Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Samina has been qualified as a psychologist for 17 years and has been involved with setting up and delivering Hearing Voices Groups since 2007. Samina has been an advocate for voice hearers and has sought to strengthen relationships across the multidisciplinary team and community services as a means to improve the patient experience and their journey to recovery through education, training and joint working. Samina has co-authored publications relating to the subject of hearing voices and narrative approaches to the patient story.

Miss Fauzia Khan BSc (Hons) MBPsS. Fauzia is an Assistant Psychologist, currently working at Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Fauzia is an avid proponent of the Hearing Voices Movement and has been involved in facilitating Hearing Voices Groups in both inpatient psychiatric settings and in community mental health settings since 2016. Fauzia has published numerous articles in both professional newsletters and in a peer reviewed publication pertaining to the subject of Hearing Voices. Additionally, Fauzia has trained multi-disciplinary staff in NHS settings as well as carers and students within a Recovery College on working with people who hear voices, which she co-produced with voice-hearers.

11.45 – 12.15 Vincent Swierstra: *The Magician, Memoires of a Fool (30 minutes)*

In this presentation, Vincent will talk about his recently published book.

Vincent Swierstra is a musician, the author of *The Magician*, *Memoires of a Fool*, and the protagonist of the documentary *Voices of Vincent*. Vincent studied Cultural Anthropology and Hermetica at the UvA in Amsterdam. During the second year of his studies, in 2005, he had a severe psychosis. Although it took a long time to recover, he eventually finished his bachelor degree in 2011. After graduating, he decided to focus on playing the sarangi, a rare instrument from India. Besides studying in Amsterdam with Joep Bor, he also went to Mumbai three times to take lessons from Grammy winner Dhruba Ghosh. He also decided to write a book about his experiences. In 2017 *The Magician, Memoires of a Fool*, was published by Paris Books. The story of the psychosis is told through the eyes of Vincent himself and gives the reader a glimpse of what it's like to have a psychotic experience. Another old dream of Vincent was to make a film about hearing voices. The Dutch filmmaker Maarten Kal made this dream come true. The documentary shows how Vincent, years after his psychosis, still struggles with his voices. Since the book and film were released in

2017, Vincent has occasionally been giving lectures about hearing voices all over the Netherlands. Schooled as a cultural anthropologist, he is very interested in non-medical perspectives. He has also performed a lot with his sarangi and recently released his first EP. The Sarangi Sessions Vol.1 is a collaboration with four Dutch hip hop producers.

PART B

12.45 – 13.15 Nikki Mattocks: *Cannabis and hearing voices (30 minutes)*

Imagine this. A young woman is told to go to A&E because she's hearing voices. Diagnosed with a "personality disorder", "pseudo hallucinations" and a substance misuse problem, she bravely asks for help after a recent trauma not knowing where else to turn. She is told "what do you expect, you've smoked cannabis, and you should expect to be unwell". She is sent home with no support.

The area of cannabis and hearing voices or "psychosis" has long been dominated by the medical model, producing a narrative often pointing out a link between the two. While this can and does make sense for some people, there is a distinct lack of information and resources from and for the people that have gone through this first hand.

I'm a 24-year-old woman who has heard voices for the last decade. I also experience visions and other things that can't easily be explained. Drawing from personal experiences from addiction to skunk and hearing voices, join me to discuss the impact of cannabis on hearing voices, paranoia, and the senses, whilst also considering the significance of social and systemic factors.

Nikki Mattocks is a 24-year-old woman who has a decade's worth experience of hearing voices and seeing visions. She has volunteered and worked for different mental health and human rights organizations including Mind in Camden, Young Minds, and Amnesty International. She also has 7 years of experience as a peer support facilitator at Evolve; the peer support group she founded for young people.

12.45 – 13.15 T: *My experience of seeing visions and hearing voices (30 minutes)*

My aim is to share my experience of having been targeted by demons which caused me to see visions and hear a voice

T prefers to remain anonymous.

12.45 – 13.15 Ariel Swyer: *Voice-hearers on their own terms: a qualitative analysis of voice-hearing experiences in a "non-clinical" British sample and a call for new questions (30 minutes)*

The "non-clinical" voice-hearer has been the subject of a growing body of psychological research. This work has identified differences, in areas such as distress and control, between voice-hearers who require treatment and those who do not. A primary aim of this research is to identify new therapeutic techniques to support those who struggle with voice-hearing, which is an important goal. However, I will argue that, as the name "non-clinical" suggests, such research still fundamentally views voice-hearing through the lens of illness. Non-clinical populations are often analyzed using tools of clinical assessment and categorized according to concepts based in clinical research and practice.

In my talk, I will present a qualitative analysis of interviews conducted with seventeen people who regularly heard voices but who did not seek or meet criteria for clinical care. I will argue that their

experiences defy the clinically-based categories traditionally used to understand voice-hearing. My analysis will complicate traditional concepts used to assess voice-hearers, such as distress, appraisal, and voice location, and argue that attempting to fit participants' descriptions into such categories may lead researchers to miss key aspects of this experience. I will argue that by asking new questions of voice-hearers and attempting to understand voice-hearing through a truly non-clinical lens, we could gain new insights and open up new avenues of research. The aim of this presentation is to not only present the findings from the study, but to stimulate discussion and together think through radical new questions that could be asked about voice-hearing.

Ariel Swyer is a PhD student in Psychology and Medical Humanities at Durham University. She holds an MSc. in Psychology from the university of Glasgow and a BA in Philosophy and Cognitive Science from Swarthmore College. She also has experience teaching psychology at the City University of New York and working in clinical environments with a variety of different approaches to psychological distress including a Soteria House. She has a long-standing interest in voice hearing and is dedicated to centering those with lived experience in conducting her work.

16.30 - 18.00 Concurrent Session B

You can select one 90-minute presentation/workshop OR two presentations/workshops (one from Part A and one from Part B)

WHOLE SESSION	
16.30 – 18.00	<i>Veteran Voices and Visions: Implementing the Hearing Voices Approach at the Greater Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center (90 minutes)</i> Ippolytos Kalofonos, Tim Laprade, Jerome Brown, George Hill, Kenneth Hammond, Erica Hua Fletcher, USA
16.30 – 18.00	<i>The Psychic, The Spiritual and the Process of Purification (90 minutes)</i> Diana Bella, USA
PART A	
16.30 – 17.15	<i>On being synthetic: living with unusual and overwhelming beliefs (45 minutes)</i> Rai Waddingham, UK
16.30 – 17.15	<i>How do we remain true to our roots? - 'Training the trainer' pilot at Voices Unlocked (45 minutes)</i> Jasmine Crowne and Jessica Pons, UK
PART B	
17.30 – 18.15	<i>The Hearing Voices Network in Ireland- A presentation compiled by Mary Farrelly (45 minutes)</i> Mary Farrelly, Ireland
17.30 – 18.00	<i>The Transformative Potential of 'Psychosis' (30 minutes)</i> Robyn Thomas, UK
17.30 – 18.00	<i>Building a Hearing Voices Network in Your Community (30 minutes)</i> Edwin Herzog (him), USA

WHOLE SESSION

16.30 – 18.00 Ippolytos Kalofonos, Tim Laprade, Jerome Brown, George Hill, Kenneth Hammond, Erica Hua Fletcher: *Veteran Voices and Visions: Implementing the Hearing Voices Approach at the Greater Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center (90 minutes)*

The Veteran Voices and Visions (VVV) project is an adaptation of the Hearing Voices approach at the Greater Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center. It came about after 3 years of running a pilot group with 3 Veterans and 2 clinicians (a psychiatrist/medical anthropologist and a psychologist).

VVV includes a research component to 1) study the adaptation of a Hearing Voices Facilitator training to the VA and 2) to understand how participating in VVV groups may help Veterans live with their voices and make meaning from their experiences with unusual mental states. Our approach has involved multidisciplinary collaborations - including perspectives and contributions from Veterans who hear voices, Veteran peer support specialists, social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social researchers. This research will help us improve VVV groups for Veterans and the care we offer Veteran Voice Hearers.

Ippolytos Kalofonos is a medical anthropologist and psychiatrist in the UCLA Center for Social Medicine and at the West LA VA. He is the PI on the West LA HV adaptation project, entitled Veteran Voices and Visions.

Tim Laprade is an Army Veteran who lives with extreme experiences. He is a Hearing Voices Facilitation Trainer and has provided Hearing Voices Trainings at two VAs, including West LA. He plans to continue working with Veterans as a social worker.

