

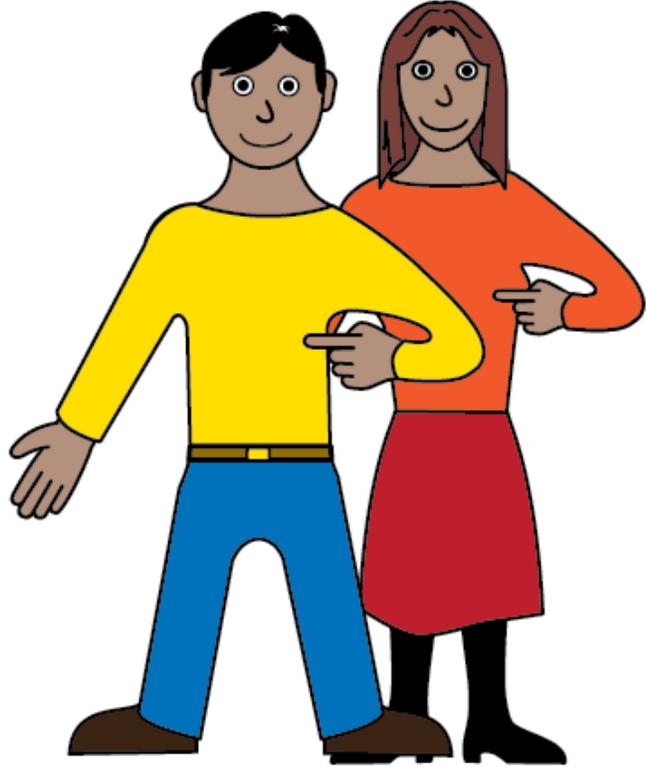


Lots of people hear voices

Some people hear them all the time and some people don't, but it is very common.

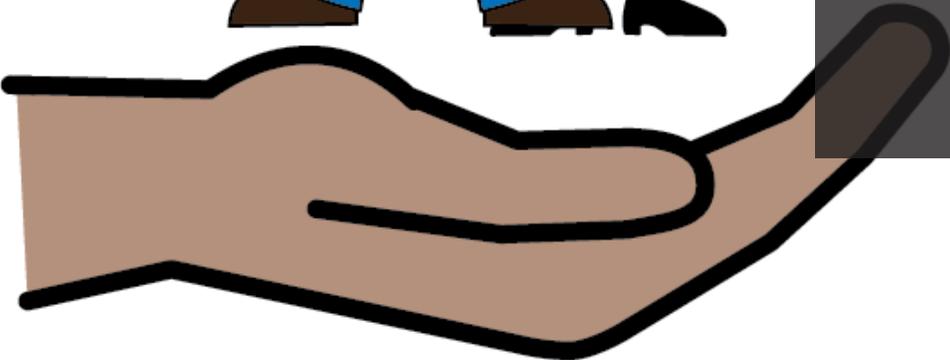
If you hear voices, you might already have things you do to cope when things are difficult.

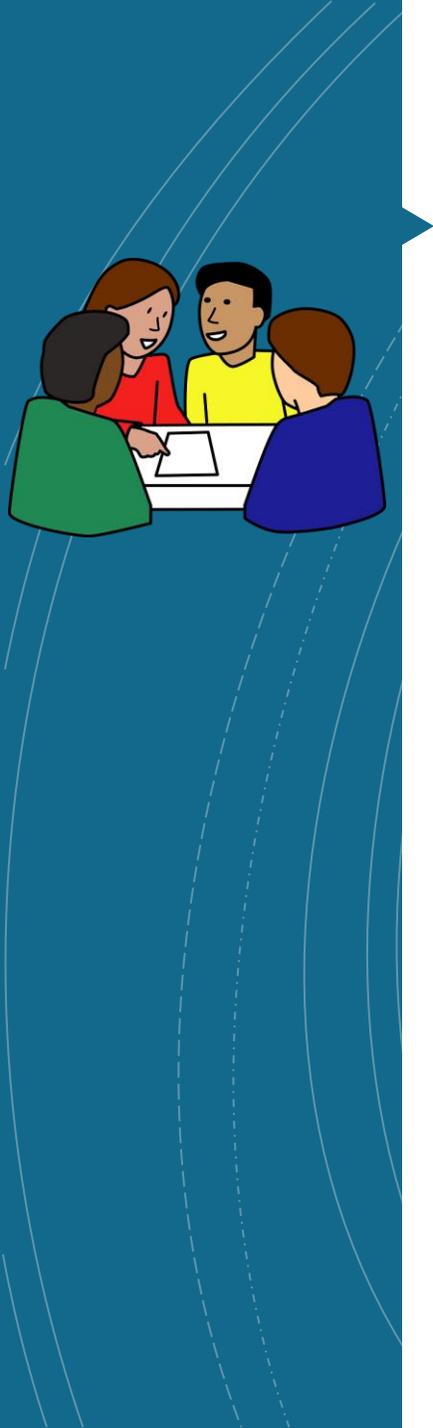
You might see some of them here, but you might see some new things to try as well.



