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NPN

'Our mind has the ability to create thoughts and ideas that we don't fully understand, thus stopping us seeing the world around us as we should. This often creates suspicion and fear, commonly known as paranoia. Just because we cannot enter into the paranoid person's world, does not mean they are ill.'

Peter Bullimore, 31 October 2004
Gravenvoeren, Belgium.

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

Making Sense of My Experiences

I have discussed below with a good, qualified psychologist about 7 years ago as I was horrified/stressed at the experience many years ago. We both agreed at the time it was trauma related and I was not a danger to anyone.

I need to give some story up to, to try place it into perspective. There was trauma in my youth from an incredibly young age continued on and off till the age of about 15/16. I believe the trauma at 15/16 left a weird mark on my mind. Which I believe is still affecting me today 30 years later. Just to give brief outline of it.

It was like the few events at 15/16 years of age within a few days of each other. Left me very confused, it was like I had to acknowledge the events in my younger years at the time which my brain simply refused to do. Which left me traumatized resetting my mind and leaving me in danger of being traumatized again and again. Possibly why the voices strongly blame me for the experience and a very vocal about it. For a while anything associated with the experience for example being in a room alone with anyone, or anyone bending over for example. Would leaving me watching the

person like a hawk. I honestly at times was unaware of this. I think I was about 24ish in a shed with a good friend of mine, I trust which were few at the time. The door behind him started to close, I nearly knocked the poor guy over in a charge to stop the door from closing. He said he never saw me move so fast, one minute I was in front of him, the next he saw a blur and I was outside. This behavior was difficult to explain but nothing to troubling at the time. Again, I associated it with events at 15/16 years old which are similar. I guess any trigger even close to those events left me in a somewhat flight, fright or freeze mode. It has improved over the years but has been in the background. One of the triggers is the feel of him looking at me in a certain way, it was just disgusting. I used to hate the feel of people looking at me not so bad in my old age.

So, I believe the process left me acting irrationally when I am in the room with someone alone or someone just moving around me. It started by just keeping an eye on those around me. I was not even aware of it at the time. A friend of mine once described me as a nervous dog watching everything in the room. Over the last 15 years it was given an abusive element. I think it started by the voices making me aware of it when I was not and asking me what I was doing.

I had another episode last year with this comes intense intrusive thoughts/imagery and a whole bunch of stuff and the belief with my heart and soul these are amplified if not caused by some of the people I was around at the time. This is another story I will not go into just give a brief outline as it is part of this as well and is the exact same process, I went through 14 years ago.

My perception is voices going through every evil deed of my life people outside listening and giving out and some getting quite the kick out of it. Some of the stuff is very nasty but I do not believe it to be true as. There would be people in it that do not exist, or people that are in wrong place and time. Also, imagery in it that would not make sense. These would be rooted in my experience 14 years ago it might start with a vague image but then build into a whole reality. That is horrid and much too vivid.

I have questioned some of these this time around and been told by the voices I am an idiot to confess to stuff that is made up. I could not find anything to hold up the claims when I looked. I used to have a whole universe which was not real but looked real when I was in it. I was important and had superpowers and popular and stuff like that in it. It did go a bit horrible 14 years ago.

I try avoiding it since, but it does cling to me. I did see voices try to make up new memories this time around. It would start with an image and just build with a belief it is real even though it has no basis in reality. I am better at spotting this now than God. 14 years ago, I had no hope, I was a different person. I was not sure of who I was.

So, all of that was just to get to a question. I now have what I call intrusive focus or abusive focus. I believe it is caused by a whole bunch of things. Like I am sensitive to other people's vibes my own trauma and other people messing with the fact the part of me is sensitive to energy and vibes in general.

It feels like you are being pulled to parts of people bodies with your eyes that you should not be looking at. It does not care if it is man/woman or child. Now that is not to say I am walking down the street staring at everyone. It is like a pull, but you do not need to give in to it. Obviously since I used the word child this would concern folk. This used to stress the head of me and lead me to having a conversation with a good psychologist mentioned at the start which embarrassed the hell out of me, but I felt better and safer for telling someone about this. As it is absolutely demented in my mind and came with a truck load of guilt.