Jerome Brown is a Veteran Voice Hearer, who participated in a pilot HV group with Dr. Kalofonos. He earned a certificate as a Hearing Voices Facilitator with Tim Laprade and Cindy Marty Hadge of HV-USA in January 2021.

George Hill is a Marine Corps Veteran who spent 12 years homeless suffering from PTSD. After receiving treatment for this condition, he has devoted his life to assisting other Veterans overcome mental health challenges. George is completing his bachelors' degree at Cal State Los Angeles and is certified in peer support, WRAP, and Hearing Voices Facilitation.

Kenneth Hammond is an Army Veteran and a Peer Support Specialist at the WLA VAMC (HUD/VASH Program) who is certified in Hearing Voices Facilitation.

Erica Hua Fletcher is a postdoctoral fellow at the UCLA/VA Center for Excellence on Veterans Recovery and Resilience. She draws from the health humanities and social medicine to study contemporary mental health social movements and their impact on public mental health care in the United States.

16.30 – 18.00 Diana Bella: *The Psychic, The Spiritual and the Process of Purification (90 minutes)*

A spiritual life provides an invaluable support to help us meet the challenges of life. A life centered in the Divine, with an awareness of ourselves as eternal souls, can help us weather the most extreme adversity with more grace, calm, trust and creative energy, knowing that we are not victims of misfortune, but masters of our own destiny, even when our outer experience is full of difficulties. Many explore psychic phenomena as a way to achieve greater understanding of ourselves and greater mastery of our own fate – and the psychic realm can offer an important bridge to a more unified, elevated view of ourselves and our world. But, like all bridges, it is not the final destination. Ultimately, our hearts seek a relationship with the Divine Oneness that is at the center of all life – that place where we know what is most important and most true through our inner relationship with the light of our soul, which is part of the light to which all beings belong. It is through the process of purification that we learn to release our attachment to habits of thought and practice that hold us back from becoming more fully realized beings. Our path forward is illuminated by light, the source of truth, love and wisdom that comes through our inner relationship to the Divine. In this workshop we will explore how one can move past an understanding of life as simple physical cause-and-effect,

through the psychic and into a soul-based relationship with life. We will discuss traditions from Yoga, Theosophy, mysticism, and spiritism that allow access to non-physical dimensions of existence, and learn how to work with the energies of light and the opposing energies of darkness.

Diana Catherine Bella is a spiritual counsellor and educator in Massachusetts, and owner of Doors of Light studio, helping people live more meaningful, soul-centered lives. She has been trained as a Hearing Voices Group Facilitator and has had her own experiences with voice hearing and visions. Diana serves in a leadership role and on the Board of Directors of two spiritual communities: Light Omega/Village of Light Ashram, a center for spiritual healing in Leverett, MA; and Ceu do Divino Redentor (Church of the Divine Redeemer), which practices the Brazil-based Santo Daime path, a syncretic religion uniting the spiritual traditions of spiritism and Christianity. Diana is a certified Transformational Kinesiologist, trained at Polaris College in Denmark, a certified Touch for Health and Brain Gym Practitioner, and an Embody Yoga instructor.

PART A

16.30 – 17.15 Rai Waddingham: On being synthetic: living with unusual and overwhelming beliefs (45 minutes)

In this session, Rai will share some of the unusual beliefs she has struggled with throughout her life - most recently the belief that she is not (fully) human. Whilst this belief often runs in parallel with her life, causing little distress, there are times when it becomes unmanageable and takes centre stage. She will explore what it is that can make such a belief intolerable at times, and how she navigates this. Taking a relational approach, Rai looks at what she has learnt from these experiences - as a survivor and as a supporter.

Rai is an Open Dialogue Practitioner, international trainer and has experience of creating, establishing and managing innovative Hearing Voices Movements and influenced peer support-based projects in a range of contexts, including youth, prison, forensic, inpatient and community. She has personal experience of hearing voices, psychosis, trauma, self-harm and hospitalisation. Lived experience, and the collective wisdom developed within the Hearing Voices Network and Survivor Movement(s) are the lenses through which she approaches all of her work. These are her guiding lights. As a trainer, Rai has facilitated courses and workshops in many countries including USA, Ireland, Bosnia, Serbia, Czech Republic, Israel and Australia. Rai is engaged in research and currently undertaking a PhD in survivor knowledge. Attending a Hearing Voices Group, back in 2000, was a pivotal moment without which she feels she would probably still be stuck in a cycle of hospital admissions with little hope.

16.30 – 17.15 Jasmine Crowne and Jessica Pons: How do we remain true to our roots? - 'Training the trainer' pilot at Voices Unlocked (45 minutes)

The team at Voices Unlocked is piloting a 'train the trainer' course for those wishing to sustain Hearing Voices groups for people in prisons, immigration removal centres and secure units. We will be training experienced group facilitators to train others within their settings to increase sustainability of groups, then offering mentoring and on-going support.

We shall reflect on this whilst we think about how we remain true to the radical ethos of Hearing Voices Groups, examining words such as 'co-option' and 'neoliberal' – 'radical' and 'movement'. Together we shall wonder how we spread the influence of the hearing voices ethos, in such institutions without diluting the ethos at the heart of the approach.

We also will be bringing into the conversation the backdrop of the last 18 months, when the call for abolition of such institutions has grown louder. Voices Unlocked works within these systems, developing hearing voices groups by training staff on critical mental health approaches. Are we aligning with systems we should be fighting against? How do we balance the ethics of this?

In this workshop we hope to explore and provoke discussion around this subject, as well as sharing experience and learnings from the pilot.

Jessica Pons began working with people diagnosed with 'psychosis' in 2006 and is now Hearing Voices project manager at Mind in Camden, developing peer support groups in forensic services, immigration removal centres, young people's mental health services and the community for people who hear voices, have other sensory experiences or alternative realities. Jess has family members diagnosed with psychosis, plus is reflective of her own experiences in the liminal spaces of psychosis and as a recipient of diagnoses such as 'bipolar' and 'borderline personality disorder'. Jess is also a qualified integrative psychotherapist practicing within a critical mental health feminist/sociopolitical framework. She has personal and political interest in institutional racism within psychology/psychiatry, and is a producer for ISPS UK film 'Dismantling the Master's House'.

Jasmine Crowne is Voices Unlocked Development Worker at Mind In Camden. Having completed my training as a mental health nurse, I found myself questioning psychiatry and the system in which it was practiced. Going on to work alongside those who heard voices in supported housing and with those that championed the Hearing Voices ethos, I then studied theology in an attempt to understand more about humanity and our experiences – particularly my own, and others, who understand their experiences within a spiritual framework. Before joining the team at Mind in Camden, I worked for a church in a pastoral role, and am in my final year of an MA in Counselling and Psychotherapy.

PART B

17.30 – 18.15 Mary Farrelly: *The Hearing Voices Network in Ireland- A presentation compiled by Mary Farrelly (30/45 minutes)*

This presentation will chart the growth of the Hearing Voices Network in Ireland over the past decade. Together with details of training provided, groups established and the launch of the Network and the website, members of Hearing Voices Groups will share what attending groups means to them.

Mary Farrelly is a lecturer in Dublin City University. Among her many interests is her interest in developing helpful responses to voice hearing and paranoia. She has played a major role in setting up the Hearing Voices Network Ireland and on the development of the network nationally. She is one of the facilitators with a Dublin based Hearing Voices Group.

17.30 – 18.00 Robyn Thomas: *The Transformative Potential of 'Psychosis' (30 minutes)*

This presentation and facilitated discussion encourage people to consider how alternate experiences of reality, or what is often defined as psychosis, can become an invitation for deeper connection

with self, community, place and purpose. Based on the speaker's lived experience of psychosis and current academic research into the value of patient-directed meaning-making, Robyn shares how the experience of psychosis can initiate positive transformation, particularly when support is designed to uphold the dignity and agency of people in crisis. During the second half of the presentation, attendees will be invited to share insights into their own experiences of alternate realities and discuss the transformative potential of 'psychosis'. Within the biomedical model, patients diagnosed with psychosis are considered to lack insight into their condition and are often treated coercively, including being forced to take medication that can cause severe side-effects and cognitive impairment. In addition, the framing of psychosis as a chronic illness can extinguish hope and become a barrier to healing. Psychiatric survivor movements and innovative models such as Open Dialogue have demonstrated that people are hungry for a new form of care that is humanising and values the voices of those experiencing alternate realities. Robyn shares her innovative research which aims to amplify the voices of service-users and to understand the experience of transformative growth after psychosis, and how people can be supported to find healing and meaning while maintaining personal agency. Robyn will create space for those with experiences of alternate realities to share their thoughts and insights.