Support

It can be a friend, family member or mental health worker





Go to a Hearing Voices group – These are safe, friendly groups where there is no right or wrong way to understand what happens to us.

Be prepared – Some people hear a sound or see or feel something before the voices start. Can you notice a warning sign?

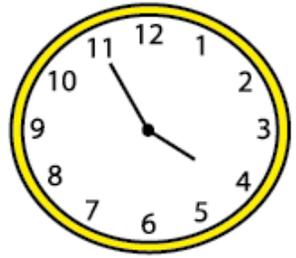
Learn about Hearing Voices – There are lots of books and videos about Hearing Voices. It can help to learn how other people live with voices



If you know what helps, tell people – Let other people know the best way they can help you and why.

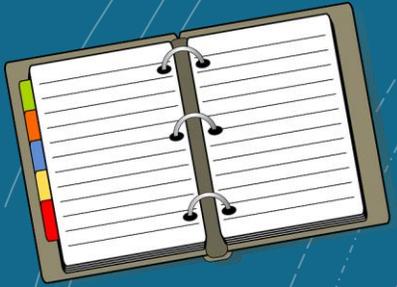
Let someone talk to the voices with you – Make sure this is someone you really trust.

Check with someone else – If you can see something or hear something and you are not sure it's there, ask someone you trust.



Stick up for yourself

Whatever the voices say, remember that **you** are the boss; you get to decide what you do



Set limits – Make deals with your voices; plan to listen to them at a certain time in the day.

Ask them to leave you alone till the ‘appointment’.

Don’t believe them – If what they are saying upsets you, remember you don’t have to believe the voices!

Argue back – If your voices say something that you wouldn’t put up with from someone else, tell them so.

Be calm and say that you don’t agree with them and you don’t want them to talk to you like that.



Say no – Some people hear voices that tell them to do things they don't want to do.

Ignore them – Others find it more helpful to ignore the voices altogether.

Sticking up for yourself isn't always easy, especially at first. It can take a lot of practice.

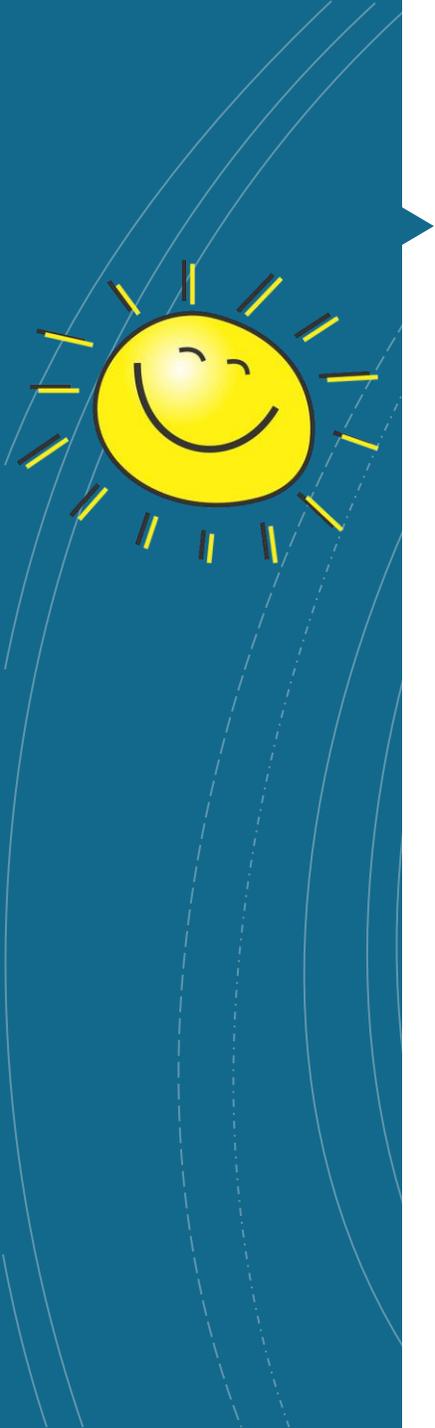
Try telling bad voices that you will only talk to them if they are polite.

Sometimes, the voices get louder when you start to stand up to them. If this happens, **stay strong**.



Be positive

Spreading hopeful messages about the experience of 'Hearing Voices'



Say nice things about yourself – Do you have a phrase that makes you feel good about yourself?

If you are hearing a voice that says you are useless, say to yourself “I am a good, confident person.”

Or if the voices say that someone wants to harm you, try saying “I am safe, people like me”.