I had one horrifying experience I could feel this pull from around the corner, I did not know what it was as could not see around the corner. I then heard some children coming around the corner. I was curious why I could feel it before I knew who was there, this led me to come up with all sorts of theories and a lot of guilt. Which has led me to try take my life more than once.

This has led me to avoid people most of my life. This does not bother me as I like to be left alone. So, my first question is does anyone feel a pull to look at something for whatever reason. Also, what is their way they deal with it. It is like I can feel it. It is not just a strong thought. It feels like a pull to look at stuff. Which you can hold off most of the time but if caught off guard or dreamy, you can look a right shit or idiot around people. I may not be a saint, but I am not evil.

Also, this seems to be sometimes linked to my whole head being wrenched to one side to look at someone as I pass them. My head could be wrenched with such violence I may not even see them but be painfully aware they think or are aware I am staring at them. Which again led to more guilt and more than a few odd looks in the community.

Just wondered is there anyone with experiences like this and their way of dealing with them. The further I get

from my episode last year. The easier and more faded this effect gets but it is nearly always there to some extent. I do not really know what it is other than I am sure of who I am, and I would not harm a fly and would go out of the way to avoid conflict or harming anyone in any way to the point I would sell my house and move.

Love and Light, Keep up the good fight.

Finding



Inspirational: By Gillian Carter

Thoughts
Words
Become you
Character becomes destiny
Love laugh live believe rule
Your mind leads to actions be brave love.

Sun
Beams
Minds adventure
Inspirational words live
Minds tick on in stages
A sunbeams evade the day to make strong.

Live
Life
Strong within
Fighting force fields
Tripping amongst waves
Like light bulb click moments
While waves whisper positively throughout the
bloodstream.
Inspired me

Inspired by the road map of life
The corners turned the signs ahead
Speed ahead at slow paces.

The bumps are raw but just
Carry your thoughts goals and control
At a heartbeat, the turns you take or ruled by your mind.

Colour fall: By Gillian Carter.

I hate the way the colours seem to me now,
In dead of winter.
They fade away with every choice I make.
The only honest hues I spy
Are the cotton candy blues and pinks
Of winter sky,
And the messy, dingy grey
Of melted snow on lonely sidewalks...
Only a miracle now will transform
My bewildered pea-sized brain
Into a healthy clicking mind again.
The thoughts that do come are
Circular and slow.
Where have all the wild roses gone?
I miss their colour constantly.
Like merry mauve and
Startling pink signposts,
They pointed the way to a kinder,
More accepting world--a world where
I once belonged.
In winter, colours fall away, hope fades,
And the mentally ill, (myself included),
Hide ourselves away in dark caves of despair,
Our thoughts trembling and weak,
Our imagined sins the only crimson spot in
a tumbling, jumbled up,
Colorless world.

Sanity by Eric William Dawson

I am diagnosed Schizophrenic. Sanity has been my mission for a long time. At thirteen years of age everything was normal. I was a regular schoolkid, one under a lot of stress from school with stress knots in my back. The time came to move from secondary school to a grammar school and it scared the shit out of me.

That school holiday before I had to go to the new school changed my life. I would get on the bus as usual with my friends to go into the city for fun. Then when I got too far away from my village, I would become extremely nauseous, my guts felt like the world was ending. I started vomiting and having diarrhea.

This got worse and worse until I didn't leave my room. Everyone, including me, thought I was poorly and sent me to doctors. I had lots of tests and they said it was psycho-somatic but offered no further help. I didn't make it to the new school, instead I stayed in my room, for three years.

Those three years were wild. At first, I was very scared to cut off from the status quo of the life I should have been living. I had the time to go through all my memories and sort them, at first it was so good to have the free time to be.

Then like a nuclear dust sky the boredom came in, utter heavy boredom. It crushed me night and day. There were only four channels on the television and little else to do. I did learn a mass of knowledge from that UK 90s television, I saw it all. I saw the news. I saw the

documentaries of the past. I saw the horror of the human species.

The Holocaust made me feel so bad. So bad that I thought no German would take responsibility, so I felt responsible for it. Which was a strange decision, but I was becoming a strange child.