Robyn Thomas is a Canadian-born mental health advocate and award-winning filmmaker currently completing her MSc in Global Mental Health and Society at the University of Edinburgh. She has experienced voice hearing and alternate realities and has shared her story of finding meaning and healing after crisis with thousands of people and numerous media outlets. She has worked for several Canadian NGOs as a public speaker, youth facilitator and trained WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) facilitator. Her work as a filmmaker bridges compelling storytelling with mental health advocacy, and her most recent film, *Follow My Brain*, explores a boxer's perspective on living with psychosis and the efforts of his community to support his wellbeing. Robyn is passionate about advocating for a consensual, human rights approach to mental health care that upholds service users' agency and insight. She is currently researching the impact of patient-directed meaning making and the possibility of transformative growth after psychosis at the University of Edinburgh.

17.30 – 18.00 Edwin Herzog (him): *Building a Hearing Voices Network in Your Community (30 minutes)*

This workshop will offer family members, clinicians, and voice hearers a guide to creating a Hearing Voices Network in their community. The presenter is one of the co-founders of the San Francisco Bay Area Hearing Voices Network (BAHVN). Since 2016 the BAHVN has offered three weekly adult hearing voices groups, a Transition Age Group (TAY) and a family and friends' group. Founding members of the network include people with lived experiences, family members, and clinicians. Though from different backgrounds they are united by the shared values of the national hearing voices movement including respect for each other's experiences, valuing differences, and support for challenging society's norms and stigma.

The workshop will outline the steps they used to build their network and how to achieve them. For example, in order to sustain their groups, they decided group facilitators needed to be paid; they made the BAHVN, a certified non-profit organization; and they partnered with other local, established mental health agencies that support hearing voices values. This allowed the BAHVN to fund their groups, pay facilitators, and get the word out about the groups to a wider community. While at the same time maintaining BAHVN's independence and selection and training of all group facilitators. All groups follow the HVN-USA charter, two facilitators have lived experiences and have

been trained by HVN-USA. No notes or names of participants are taken. All groups are offered on-line with plans to offer them in-person as well.

Edwin Herzog is a family member with a son who has heard voices for ten years. He is a co-founder of the Bay Area Hearing Voices Network (BAHVN) since 2014. He has been a co-facilitator of the network's hearing voices group and is currently a co-facilitator of two family members' groups. He has participated in two HVN-USA facilitator trainings and was a co-organizer for one of them, attended by 25 people including people with lived experiences, clinicians, and family members. He currently is also on the HVN-USA board of directors and the HVN Family and Friends Coordinating Committee.

Friday 3 September

07.00 – 08.30 Open Mic #2. MCs: Rai Waddingham and Kellie Stastny, supported by others. A social event to share songs, poems and our creativity. If you something you'd like to perform, please email Rai (rachel@behindthelabel.co.uk) to book a slot. It'll be an informal event ... so don't feel you need to be concert-ready. We welcome anyone who is willing to have a go.

Keynote Presentations



10.00 -10.45 The Listening to Voices Project: *Listening to Voices: Hero of Myself* (45 minutes)

Listening to Voice is a community based, peer constructed and performed theatrical experience that seeks to educate audiences about and break down stigma surrounding the human experience of hearing voices. The performances are derived from actual accounts and experiences of life, the mental health system and of the things that brought about hope and change, such as The Hearing Voices Movement.

A community development project in which the participants of Albury Wodonga Hearing Voices Group become the devisors, the consultants, the actors, the protagonists of their own and each other's stories. A form of community development where people have the creative space to 'discover the need to speak and speak the unspoken'.

Listening to Voices Theatre offer up a unique and engaging opportunity to see examples of their innovative performance-based work as well as a chance to explore the experience of voice hearing in a candid and hopeful way, from those living well with voices.

The Listening to Voices Project utilises the performing arts to both empower and honour the lived experience. The group deliver community-based performance and training, have produced films for education and continue to help drive trauma informed and compassionate responses toward experiences of psychological distress wherever they present.

This 45 minutes' presentation aims to engage and enliven and bring about a deeper understanding of voice hearing, the impact of trauma and the importance of relationships to both the things that threaten to break us as well as the essential element to healing.

Listening to Voices Theatre have been cutting through the stigma, the misconceptions about voice hearing and challenging the ever-growing 'mental illness' industry by powerfully awakening people to a deeper understanding. Their award-winning grassroots project and performance is providing the catalyst to empathy and understanding. The willingness to unpack their own histories and experiences of the system continues to push through the medicalised rhetoric by reaching the hearts and minds of audiences with relatable accounts and creative clout. Since 2016 The Listening to Voices Project have developed and presented their own stories in beautifully crafted theatre performances. These performances have been witnessed by hundreds of people from all areas of community. The performers Ben Pearson, Kelly Bayley, Sarah Sewell and Jain Thompson,

accompanied by Kate Fiske are pleased to be presenting at this year's 12th World Hearing Voices Congress in Cork. www.listeningtovoices.org.au



 *Hearing Voices*.gr
Greek Hearing Voices Network - Athens

12.45 -13.30 Hearing Voices Network Athens. *Networks, Movements, Emotions and the first poetry of our life (45 minutes)*

Voices, loved and idealized,
of those who have died, or of those
lost for us like the dead.
Sometimes they speak to us in dreams;
sometimes deep in thought the mind hears them.
And with their sound for a moment return
sounds from our life's first poetry—
like music at night, distant, fading away.
Constantine P. Cavafy (1904)

According to Maturana, love, as “a fundamental emotion in the constitution of the history of humankind”, broadens our mind for reflection, creates the possibility of choice, heals, and serves as the starting point and source of recovery. We aspire to give the current presentation as the outcome of an emotion-driven reflection process within the Greek Hearing Voices Network. The process aims to bring out the way in which core values of the Network's culture as a movement are underpinned by terms such as “co-evolution”, communities of learning and practice, “partner-like cooperation in developing common goals,” “solidarity,” “development of self-help potential”, learning networks. The process started in the beginning of March 2021. We don't know yet where it will lead. What we know is that questions create motion and emotion. What raises our spirit? Who talks through a person? Which voices are deployed? How can the voices teach us? How can we make use of all the voices, if possible? How are these voices linked with other voices? Some voices will remain unsaid like the sounds from our life's first poetry. We know that “the community is a potential school, a collective that teaches, shows, and shapes, a collective within - or with - which people can learn and teach in turn”. We also know that “even in an emerging society of control, there is a momentum that helps us cope with the fear of isolation, suppression and prohibition”. Finally, we know it is the love of Sandra Escher that still talks in our dreams. And we know all these because we are members of a community.

Hearing Voices Network Athens. After a series of visits by Jaqui Dillon, Peter Bullimore, Cate Crawford, Tori Reeve and Linda Whiting, during which they gave talks about alternative approaches to voices and paranoia, the Greek HVN was founded in 2010. It represents a partnership between individuals who hear voices or have other extreme or unusual experiences, professionals and allies within the community, all of whom are working together to change the assumptions made about these phenomena and create support, learning and healing opportunities for people across the country. But this is something more than collaboration. It is a vivid, autopoietic system that aims at producing meaning and therefore life. And that's how it started: from the quest of meaning deriving from the sorrow, the self-awareness and the radical stance of a young woman, Marianna Kefallinou, who met a creative, rebel, open minded person Peter Bullimore. And the spark was there. In our history this was our Big Bang moment. Meaning and dreaming... And then voice hearers entered the meetings, some professionals came, family members, students, persons coming from a community that has been violently attacked from neoliberal politics that aim to destroy the community. So,

these meeting turned out to be something more than a network of people. It proved to be a dreamland; a movement that aims to keep people connected.



14.15 -15.00 Pete Bullimore: *Working Through the 3 Stages of Hearing Voices Using a Profiling & Focussing Approach (45 minutes)*

In this presentation I will show the 3 stages of hearing voices then using real life case studies I will look at how we can collect information about a person's experiences by using profiling questions, then show we can expand on the information gathered by using focussing questions to help the person understand their experiences and move through the 3 stages.