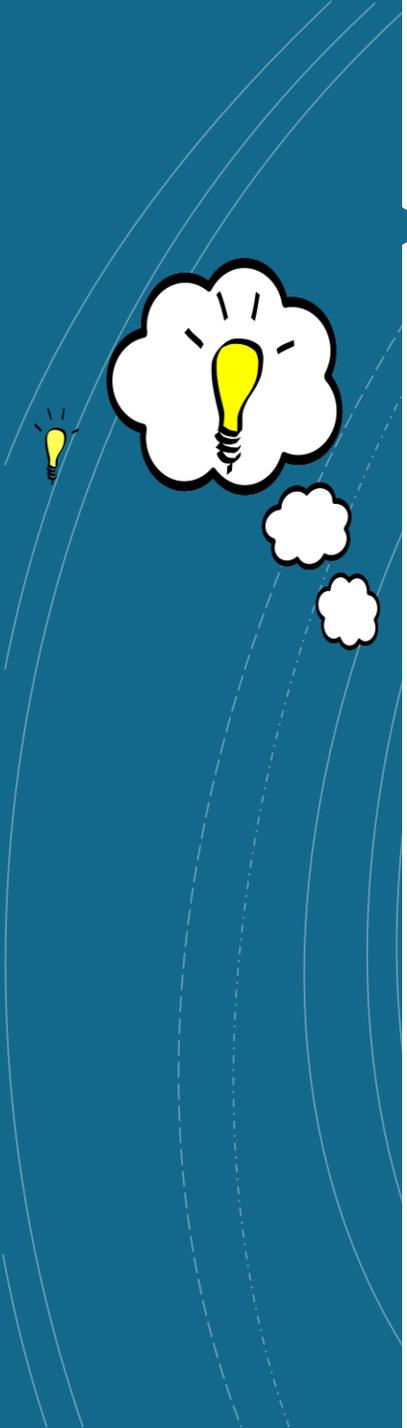
Notice if the tone of the voice changes – Sometimes voices say nasty things, sometimes they say nice things. What is it that you are feeling when what they say starts to change?

Be kind to your voices – Sometimes we are mean to people when we are scared, sad or hurting. Maybe that’s what your voices are doing?



Get creative

Use your imagination



Use your imagination – Imagine the voices getting smaller or having a cartoon face or a comedy walk.

You can change the way they sound too, imagine turning the volume down like you would for the tv.

Write what the voices say in bubbles – Imagine the words are trapped in the bubbles and you can let them out when you are ready to.

Keep a mood diary– If you write down how you feel each day, and what your voices are like you might be able to see a pattern. If you are writing things down, make sure it can stay private!

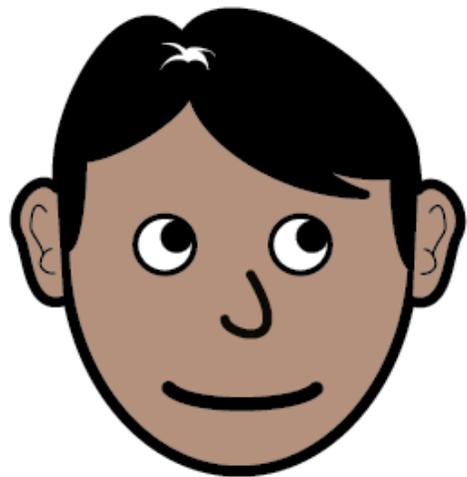


Write to your voices – have a conversation with them on paper

Change what you see – If you see frightening things, can you change them into something else?

Or maybe close your eyes and imagine them getting so small that they disappear.

Identify your voices – How many are there? What kinds of characters do they have? Do you have names for them?



Change the mood

And do something different...



Just sit, breathe and relax – Sit comfortably, with your back straight and relaxed. Take a slow, deep breath down into your belly.

Feel the sensations in your body as you breathe. Slowly release the breath and repeat this at least three times.

Use TV or radio and listen to music – Some people find TV or radio a useful distraction. Find out what sort of music is helpful for you.

Get active – Is there an activity available that you could join in with – e.g. doing some exercise?