Choking in the nuclear skies of the boredom I became so utterly depressed that thoughts of suicide pulsed around my mind. All day all I thought was of ways to die the best, and I pictured them and felt them. I became Christian for once (my parents didn't raise me in any religion) I was sick of life and wanted to go to Heaven. It all came to a head when I had a sort of vision or dream. I was in a swimming pool and I decided to kill myself by drowning. I went underwater and could feel the air going out of my lungs and I loved it. Then when I was about to die, I suddenly realized the truth. That I was just sulking, and I really wanted to live I had things to do. But it was nearly too late in the vision. I was so grateful when I got out of the water and breathed life, happy to breath for a change.

Things were so bad I denounced Christianity and began to hate God. The boredom and my over-active brain lead me into neuroses after neuroses then. I started to notice how many spiders there were in the house for example. I then became terrified of spiders and would scan every room for them. What was worse was I became prone to picking up the neuroses of others. I would watch a talk show about a girl with a phobia of how ketchup congeals around the lid of the bottle then I

would also become scared of ketchup bottles! I love ketchup.

Other more invasive neuroses came. I was watching The Simpsons, the episode where Montgomery Burns becomes scared of germs on surfaces. Then I started to become disgusted by surfaces, I became quite Obsessive Compulsive.

I would think all the time that my family had touched things, leaving parts of them and germs on the surfaces, I obsessed about it. Pretty soon I was walking around the house using kitchen roll as steppingstones. I would layer the toilet with paper before sitting on the lid. I would shower in sandals, so I didn't have to touch the bath.

All this time I was also completely on edge, I felt stress when my family were in the house, so I'd spend my life in my room to feel some relief. I would actually feel physically bad when they were around, I was so lonely. I had all day worrying about spiders and germs. I was heavily depressed, stressed and my social phobia was so strong I would have an anxiety attack when someone my age went outside on TV.

The inner truth at this time was I was sort of loving it. It was the wildest mental adventure into the abyss of my mind. There's a song by Jim Morrison, #There's a game I like to play. You've got to crawl inside your brain, a little game, called go insane#.

It all came to a head one day when I was fifteen. That day I had all my symptoms like any other, but it was such a weird day. I was starting to become scared of the

insanity. That day I imagined when I was bending over that Jesus' ghost was raping me. That was enough for me, I decided to get sane.

There was this mental image I had of my insanity, it was like a battle and this blackness of insanity was eating into my mind all over. There was a light part of me still left and I grew it and pictured it pushing the darkness back. I had a very insane thought process, and I knew the thoughts I was thinking were not regular or good thoughts. So, I started to re-train my brain, when a crazy thought went through my mind, I would rethink it and replace it with a more rational thought

'Baby Steps' I learned off one of the few movies about mental health. I began to fight the O.C.D. I stopped clicking my fingers at imaginary hidden cameras around my room, I stopped turning on and off lights for no reason. It worked, baby steps.

I remember sitting on the toilet covered in paper thinking that I was making progress but there is just no way I would ever stand in the bath without sandals again. Then months later I was surprised to find myself sitting on bare toilet seats!

The fears were bad to fight, I went on a warfare spree against the spiders, killing everyone. It only started to get better when one day I was laying in my room, bored as usual, and I looked into the air and refocused my eyes. I saw a spider dangling in mid-air, a little one. I caught it in a Tupperware container, and I looked at it. It was so beautiful it had army camouflage on. When it

saw me looking at them the spider raised their front legs in attack pose to show defiance. It was then I saw that I was a giant and the spider was cute. I let them go out the window instead of killing as usual.

The teachers were a huge help. I had four of them come over for an hour or so once a week. Talking to them and learning stuff was a window letting in sanity. I didn't act insane around them or my family if I could help it. It was my secret.

So after many baby steps I felt a lot better. I passed my exams enough to get into the "sixth form" of the grammar school which was the next education step, and I wouldn't have to wear uniform. I was ready to fight my greatest monster, that school, my social phobia. I took some hypnotherapy with a great hypnotherapist who got me to relax and then play a video in my head of going to school whilst feeling good.

It worked, I went to the sixth form. It turned out as arduous as I expected, maybe worse. Though I didn't vomit or have diarrhea.

I felt sane, eventually I dropped out of school, met some friends, and started smoking weed. The happiness that came from that and the relaxation stays with me to this day. I had some real life for a while.

