

Voices @ Work



**A pilot project supporting
voice hearers to get work.**

A project of Richmond Fellowship Western Australia

Richmond Fellowship
Western Australia

Recovery First



A progressive, ‘recovery-focused’,
non–government mental health
organisation,

who believes that recovery from ‘mental
illness’ is possible and does happen.



Our role: To enable recovery * for people with mental illness through innovative services, education and advocacy.

** where recovery is defined as the person living a life they deem to be meaningful*

Richmond Fellowship
Western Australia

Recovery First



RFWA provides a range of support services and programs aimed at supporting people on their recovery journey.

Richmond Fellowship Western Australia

Recovery First



- Accommodation with a purpose
 - Outreach support services
 - Carer Respite
 - Personal Helpers and Mentors
 - Training and education
- Hearing Voices Network Australia
 - Voices @ Work project

Who's in the room?

Introductions: 3 questions

1. Name
2. What brought you to the Congress? (why are you here?)
3. Do you have particular expertise/ background in employment?

Knowledge of Hearing Voices Approach

- ❖ Heard of the approach?
- ❖ How familiar do you consider yourself to be with it?
 - A bit
 - Moderately
 - Very familiar

'Hearing Voices' - HVN

- ▶ Includes a range of sensory experiences, not just voices, that are experienced by the person but not by others
- ▶ Known by psychiatry as 'hallucinations'
- ▶ Commonly but not always experienced as auditory (internal or external)
- ▶ Can also be visual, tactile, smell etc
- ▶ Includes living with distressing beliefs

perceived as **separate from oneself** ~

Focus of Hearing Voices education:

- ✧ Accepting that voices and visions are real
- ✧ Normalising these experiences
- ✧ Respects expertise of ‘experts by experience’
- ✧ Ordinary non-professionalised language
- ✧ Encourages an ethos of self-determination



3 phases of voice hearing

1. Startling phase
2. Organisational phase
3. Stabilisation phase

1. Startling Phase

- ❖ Voices start – VH is startled and/ or denies them
- ❖ Withdrawal leads to isolation
- ❖ Some voices may be positive – VH strengthened
- ❖ However, with the negative voices, the VH suffers.

2. Organisational Phase

- ❖ Select voices
- ❖ Initial panic may change to anger
- ❖ Apply strategies e.g. talking to voices, ignoring voices, listening to voices
- ❖ Important that VH accepts voices and take responsibility for own experience.

3. Stabilisation Phase

- ❖ VH gains control over voices
- ❖ Acceptance:
 - voices are real
 - voices are part of self



Working with Voices

The aim is to assist people to make sense of their voices
and thus find their own way
to the *Organisational Phase* and,
ultimately, to the *Stabilisation Phase*.

Underlying thesis for project

- ❖ Being exposed to and supported in the HV approach to voices gives a person the opportunity to
 - engage with their voices and
 - move through the phases of voice hearing to organise and stabilise their experience.
- ❖ By educating and supporting voice hearers and their workers in the HV approach, the barrier voices pose to employment will thus be reduced.

Voices @ Work in partnership

- ✧ Current active partner: atWork Australia
- ✧ Developing relationships with other employment service providers
- ✧ Also accepting Expressions of Interest from people registered elsewhere.

Experts in employment?

- ❖ Who works in the employment field?
- ❖ Who has had experience in assisting voice hearers to get/ keep employment?

Project Staff

Project Manager:

Ros Bowyer

Current Project Worker:

Mandy Olsen

Administration Assistant:

Eshana Zaleski

Invaluable Wisdom!:

Lyn Mahboub

Stage A: Funding Process

1. Conceptualisation of project – Joe Calleja
2. Literature search – no other similar projects
3. Approached employment agencies to ascertain interest – 6 interested
4. Application for an ‘innovations grant’ from Commonwealth Government
5. Rejection... then application for Lotterywest funding
6. Success... after 15 months of negotiations, funding received & project initiated January 2011.

Once funding received...