The chair of the National Paranoia Network, **Pete Bullimore**, is testament to how effective accepting and working with voices can be. Pete heard his first voice aged seven, after suffering sexual abuse at the hands of a child minder. "I heard a child's voice telling me to keep going, that everything would be OK. It was reassuring, a bit like an imaginary friend," he says. But as the abuse went on the voices increased in number, eventually turning sinister and aggressive. "They told me to set myself on fire, to slash myself and destroy myself, often 20 or 30 voices all shouting at me at once," he says. By his mid-twenties Pete had lost his business, his family, his home, everything. "The voices just encompassed my life; I curled up in a chair and didn't wash or eat. "I was locked in a world of voices, paranoia and depression, and it was probably the most frightening time of my life," he says. Pete spent more than a decade after that on heavy medication, but the voices never went away. He had to get out of the psychiatric system to recover. It was only when he came off the medication and met people who share his experiences at the Hearing Voices Network that he was able to stop being so afraid of the voices and actually start listening to them. He changed his relationship with his voices and worked through the meaning of his voices and paranoia. He now runs his own training and consultancy agency delivering training on hearing voices childhood trauma and paranoia internationally. He also currently teaches at thirteen Universities in the UK. He also facilitates his own Maastricht Approach Center in Sheffield. He has set up Maastricht Centre's at the Radbone unit in Derby and the Hartington unit in Chesterfield in collaboration with Derby NHS trust; he has now launched a Maastricht Approach Center in Bradford and a National Maastricht Center in Telford. "I wouldn't want to get rid of my voices now, they're part of me," he says.

Friday 3 September

Concurrent Presentations

11.00-12.30 Concurrent Session C

You can select one 90-minute presentation/workshop OR two presentations/workshops (one from Part A and one from Part B)

WHOLE SESSION	
11.00 – 12.30	<i>Talking with Voices to Talking with Suicide: working creatively with HV approaches (90 minutes)</i> Matt Ball, Rory Ritchie, Berny Maywald, Australia
11.00 – 12.30	<i>How voices come and go: the dynamics of hearing voices in daily life (90 minutes)</i> Neil Thomas, Imogen Bell, Rachel Brand, Scott Pennay and Ben Hillard, Australia
PART A	
11.00 – 11.45	<i>Working Creatively Online with Young Voice Hearers (45 minutes)</i> Sarah Morgan, UK
11.00 – 11.45	<i>Why do voices say bad things to do good (or how my voices saved my live by telling me to kill myself). How communities can support the process (45 minutes)</i> Oana-Mihaela Iusco, Austria
PART B	
12.00 – 12.30	<i>It all starts with connection: the transformational power of Intentional Peer Support (30 minutes)</i> Lisa Archibald, UK
12.00 – 12.30	<i>A Shared Experience: The Virus and the Voice (30 minutes)</i> Paulann Grech, Malta
12.00 – 12.30	<i>Ancient Irish Stories of Madness & I (30 minutes)</i> Eoin Ó Tuama, Ireland

WHOLE SESSION

11.00 – 12.30 Matt Ball, Rory Ritchie, Berny Maywald: *Talking with Voices to Talking with Suicide: working creatively with HV approaches (90 minutes)*

The workshop will describe the value of creativity in the facilitation of Talking with Voices both when spending time with voice hearers and with people experiencing other extreme experiences such as suicide.

Talking with Suicide is being facilitated in South Australia as an adaptation of the Talking with Voices approach and supporting individuals to discover meaningful narratives towards making sense of their realities. This has provided opportunities for individuals and communities to understand the stories in our lives that are behind extreme states expressed as suicide.

The workshop aims to demonstrate the value of the Talking with Voices approach in understanding other common human experiences and the value of creativity in approaching individuals with genuine curiosity towards meaningful narratives and not the disempowering labels assigned by mental health systems.

Matt Ball is a Nurse Practitioner and Psychotherapist and founder of the Humane Clinic, Adelaide. He has past and current experiences of voice hearing. He has facilitated Hearing Voices groups and facilitated Maastricht Interviews and psychotherapy with voices hearers for many years. Matt has

developed the Dissociachotic framework, is the first author and trainer of the Suicide Narratives approach and is part of the leadership group that has opened the Just Listening Community.

Rory Ritchie is a Social Worker and Psychotherapist at the Humane Clinic. He facilitates Hearing Voices approaches and psychotherapy with people who experience voices and other realities and is Assistant Director at the Humane Clinic. He is a co-author and trainer of the Suicide Narratives approach; producer of the ReAwaken Podcast is part of the leadership group that has opened the Just Listening Community.

Berny Maywald is a Psychotherapist at the Humane Clinic, Adelaide. She has facilitated Hearing Voices groups for over 8 years, has led the establishment and facilitation of Suicide Narratives groups, and leads the group and volunteer program at Humane Clinic. She is an author and trainer in the Suicide Narratives approach and part of the leadership group that has opened the Just Listening Community.

11.00 – 12.30 Neil Thomas, Imogen Bell, Rachel Brand, Scott Pennay and Ben Hillard: *How voices come and go: the dynamics of hearing voices in daily life (90 minutes)*

This session will consider recent research and therapy development from our team on understanding how the experience of hearing voices comes and goes during the course of a day. The session will involve a series of brief presentations, each followed by audience discussion. We hope that the session will be interactive, and we especially welcome people considering this topic from the perspective of their own lived experience.

Imogen Bell will start with a summary from a systematic review of the existing research literature about the factors that have been found to predict when voices occur, which include variables such as stress, negative emotions, and different types of activity. **Rachel Brand** will then present new research investigating the potential role of intrusive trauma memories in understanding when voices occur. **Scott Pennay** will then discuss findings from his PhD research on the many ways in which people may engage with their voices when they hear them, and people's experiences of this. Session chair **Neil Thomas** will go on to discuss work in Melbourne's Voices Clinic in using an individualised understanding of day-to-day variation in voices to help people better cope with this experience. Finally, **Ben Hillard** will present reflections on the presentations and the broader group discussion.

Attendees will gain an understanding of the latest research into how voices may vary from day-to-day and ideas of how this knowledge can be applied in coping with hearing voices and/or helping others with this experience.

Associate Professor Neil Thomas (session chair), Deputy Director, Centre for Mental Health, Swinburne University; and Consultant Clinical Psychologist, AlfredHealth, Melbourne, Australia. Neil established a pioneering voices clinic in Melbourne 15 years ago and is a clinician-researcher who leads a team researching therapeutic approaches for people who hear voices, with over 100 scientific publications to date.

Dr Imogen Bell, Research Fellow, Orygen Youth Health and University of Melbourne, Australia. Imogen is a clinician-researcher in youth mental health who is working on novel therapeutic approaches for helping people with experiences of hearing voices.

Dr Rachel Brand, Lecturer in Clinical Psychology, University of Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia. Rachel is a clinical psychologist with extensive expertise in working therapeutically with

people who hear voices, and who conducts research on the role of trauma and emotion in hearing voices.

Scott Pennay, PhD Student, Centre for Mental Health, Swinburne University, Melbourne, Australia. Scott is a PhD student conducting research on the various ways in which people may engage with the voices that they hear.

Ben Hillard. Lived Experience Advisory Panel, Centre for Mental Health, Swinburne University; and Peer Worker, Voices Vic at Uniting, Melbourne, Australia. Ben is a lived experience consultant and peer worker who will join as discussant for the session.

PART A

11.00 – 11.45 Sarah Morgan: *Working Creatively Online with Young Voice Hearers (45 minutes)*

During the last year of the global pandemic, Voice Collective received a large number of enquiries from parents and young people under the age of 14 hearing voices. We realised this was an area of need so decided to launch an online peer support group specifically for this age group. Through research and discussions with other services and charities, and my own personal experience working with this younger age group, it was clear that a more creative approach may be more appropriate to help children explore their experiences. In this 30-minute workshop I will talk about some of challenges and planning stages involved in forming this groups, as well as a discussion about some creative tools you can use to explore hearing voices with young children online.

Sarah Morgan is Voice Collective Development Worker. Voice Collective is a project based at Mind in Camden supporting Children and Young People who hear voices, see visions and have other unique sensory beliefs and experiences. I have been a part of the project for a year now, and been working in the field of mental health for over 10 years (Special Education Needs support in schools, Social Care and Family support in schools and local authority and Mental Health charities) since completing my BSc Psychology undergraduate degree. Alongside the Voice Collective project, I am studying for my MSc in Counselling Children and Young People. Working creatively with young people in mental health has always been a passion of mine which I hope to share with you during my workshop as part of the World Hearing Voices Congress.