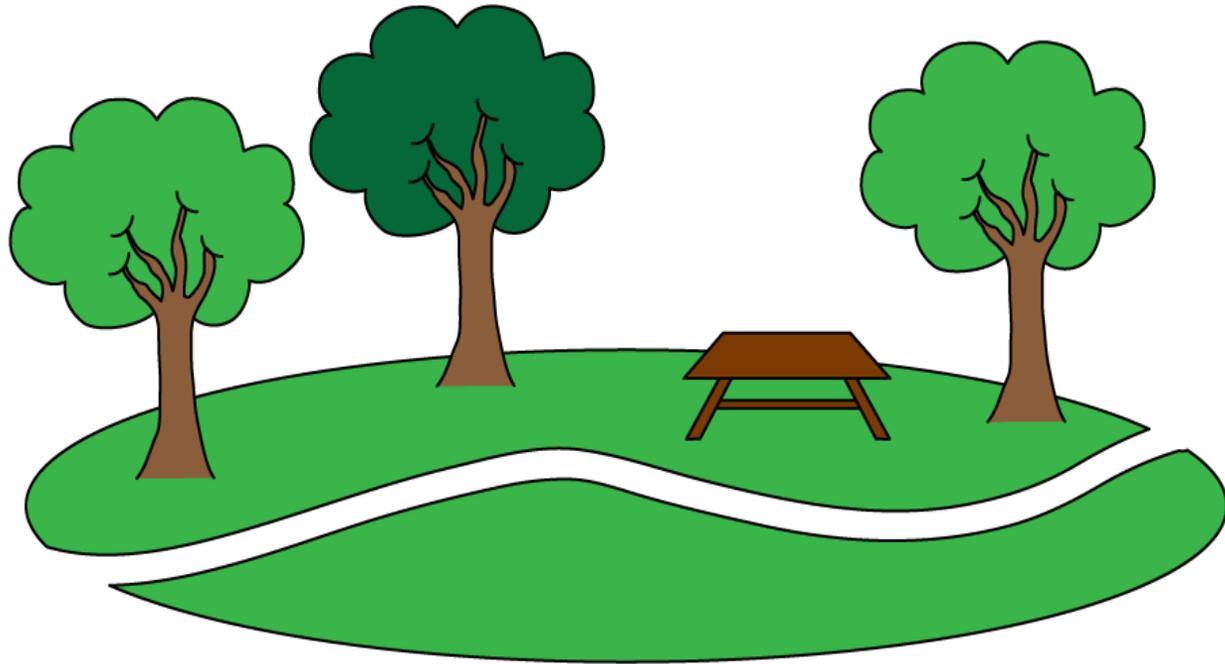


Medication – Sometimes it can be helpful, but there might be some things it won't help with. Finding the right dose is important too, and you might not get it right straight away.

Always talk things through with your doctor or mental health worker.

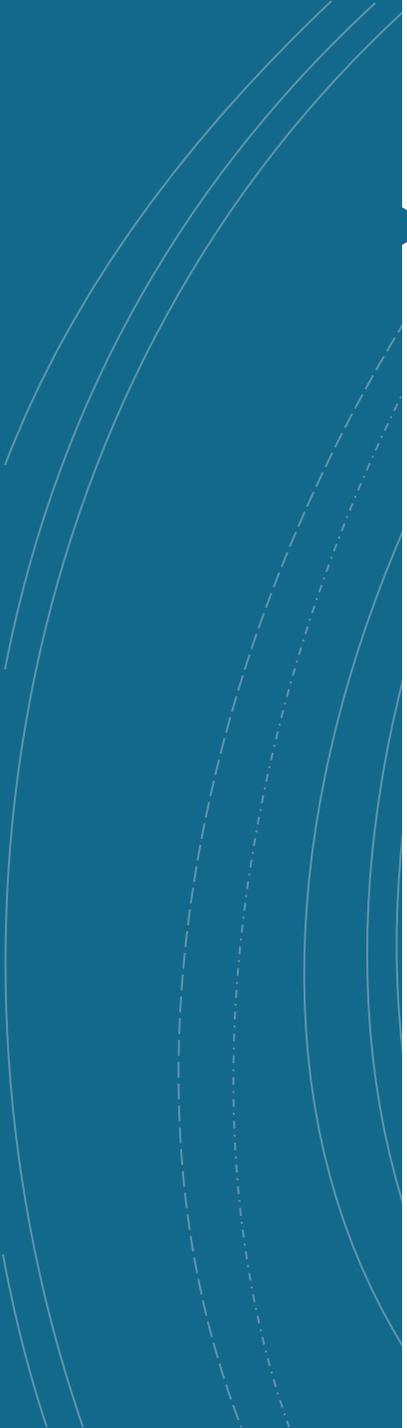
Drugs and alcohol – Many people find that using drugs or alcohol makes the voices worse, so they avoid these.

Be aware of how these could, or do, influence your voices.



Lastly

Some other thoughts



The Hearing Voices ethos

By 'ethos', we mean values or guiding thread

Hearing voices and seeing visions are important experiences that can be understood in many ways

Hearing voices isn't necessarily the same as being ill – and it does not mean that there is something wrong with you. But if you find you can't cope, then you might get very distressed

When people are overwhelmed, support is based on respect and empathy

Voices and visions have a personal meaning in someone's life

Congratulate yourself each time you take control.

If one of these ideas doesn't work for you, that's ok. Try another one.

If you find a way that's helpful to you that isn't here – let us know about it!

Contact us

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