Stage B: Project Development Process

1. Employment of Project Manager
2. Writing up of Project Scoping Plan – making the concept work in practice

Core issues: *

- * Creating a person-centred process
- * Being realistic of what was achievable within funding parameters

Stage B: Project Development Process/ Project Scoping Plan



Project Scoping Plan incorporated:

- Project Name
- Project Aim *
- Project Summary *
- Defining Terms
- Outlining % FTE of Project Manager & Project Team
- Project Objectives *
- Project Duration
- Key Principles for Voices @ Work *
- Project Description *

* Will cover these in more detail

Stage B: Project Development **Process/ Project Scoping Plan**

To look at these in more detail...

1.2 Project Aim

To provide people who hear voices with access to Hearing Voices education and, via collaborative work with other key stakeholders, assist them to manage the distress associated with their experiences in relation to attaining and maintaining employment.

1.3 Project Summary

- ▶ Voices at Work is a small-scale pilot project intended to support up to 25 people who hear voices (voice hearers) to overcome the distress associated with their voices in order to engage with the employment process.
- ▶ This will be undertaken via Hearing Voices education, *small group support* and engagement with key people from employment services and support agencies as mutual allies to support voice hearers in the process.
- ▶ It is proposed that by offering Hearing Voices education & *support* to voice hearers, their nominated support people (family, case managers and/or support workers) that clients' voices will become less of a barrier to employment.

1.6 Project Objectives

- ▶ To provide Hearing Voices education to Voices at Work clients, their families/ carers, employment service providers and their potential employers.
- ▶ To support people who hear voices who are seeking to engage with the employment process in order to obtain and sustain employment.
- ▶ Engage with key people from employment services and support agencies as mutual allies to support voice hearers in the process.

1.8 Key Principles for Voices @Work

- ▶ Accepting that hearing voices is a valid experience;
- ▶ Respecting each person's interpretation and beliefs about their experiences;
- ▶ Fostering and enabling safety and wellbeing of all;
- ▶ Promoting hope;
- ▶ Helping clients to know that they are not alone;
- ▶ Believing in each person's capacity to take control of their experience and recover;
- ▶ Encouraging people to come together and to feel safe in sharing their experiences and coping strategies;
- ▶ Working collaboratively and inclusively with other services to develop knowledge and achieve holistic approaches to recovery
- ▶ Fostering and supporting client independence and empowerment.

- in alignment with the foundational
principles of the UK HVN
Voices@Work – an RFWA project

1.9 Project Description

- ▶ Target group identification
 - Unemployed ‘voice hearers’ who are seeking employment.

- ▶ Criteria for inclusion:
 - Unemployed
 - Hearing voices
 - Registered with an employment agency or willing to join one
 - From metropolitan Perth (up to 20 people)
 - From the Bunbury region of W.A. (up to 5 people)

1.9 Project Description cont.

- ▶ The rest of this section is highly detailed and lays out the originally envisaged process – please see provided copies if interested.

Stage B: Project Development Process



3. External consultant: Program Logic Planning
4. Journey into the land of Gantt (!)
5. Employment of additional staff: project worker + administrative assistant
6. Development of flow for client through project (see document: *Voices@Work Process*)
7. Development of evaluation tools:
 - ❖ Pre- & Post-Project Survey
 - ❖ Feedback Star
 - ❖ Exit Interview

Stage B: Project Development Process

8. Design and development of forms & packs
 - Expression of Interest (EOI)
 - Receipt of EOI letter & info. pack
 - Consent to Exchange Information form
 - Initial meeting pack
 - Registration form for HV Snapshot training
 - Outline of all free trainings/ education available for project participants
9. Project promotion: internal & external
10. Training of core staff from 1st employment service partner (2 day HV training)
11. Referrals opened 1 July 2011

Voices @ Work from client's perspective

1. Complete and send in an EOI. Clients can
 - self-refer (website) or
 - hear about project internally or
 - through employment agency or
 - support agency.

Preference is for clients to complete their own EOI form.