11.00 – 11.45 Oana-Mihaela Iusco: *Why do voices say bad things to do good (or how my voices saved my live by telling me to kill myself). How communities can support the process (45 minutes)*

In my presentation I would like to depict the topic of so-called bad voices and why voices often mean good, even if they say the worst imaginable things. I also want to show examples on how I felt able to improve the communication with the voices, so that it became possible to listen to and understand the content of the voices instead of just hearing voices. Furthermore, I also want to focus on why it is more helpful and healing if communities support the voice hearer, then to just demonise the voices. To do this, I would also like to share a story of my voices: A few years ago, my voices told me to kill myself repeatedly. It was an awful and frightening experience which also led to suicide attempts and psychiatric hospital stays. This experience of voices was used by professionals, others, and myself to explain that my voices were bad and just a sign of my psychotic illness. The fact that nobody knew about at the time, however, and that nobody had asked further about, was that I was very suicidal at the time anyway and that I had made well thought-out suicidal plans over the previous months. Every time I had just finished another suicide plan and was ready to put it into practice my voices kicked in louder than ever, which led to some rushed action or another to take

my own life. In this way I could not go through with my very well thought out plans. In my recovery (with help of Joachim Schnackenberg and Senait Debesay) I worked this topic out with my voices, and they explained themselves that they just wanted to interfere with my plans, so that I did not kill myself successfully. This was the time when I realized that my voices saved my life by telling me to kill myself and I also realized that the voices were never bad in the first place – we had just had major communication issues. In addition to this distinctive example, there are numerous other stories of me and many other voice hearers and our voices, which show that voices often are not bad, but they often cannot find a better way to express their good intention.

Oana-Mihaela Iusco is a voice hearer since her early childhood, in her teenage years she experienced psychiatric hospitals, medication, coercion, therapy and many other good and bad aspects of mental healthcare. A major point in her life was when she accepted her voices as part of herself and was convinced that there is a reason behind them and her struggles. This was the first step into her successful recovery. On this very tough but also rewarding journey she was enabled to her decision to live, and to find a path out of the stigmata of psychiatric illness. Along the track she met the hearing voices movement and the efc Institute, which accompanied her further towards her recovery. While recovering she was able to begin her Biology and Philosophy studies and start working in many companies and numerous fields. Now she is finishing her studies, founded her own company LITTLEVOICE, works as peer counsellor at a regional governmental counselling center, is part of the team of the efc Institute, is a board member of the NGO Achterbahn and support group facilitator. She is further a board member of the Styrian monitoring committee of compliance with the UN CRPD in Styria and additionally also takes part of numerous other projects, workgroups and committees regarding voice hearing, mental wellbeing, anti-stigma, prevention, and UN CRPD.

PART B

12.00 – 12.30 Lisa Archibald: *It all starts with connection: the transformational power of Intentional Peer Support* (30 minutes)

The aim of this presentation is to invite people to consider how connection and relationships have been impacted by the pandemic. During a year of physical distancing and restrictions, have we also seen an opportunity to be more intentional about how we connect and support each other? Intentional Peer Support offers a framework for building communities with a focus on meaningful dialogue and mutual aid.

Lisa Archibald is a proud Scot who recently moved back home after 7 years of living and learning in New Zealand. Lisa has worked in peer support for over 20 years after attending a peer support group herself as a student. After graduating, Lisa became a group facilitator, peer support worker then went into management of services and eventually became an Intentional Peer Support trainer in 2016. Lisa was a Scottish Winston Churchill fellow in 2013 and a Yale University Let(s) LEAD fellow in the New Zealand cohort in 2019. Lisa is a student on the MSc Mad Studies course in Edinburgh and works part-time for Intentional Peer Support as a Trainer/ Coordinator.

12.00 – 12.30 Paulann Grech: *A Shared Experience: The Virus and the Voice* (30 minutes)

Since the beginning of the pandemic, life as we knew it, changed drastically. Mental health challenges increased considerably and though this is a concerning issue, it was also a means of bringing mental health to the forefront and perhaps lessen the stigma. Whilst the experience of Hearing Voices may not be necessarily related to or classified as a mental health challenge, it is often misunderstood by society and quickly pigeon-holed as an ‘illness’ or as an ‘unexplainable strange

phenomenon'. Yet, the general public's experience of and reaction to the Covid-19 virus may be quite similar to the 'hearing of a voice' or to experiencing a stimulus which is not really visible or audible to others. Whilst many of us believed that the virus was there, most of us never really had the opportunity to see the virus with the naked (or microscopic) eye. Yet, many never doubted its existence and still felt anxious and scared because of its reported presence. In this view, parallels can be drawn to the 'Hearing Voices' experience. In this presentation, this concept shall be discussed, in terms of why the 'Hearing Voices' experience is often misunderstood. I shall also describe how Hearing Voices Malta launched a national awareness campaign during the Covid era – specifically because these parallels could be highlighted, and non-voice hearers were probably more open to understanding and empathizing with voice hearing and similar experiences. Our journey through online methods of implementing this campaign and continuing with our Hearing Voices Work in Malta during these challenging times shall also be explored.

Paulann Grech is a senior lecturer with the Department of Mental Health, University of Malta. Prior to focusing on lecturing, Dr. Grech used to work as a practitioner within the state community mental health services in Malta. She completed her Bachelor's degree in Nursing followed by an M.Sc., finished her PhD studies at the University of Sheffield in 2014 and completed a Masters programme in Psychiatry with Cardiff University. In addition to lecturing, she is involved in research projects related to critical psychiatry, service user involvement and approaches to understanding and managing mental distress. Dr. Grech is the chairperson of the NGO Hearing Voices Malta, which is the Maltese branch of the Hearing Voices Network. She also sits on the board of directors of the European Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Research in Continuing Professional Development. Dr. Grech is a mental health activist and is a co-organiser of two ongoing campaigns, namely #StopStigma and #myreality. In this role, she regularly co-organises awareness events and participates in others as an invited speaker, focusing on different mental health aspects. As a writer, Dr. Grech is particularly interested in observing and blogging about life from a mental health perspective via her thrice weekly mini-articles on: <https://www.facebook.com/paulann.grech> She has just published a book called *Coping with Coronavirus: Self-help notes for a Pandemic*.

12.00 – 12.30 Eoin Ó Tuama: Ancient Irish Stories of Madness & I (30 minutes)

I aim to look at some stories concerning madness from Ancient Ireland especially that of Mad King Sweeney, using slides. Sweeney or Mad Sweeney is a well-known figure from Ancient Irish History who was described in early Christian writings. I'll be looking briefly at his story and also tying in some themes such as what life might have been like for the 'mad' at that time, aspects of life at that time such as the different legal system, clashes between Druidic belief systems and Christianity, congregations of 'madmen' at places such as Glenn na nGealt (Glen of the Mad) in Co Kerry and so on.

I (**Eoin Ó Tuama**) am a Service User/Survivor of psychiatry for over 25 years. I began hearing voices and seeing visions after third level education. I was sectioned in 1996 for five months and, like most people, had every 'treatment' in the book. Survivor/activist groups like Irish Advocacy Network, HVN etc. & holistic therapy helped me recover to a large extent. I still take psychiatric medication and have periodic episodes of voices. I work for the Occupational Therapy Department of the Donegal Mental Health Services. I have been delivering the Dance voice and movement as a service provider for the past seven years. I have an honours degree and a Masters' degree in Biological Sciences.

15.15 -16.45 Concurrent Session D

You can select one 90-minute presentation/workshop

15.15 – 16.45 David Adams, Cindy Marty Hadge and Edwin Herzog: *The Development of Hearing Voices Network Family and Friends Groups in the United States (90 minutes)*

In 2020, the Hearing Voices Network USA revised its Charter to include Family and Friends groups, including this new statement of purpose:

Family and friends are uniquely positioned to validate the experiences of those who hear voices or otherwise perceive things not perceived by others. At the same time, the experience of family members and friends also benefits from validation and a sense of community as they learn to resist oppressive conventions and develop alternative frameworks for understanding their own and their loved ones' experiences.

A number of family group facilitators from across the US came together to forge the new language, and three of us who initiated family and friends' groups across the United States are offering this workshop, open to all, though family members in particular are invited to participate.

It has been challenging to create family support groups that adhere to HVN values, but the need is great for groups that are not focused on illness and where friends and family members can share and explore their own fears, hopes and needs in relationship to supporting loved ones who experience voices, visions, or other unusual beliefs or experiences.

The first 30 minutes of the workshop will be a presentation of the new Family and Friends portion of the HVN-USA Charter and of our experiences facilitating these groups, including consideration of the ways Family and Friends groups are the same as and different from traditional HVN groups. The following 60 minutes will allow attendees to participate in a HVN Family and Friends group.