2. Receive a receipt of EOI letter & info. pack
3. Receive a phone call within a week to invite to a meeting.
Purpose: commence building relationship, do survey, register for training, and sign paperwork.

Voices @ Work from client's perspective cont.



4. Attend HV Snapshot training with nominated support person
5. Do first Feedback Star
6. Receive phone call within a week of training to organise next training date.
7. Process not linear: after Snapshot, can do Discover Recovery (3 hr) seminar or whole day HV training or go straight to 'Working Voices' small group.

Voices @ Work from client's perspective cont.

8. After each training 'stage', Feedback Star done.
9. Their psychologist (if atWork client) or support worker is their support through this process – we support the workers through education, the VHs through both education and the small group component.
10. Once client has decided they are finished in the project, they are invited to a debrief session where the Post-Project Survey is completed and future needs are discussed.

Voices @ Work from client's perspective cont.

11. Should the person choose to leave the project and will not complete the survey, an Exit Interview will be done by either Voices @ Work staff (phone) or their employment case worker/ psychologist/ support worker.

The Interview has two parts: one from the perspective of the client, one from the perspective of the project manager/ worker.

Stage C: Going live!

~ Current status of the project ~

1. Three Expressions of Interest received to date
 - New learning: employment agencies
 - government vs private
 - unregistered clients
 - Adjusting processes eg:
 - initial meetings to be offered off-site
 - client files

Stage C: Going live! *Current status of the project*

2. *Considerable interest* in partnering us from a progressive MHS south of Perth in order to:
- ▶ refer their clients
 - ▶ formalise the research component
 - ▶ assist us in publishing the results.

Evaluation tools currently being submitted to their Governance Committee in order to gain Ethics Approval.

Stage C: Going live!

Current status of the project

3. Expanding the project

- Current discussions underway to identify potential project partner(s) in the Bunbury region.
- A project manager has been appointed for the region and will work the project in conjunction with Perth staff.
- Ros is to present the project at the Health Dept as part of Mental Health week in October. Senior psychologist from atWork has agreed to co-present.

Engagement with process

– small groups

1. Get into small groups (ideally 4 – 5 people)
2. Identify someone as your spokesperson (will be feeding back to larger group later)
 - ❖ Get up close and personal with the tools
 - ❖ Think about process, tools, apply to own contexts
 - ❖ Discuss
 - ideas for improvement
 - perceived barriers
 - concerns etc

Share back with the group

- ✧ Spokesperson from each group to feedback to larger group

Questions?

Comments?

Outline of HV Snapshot

3 hour training open to consumers, families, friends, professionals, students – anyone!

Objectives:

1. Increase awareness about hearing voices
2. Share information about the experience of hearing voices
3. Provide an opportunity to learn more about the Hearing Voices approach
4. Discuss some tried & tested ways of coping with the experience of distressing voices

Outline of HV Snapshot cont.

- ▶ Discuss definitions of ‘hearing voices’
- ▶ Share some research around the percentages of the undiagnosed (‘normal’!) population who hear voices
- ▶ Connection with trauma (strong but not universal)
- ▶ Simulation activity
- ▶ Discussion around the consequences of hearing voices vs the ‘symptoms’ of schizophrenia

Outline of HV Snapshot cont.

- ▶ History of Hearing Voices movement
- ▶ Outline of the phases of voice hearing
 - Startling phase
 - Organisational phase
 - Stabilisation phase
- ▶ Outline of the HV approach
 - Voices are meaningful
 - Focus on the voices
 - Accept the experience
- ▶ Coping Strategies

Outline of 'Discover Recovery'

3 hour training open to consumers, families, friends, professionals, students – anyone!

Objectives:

By the end of this workshop you will be able to :

1. Discuss the concept of recovery
2. Examine the elements of recovery
3. Engage with recovery as an individual, ongoing & non-linear process.

Outline of 'Discover Recovery'



cont.

- ▶ Elements of Recovery exercise: helps/ hinders
- ▶ Definition of recovery
- ▶ Types of recovery