David Adams (he/him/his) is Associate Professor of English at Ohio State University and a Co-founder and Facilitator for the Central Ohio Hearing Voices Network. adams.428@osu.edu

Cindy Marty Hadge is Lead Trainer for the Wildflower Alliance and Hearing Voices Network USA. cindy@westernmassrlc.org

Edwin Herzog (he/him/his) is a Co-founder and Facilitator for the Bay Area Hearing Voices Network and a Member of the Board of Directors for Hearing Voices Network USA. edherzog48@gmail.com

15.15 – 16.45 Joachim Schnackenberg, Isla Parker and Mark Hopfenbeck: *Inspirational insights from "The Practical Handbook of Hearing Voices" (2021) (90 minutes)*

This new publication "The Practical Handbook of Hearing Voices" – due to be published in the summer of 2021 – introduces a wide variety of inspiring approaches to being with and accompanying people who experience distress in relation to their voices, visions and unique beliefs.

This 38-chapter book includes contributions from many members of the Hearing Voices Movement but also from people outside of the HVM who have been seeking innovative non-medical approaches to working with voices, visions and non-shared realities. In this way, it seeks to offer a

forum to both learn from each other but also bridge the gap between different traditions. Its practical focus is also meant to make it accessible to anyone interested in the topic.

In this workshop, the presenters – who have both edited and also contributed chapters to the book – will both reflect on what can be learned from the various approaches. The presentation will then focus on three different chapters in order to illustrate how practical and helpful the Handbook is in its content and format. Joachim Schnackenberg will present his chapter ‘Experience focused counselling with voice-hearers’, Mark Hopfenbeck will present his chapter ‘Responding to trauma dialogically: Peer-supported Open Dialogue’ and Isla Parker will present her chapter ‘How writing memoirs and poetry may help voice hearers’.

There will be an invitation for participants of the workshop/presentation to contribute their learning from their journey with voices, visions or non-shared realities.

Joachim Schnackenberg has been part of the HVM since the year 2000. His background is in both mental health nursing and in social work. He was first introduced to the HVM via Ron Coleman and Mike Smith. Together with his colleagues Senait Debesay, Christian Feldmann and Oana-Mihaela Iusco he runs freelance training in the HVM approach (aka Making Sense of Voices or Experience Focussed Counselling) across the German speaking countries in particular. He is also employed as a director of hearing voices and recovery in a mental health service provider organisation in the North of Germany. He remains an active researcher and provides consultancy and supervisory services on a freelance basis in the hearing voices approach.

Isla Parker is a pen name. Isla is a freelance editor and writer who promotes the understanding of health issues and well-being. She undertook a degree in English and found it interesting to study how literature explores illness. This led to Isla writing a novel about anorexia for teenagers called ‘Size Zero?’, that is loosely based on her own experience. Isla has co-edited ‘The Practical Handbook of Hearing Voices’ and ‘The Practical Handbook of Dementia’ for the publisher PCCS Books. Recently, she has co-edited ‘The Practical Handbook of Eating Difficulties’ for Pavilion Publishing. In her free time Isla enjoys playing the piano. She also takes part in an online writing group that has introduced her to writers from different countries.

Mark Hopfenbeck is a social anthropologist specializing in health and social policy, an Assistant Professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Visiting Fellow at London South Bank University (LSBU) and Individual Partner at the Collaborating Centre for Values-based Practice in Health and Social Care, St Catherine’s College, Oxford University. For the past 20 years he has been teaching and supporting the implementation of the Open Dialogue approach. He is currently co-investigator on a large-scale programme of research into crisis and continuing mental health care within the NHS (the ODDESSI trial) and is on the advisory board of an international collaborative study to evaluate the effectiveness of Open Dialogue in various contexts around the world (the HOPEnDialogue project).

15.15 – 16.45 Elisabeth Svanholmer and Douglas Ross: “The Call” – Exploring Voices Collaboratively Through Art (90 minutes)

This workshop will explore collaborative and creative processes and provide some guidance on how to initiate and work through creative projects on voice hearing. It will be accompanied by examples of the work as well as the stages of work-in-progress.

In 2016 Elisabeth Svanholmer and Douglas Ross began a four-year project to create collaborative art pieces that would be informed by Elisabeth's voice hearing experiences.

They had met at a conference to re-envision mental health in Cork in 2011 and Elisabeth was drawn to Douglas's mythological and archetypal approach to his work, as well as his use of the human body as an expressive motif.

They developed the ideas collaboratively via the internet and then shot thousands of images, mainly in Leitrim, a remote area of Ireland. They then set about editing the images, both side by side at the computer and remotely.

The result is a body of work comprising 52 visual artworks which have a mythic character and are mainly fine art nude photomontages in style., along with prose and poetry, which has been published in book form.

The workshop will explore areas such as:

- Why create art? And why create art collaboratively?
- How we commenced the project.
- Finding common ground.
- Involving voices in the process.
- Working remotely;
- The practicalities of getting the work into the public domain.

Elisabeth Svanholmer lives in West Yorkshire, UK. She has no official qualification to do anything in life. She is a self-taught facilitator and organiser of training, supervision and other ways of people coming together to learn and connect. She is passionate about creating space for the things that may be seen as uncomfortable, strange, inconvenient, confusing and distressing. She values both complexity and simplicity, chaos and calm, pain and ease. She finds inspiration and solace in nature, movement and relationships.

Douglas Ross is a visual artist who has been making art in Bray since 1985. He has worked collaboratively since the early 1990s with groups such as asylum seekers, farmers, factory workers, students and a women's collective to help to give a creative voice to their collective experiences. He also engages with individuals to find threads of common humanity and weave them into shared creative expressions. He was a founder member of the peer-led mental health support group Renew and an active member of the CVNI for several years.

15.15 – 16.45 Sarah Morgan and Fiona Malpass: Peer support for young voice hearers, in times of a global pandemic (90 minutes)

At Voice Collective, we hold the values of the hearing voices movement, and of peer support more broadly, at the heart of all we do. These values have been more important than ever whilst we have been navigating the global crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic. Connecting young people who have similar experiences, and providing safe spaces of solidarity for them to share their distress, anxieties, or anything else, has been an integral part of how we have provided support during these times. We run a number of peer support groups for young people who hear voices, which we had to adapt and move online during the pandemic. Join us for this 45-minute workshop where we will discuss in more detail the learning we have done in the process of moving our groups online, the benefits of working this way, and the challenges of holding and facilitating these online spaces.

Voice Collective is a UK based project called Voice Collective, which is part of Mind in Camden. Voice Collective supports young people who hear voices, have other sensory experiences, or unique beliefs, as well as their families. They work from a position of combining a mix of academic, personal and professional experiences into their practice, and deliver talks on a range of topics on mental health and distress

Sarah Morgan is Voice Collective Development Worker, and has been a part of the project for a year now, and worked in the field of mental health for over 10 years (Special Education Needs support in schools, Social Care and Family support in schools and local authority and Mental Health charities) since completing her BSc Psychology undergraduate degree. Alongside the Voice Collective project, she is studying for her MSc in Counselling Children and Young People.

Fiona Malpass is Voice Collective Senior Development Worker. After many years of struggling with various forms of distress, and being under the care of both child and adult mental health services, Fiona uses their experience to inform and provoke discussions that challenge dominant narratives and provide space to open alternative ways of thinking, and this has led to them studying an MA in Philosophy and Mental Health.

15.15 – 16.45 Vikki Price: *Intentional connections: exploring the breadths of togetherness (45/90 minutes)*

Personally: my experience of peer support and learning about shared experiences has been life changing. It has allayed my fears of being inherently broken and has connected me to a community of peers that far expands my own little corner of the world. From a starting place of complete isolation, I have found my own sense of belonging among my peers that I never imagined possible: and beyond that, whole communities of people with different ideas, interpretations, and beliefs all around the world. These relationships have helped me feel part of something much bigger, more meaningful, and more tangible than I could possibly feel on my own.

Through a lived experience lens, this workshop will explore ‘intentionality’ in nurturing connection, and how this informs our thoughts about communities and networks. We’ll consider the learning from technical knowledge like social network analysis and look beyond the idea of one-to-one relationships, groups and communities to think about how we can connect much more widely to a larger movement. The workshop will be a combination of stories, creative & interactive activities and exploration of experiences that move towards a collective sense of togetherness. We’ll think about what sits behind the relationships we value, and what anchors our personal experience against a much larger network of diverse allies. Finally, the workshop will explore networking as an intentional practice, and how discovery of more communities can evolve our experience of ourselves and the meaning we draw from stories and relationships.

Vikki is a lived experience strategist, intelligence analyst and project manager with a varied 20-year career spanning justice, law enforcement and mental health sectors. Her areas of expertise are intelligence-led decision making, service design, influencing policy development and critical analysis of evidence. She has held leadership roles in the development of harm reduction projects in areas such as human trafficking, domestic abuse, missing people, cybercrime, and community violence/hate crime. A passionate advocate for lived experience expertise, trauma informed approaches, human rights, and accountability & integrity across statutory sectors, she has brought her personal experiences of peer support, collective advocacy, psychiatric diagnosis/treatment, and life interrupting distress to her work. Most recently, she has managed the planning and development

of statutory mental health services, and led the implementation of the first trauma informed, user-led peer support programme in the NHS. As well as being managing director of Peer Hub, Vikki is an associate with NSUN and an Intentional Peer Support organisational trainer.

15.15 – 16.45 Iseult Twamley & Rai Waddingham: *Open Dialogue: Listening to everyone's voice(s) - workshop/interactive format (90 minutes)*

Hearing, and responding to, all the voices in the room is a key tenet of Open Dialogue (an exciting approach to human crises originating in Western Lapland and now being implemented in different ways around the world). This workshop explores this idea in the context of the Hearing Voices Movement, looking at what the dialogic approach might offer us in our own lives and in our support of others. It will explore some of the tensions in this approach, especially when we live in a world where many are marginalised, unheard and discriminated against. It will look at how we can nurture and welcome polyphony - many different voices - within and between us.

Jacqui Dillon introduced me (**Iseult**) to HVN in 2011, I am forever grateful to her! I work as a psychologist in the Irish mental health service, and lead an open dialogue implementation there. In my partnership with Rai Waddingham (Dialogue (R)Evolution) we offer open dialogue training and supervision, supporting communities internationally. My life experience of trauma has given me a first-hand experience of extreme states. Two of my family members were given diagnoses of schizophrenia and this has been a significant part of my journey. Of recent years I have been learning an indigenous & shamanic way of looking at the world and healing which has been transformative, and influences how I approach realities in my own life. At core I am interested in how we can be with each other in our darkest times.

Rai is an Open Dialogue Practitioner, international trainer and has experience of creating, establishing and managing innovative Hearing Voices Movements and influenced peer support-based projects in a range of contexts, including youth, prison, forensic, inpatient and community. She has personal experience of hearing voices, psychosis, trauma, self-harm and hospitalisation. Lived experience, and the collective wisdom developed within the Hearing Voices Network and Survivor Movement(s) are the lenses through which she approaches all of her work. These are her guiding lights. As a trainer, Rai has facilitated courses and workshops in many countries including USA, Ireland, Bosnia, Serbia, Czech Republic, Israel and Australia. Rai is engaged in research and currently undertaking a PhD in survivor knowledge. Attending a Hearing Voices Group, back in 2000, was a pivotal moment without which she feels she would probably still be stuck in a cycle of hospital admissions with little hope.

17.00 -17.45 Concurrent Sessions E

You can select one presentation/workshop from Part A and one from Part B

PART A	
17.00 – 17.45	Systemically induced paranoia – reflecting on Black Lives Matter (45 minutes) Jessica Pons, UK
17.00 – 17.45	Dual diagnosis with addiction – the hidden challenge for people who hear voice voices &/or get unusual experience (45 minutes) Jon Caldbeck, UK
17.00 – 17.45	Documentary ‘Voices of Vincent’ and Q&A (45 minutes) Vincent Swierstra, Netherlands
17.00 – 17.45	“I don’t know”: Exploring the dynamics of uncertainty and the ineffable in distressing and overwhelming experiences, including ‘hearing voices.’ (45 minutes) Fiona Malpass, UK
PART B	
18.00 – 18.30	The Problem with the Word "Psychosis" (30 minutes) David Adams, USA
18.00 – 18.30	Engaging the Margins: Integrating Critical Perspectives and Bioethics (30 minutes). Kathleen Lowenstein, USA
18.00 – 18.30	Delusions of Grandeur or Spirit Healing (30 minutes) Michael Ryan, Ireland
18.00 – 18.30	The Physicists and Voice Hearers Meet to Explore Dark Energy & Matter (30 minutes) David Hallsted, USA.

PART A

17.00 – 17.45 Jessica Pons: Systemically induced paranoia – reflecting on Black Lives Matter (45 minutes)

For the past 18 months I’ve been working in the UK as a Hearing Voices Project Manager throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst also riding the wave of people becoming more aware of racial injustice via Black Lives Matter.

Rather than the UK’s reckoning around racism making life easier, it’s led to increased paranoia. I see a parallel in having my reality doubted regarding racism (for example via the UK government’s report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities), with having my reality doubted when it comes to being a recipient of psychiatry and unethical therapeutic practices.

Speaking out about racism this year has had a toll. When people don’t believe me when I talk about racism, it triggers ‘the what is real’ traumatic pattern, leading to heightened distress. I feel I was naïve to speak out before, without thinking through the trauma of having your truth questioned.

Join me in this workshop to think through how white people can do better; how racialised people can protect themselves; and ultimately how do we come together and fight systems that make these dynamics more likely?

Jessica Pons began working with people diagnosed with 'psychosis' in 2006 and is now Hearing Voices project manager at Mind in Camden, developing peer support groups in forensic services, immigration removal centres, young people's mental health services and the community for people who hear voices, have other sensory experiences or alternative realities. Jess has family members diagnosed with psychosis, plus is reflective of her own experiences in the liminal spaces of psychosis, and as a recipient of diagnoses such as ‘bipolar’ and ‘borderline personality disorder’. Jess is also a

qualified integrative psychotherapist practicing within a critical mental health feminist/socio-political framework. She has personal and political interest in institutional racism within psychology/psychiatry, and is a producer for ISPS UK film 'Dismantling the Master's House'.

17.00 – 17.45 Jon Caldbeck: *Dual diagnosis with addiction – the hidden challenge for people who hear voice voices &/or get unusual experience (45 minutes)*

How many people who hear voices or get unusual experiences go onto develop an addiction issue? With people with a diagnosis of either schizophrenia or bipolar, as many as 50% of them will go onto develop a concurrent addiction issue of some kind. So, even considering that people who hear voices or get unusual experiences, don't all have one of these diagnoses, this could still turn into quite a high percentage of us who do – I don't know, so let's talk about it!

Addiction isn't talked about much in some HVN groups, but it is a big problem, and one that I believe, HVN should consider opening itself up to talking about. Is there a need for a survey of our members to find out how many of us use some form of substance or addictive behaviour to cope with our voices or unusual experiences? And isn't it time we as a network helped to facilitate our members into being able to talk openly about addiction, how to avoid it, and how to recover if we slip into it?

Other topics I'd like to discuss:

- Why is addiction such a taboo subject?
- How HVN can help its members
- The mental health system often fails at recognising addiction issues: is it time we did something more to empower our members with information about how to recognize it when we're using alcohol or substances abnormally and provide our members with information on how to seek help if we slip into these types of problems?
- What do we mean by 'dual recovery'?
- The common problems with getting into dual recovery
- Useful sources of support for dual recovery.

My name is **Jon** and I have a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia and have lived experience of hearing voices and unusual experiences. I am in 'dual recovery' which means I've recognised that I have a concurrent addiction issue (to alcohol) running alongside my mental health condition and that I actively work on both my addiction issues and my mental health.

I have not had a drink for about 20 months now, and stopping drinking & using has enabled me to look at all of my problems objectively. This enabled me to look into seeking help from organisations like HVN, which I have found really interesting and helpful to me.

I am setting up a social enterprise that uses its profits to develop a dual diagnosis resources website that aims to signpost all of the main support options available to people who have a dual diagnosis to help more people to get into dual recovery.

I am passionate about dual diagnosis and helping people to develop the healthy support networks they need to help them to develop and grow past their addiction issues.

I am planning on setting up a HVN group for those who hear voices or get unusual experiences and who also struggle with some form of addiction issue. Being actively in recovery from their addiction will not be a requirement.

17.00 – 17.45 Vincent Swierstra: Documentary ‘Voices of Vincent’ and Q&A (45 minutes)

In this session, I will show a documentary about my hearing voices, ‘Voices of Vincent’, which was released recently, followed by a Q&A session.

Vincent Swierstra is a musician, the author of *The Magician*, *Memoires of a Fool*, and the protagonist of the documentary *Voices of Vincent*. Vincent studied Cultural Anthropology and Hermetica at the UvA in Amsterdam. During the second year of his studies, in 2005, he had a severe psychosis. Although it took a long time to recover, he eventually finished his bachelor degree in 2011. After graduating, he decided to focus on playing the sarangi, a rare instrument from India. Besides studying in Amsterdam with Joep Bor, he also went to Mumbai three times to take lessons from Grammy winner Dhruva Ghosh. He also decided to write a book about his experiences. In 2017 *The Magician*, *Memoires of a Fool*, was published by Paris Books. The story of the psychosis is told through the eyes of Vincent himself and gives the reader a glimpse of what it’s like to have a psychotic experience. Another old dream of Vincent was to make a film about hearing voices. The Dutch filmmaker Maarten Kal made this dream come true. The documentary shows how Vincent, years after his psychosis, still struggles with his voices. Since the book and film were released in 2017, Vincent has occasionally been giving lectures about hearing voices all over the Netherlands. Schooled as a cultural anthropologist, he is very interested in non-medical perspectives. He has also performed a lot with his sarangi and recently released his first EP. *The Sarangi Sessions Vol.1* is a collaboration with four Dutch hip hop producers.

17.00 – 17.45 Fiona Malpass: “I don’t know”: Exploring the dynamics of uncertainty and the ineffable in distressing and overwhelming experiences, including ‘hearing voices.’ (45 minutes)

This presentation will look at sitting with uncertainty, thinking about experiences that don't have words, and being in a position of not knowing. I have often used the term ‘hearing voices’, but at times I'm not sure that's the 'right' phrase for my experiences. Yet, I don't know how else to refer to them. As Edmund White says “There’s something mystic and beautiful in the ineffable”. Phenomena which by their very nature are ineffable, aren’t necessarily negative and shouldn’t be pathologised - they can often be associated with positive experiences. However, if someone is in distress and unable to describe or express what is going on for them, where does that leave that individual, as well as those who wish to support them? Models of support can lean towards making sense of experiences in some way and having a framework(s)/language with which to discuss them. However, what does this mean for experiences that can’t be made sense of, can’t be expressed or conveyed in any way? What can we do if all we are confronted with is "I don't know"? The art of not knowing, sitting with/accepting uncertainty, and the implications this might have for supporting people who are overwhelmed will be discussed. Space will be given to think through how people can be supported without knowing what is wrong, using personal examples, as well as cases of working with young people who sense things that others don’t, have other unique or what might be called ‘unusual’ experiences or beliefs.

Fiona Malpass is currently the Senior Development Worker for a UK based project called Voice Collective, which is part of Mind in Camden. Voice Collective supports young people who hear voices, have other sensory experiences, or unique beliefs, as well as their families. They work from a position of combining a mix of academic, personal and professional experiences into their practice, and deliver talks on a range of topics on mental health and distress. After many years of struggling with various forms of distress, and being under the care of both child and adult mental health services, Fiona uses their experience to inform and provoke discussions that challenge dominant narratives and provide space to open alternative ways of thinking, and this has led to them studying an MA in Philosophy and Mental Health.

PART B

18.00 – 18.30 David Adams: *The Problem with the Word "Psychosis" (30 minutes)*

"Psychosis" is a sneaky, versatile term, used freely by scientists, clinicians, and many people who have lived experience. It is prevalent in both scientific journals and personal narratives. In the Hearing Voices groups I facilitate, some participants find the term helpful while others find it objectionable (this difference is what led me to this topic). Over time, the meaning of "psychosis" has varied so much that one historian has jokingly labelled it a "mad traveller": "readers of both the primary and secondary literatures on psychosis soon feel as if they have plummeted into a narrative maze with only an unreliable protagonist to follow as a guide."

My presentation attempts to shine light on this term, which is so often used without critical reflection or clear definition. I have no interest in criticizing its use when it helps give meaning to individuals' experiences, but I am suspicious of its easy circulation in clinical and scientific contexts. Why has it been purged from diagnostic manuals even as it has helped shape scientific knowledge?

After surveying examples of scientific, clinical, and personal uses of the term "psychosis," I conclude that it often cuts short people's curiosity about the meaning of alternate realities and perceived breaks from a shared reality. Thus, it too often limits the sense of solidarity and connection among people "negotiating alternate realities" (to borrow a phrase from the Congress CFP). This time of heightened need for solidarity and connection calls for a more restrained, critical use of the term "psychosis."

David Adams (he/him/his) is Associate Professor of English at Ohio State University and a Co-founder and Facilitator for the Central Ohio Hearing Voices Network. He is also a Facilitator for the HVN-USA Friends and Family group. adams.428@osu.edu

18.00 – 18.30 Kathleen Lowenstein: *Engaging the Margins: Integrating Critical Perspectives and Bioethics (30 minutes)*

Pushback from within critical mental health has argued that paying heed to the perspectives of individuals with lived experience of madness and distress has important implications for both research and practice. However, relatively little attention has been paid to the implications that interventions from within critical mental health, particularly interventions based on pushback against standard conceptual frameworks, have for conceptualizations of ethical responses to experiences of madness and distress.

This presentation seeks to bridge the gap by placing critical perspectives, such as insights from the Hearing Voices Movement, into conversation with bioethics. In particular, it situates itself at the intersection between critical mental health and bioethics, asking how commonly-encountered

ethical dilemmas (such as treatment nonadherence) change when understood from the perspective of critical work that integrates standard conceptualizations of ethical responses to madness and distress with an explicit awareness of power relations in the provider-service user dynamic. Accordingly, it fills a gap in the literature: namely, the lack of discussion of what ethics in critical mental health looks like, by asking how insights from those with lived experience of voice hearing can inform approaches to ethical issues within the ethics of mental health and illness more broadly.

Kathleen Lowenstein is a doctoral student whose research focuses on the ethics of mental health and illness, with a specific focus on lived experience of voice hearing and experiences commonly understood as psychosis. She is particularly interested in integrating critical perspectives into conceptualizations of ethical responses to madness and distress.

18.00 – 18.30 Michael Ryan: *Delusions of Grandeur or Spirit Healing (30 minutes)*

I intend to give brief introduction of myself as a voice hearer, share my understanding of voices, which can come from many sources, such as trauma in the sub-conscious, spirit other people and possible many other sources. This understanding would mostly come from my own experiences and from interacting with HVNI groups etc. I will draw on some research into voices hearers as healers in the past. I will include some Reiki, having had good feedback on this as a healer. I will mention the expectation of healing in a high state of mind or the actual healing effect when I am working (I will share some positive feedback from clients.) I then, technology permitting, bring in spiritual links to the people in the group.

I am **Michael Ryan** and have been a voice hearer as long as I remember. I made contact with the Hearing Voices Network Ireland (HVNI) about 10 years ago, when I did some training organized by them. I am currently chairman of the HVNI board. At the moment, I run an online HV Support group every Sunday. In one of the many things I have tried around healing, I ended up in spiritual circles with many talented people. I started learning how to read tarot cards, and many other various things along the way. I learned and still am learning to bring in what are called links from spirit and channel stuff from spirit. I have done a few courses and a weekend with Tony Stockwell just before lockdown. You can see some examples on my Reiki Page on Facebook see link below. Any questions or anything unclear just let me know. <https://www.facebook.com/ReikiMike>

18.00 – 18.30 David Hallsted: *The Physicists and Voice Hearers Meet to Explore Dark Energy & Matter (30 minutes)*

I will explain why physicists with the help of voice hearers will be able to quantify all the different aspect of Dark Energy & Matter, DEM. I will use examples of how I interacted and examined DEM for over a decade before I even realized that it was DEM. I plan to end the session with an uplifting message that voice hearers are the future of Earth because of their innate ability to interact with Dark Energy & Matter.

David Hallsted and **my voice, Ibol**. When I was young, she was the voice of my invisible friend. In my teens, she replayed music I liked that surrounded my head to keep away the bad voices that often invade voice hearers. Throughout my life, I experienced unexplainable events. Ibol used clairvoyant thoughts to assure me to not obsess about the unknown, that later it would be explained.

In my thirties, I finally heard her and her friends talk. Over the years, our adventures became more

complex as they helped me understand the human world. Ibol taught me how to make timeline records and to examine records to study the physical world. Now I am comfortable to say that I hear many voices and do work with them. In January of 2015, I started a blog of our adventure.

At the end of September of 2020, I retired from work for a new adventure to decipher Dark Energy and Matter, DEM. My voice, Ibol, allowed me to use her eyes to clairvoyantly see the world of the DEM. With clairvoyant vision and record examination, the patterns of the DEM world interacting with our physical world can be classified. <https://www.thevoiceinsidemyhead-myavatar.com/>