However despite all my efforts to be sane and live the good life I was still Schizophrenic. It's like you're doing your best but the entire universe and yourself always trips you up. You're trying to live in the status quo normal but you're not right, so you do everything wrong

due to your emotions and a lack of understanding. The Schizoid personality traits are underlying and more powerful than most. I retreated to the front room of my mum's house at the time. I stopped talking to my friends, I stopped buying weed because I'd have to go out, I started drinking to medicate for the depression and melancholy.

Mum got the psychiatrists to talk to me because I wasn't paying rent. They gave me a pill of Olanzapine which put me to sleep for two days. Then I woke up with a feeling of impending doom.

The day after I won a chat room fight with the biggest troll I've ever come across and I was so happy I lost the plot. I came to my senses sitting on the armchair in front of the Win98SE PC and felt the back of my hair was wet as if I'd had a shower. I suddenly thought I'd been abducted and given a shower, then all of a sudden, the flies in the room were alien flies. I had my first real delusionary state.

It was wild. I stopped drinking the two bottles of cheap French wine a day and had a crazy party in my mum's house with all the imaginary beings watching me. I was in the bath and looked at the shower taps, they always appeared like Grey aliens from the X-Files if you looked at the reflection right, then all of a sudden, the universe was just a game. A game made for me by my alien brother as a gift.

I went on a Schizophrenic adventure to Amsterdam to find weed. I walked out the house and if I were in any other country I could have gone to the streets for the

rest of my life. I ended up robbing a discount store at dawn to test if this wild reality was actually true.

Apparently, jails were all party houses like the song Jailhouse Rock by Elvis. I smashed the window and thought the whole thing was a big joke by my alien brother and they were laughing. The alarm was silent which furthered my misunderstandings. I ran out the fire escape into the arms of a policeman.

The police thought my delusionary excuse was nonsense and tried to convict me. But because I'd spoken to a psychiatrist before I was instead "sectioned" under the Mental Health Act and put in the local hospital.

At the hospital the psychiatrist wanted to try out Seroquel on me. A new med. It did not work AT ALL. One delusion added to another and pretty soon I was in my own fantasy reality with its own history and its own crazy awesome characters. It was such an adventure like living in a dream but you're awake.

It wasn't until about six months in I thought another patient was really a psychiatrist and they were giving me flicks of their finger to answer what questions I posted in my head. They gave me the idea to rebel against the scary psychiatrist and stop the meds. Which I did, I refused to see the psychiatrist again. They gave me a new doctor and he put me on an injection of Depixol which was the most horrible medication I've ever been on.

To say side-effects to Depixol are bad is an understatement. It was extreme suffering. However, to

my surprise all the delusions fell away, and I realized I was actually in the real world again. The first thing I did was to phone my parents to apologies', after 7 years of illness.

My 20s we're spent in a sort of haze in a group house with other people with mental health issues. It was good to be around people who understood what you were going through and showed symptoms too. We all lost a lot of years in that house, they just disappeared. After many years of suffering I managed to lie to the staff enough to get them to think I was stable enough to change to another medicine with less side-effects. I was sane then for a good time, I didn't feel bad either and could still masturbate. I got to live more of a life.

At the end of that era I became exhausted physically. I had a car, a house, friends, everything was going well but I got pooped all the time. The GP doctor did all the tests and couldn't find what was wrong, they thought it was my meds.

I stopped taking my meds and started seeking other treatments. I'd been well for so long the mental health staff questioned if I was really Schizophrenic. I relapsed and became delusional again. One relapse led to the next, the med I was on stopped working which confused everybody. They also tried to make me diagnosed Bipolar and fed me Depakote for no reason. It was a whirlwind until I'd been in hospital completely delusional and recovered five times in as many years.

I'm now on a new med (Zuclopentixol) at a very low dose I am recovered again and since it's an injection treatment I shouldn't get ill again. My brain is back, and I find myself feeling saner than ever before. It leaves me wondering what exactly sanity is.

I admit I was insane with neuroses as a teenager. That to me was real insanity. When you have a relatively healthy brain, but it thinks itself into wrong patterns. I admit that if I stop meds, I lose the plot and go into dreamworld. However, to me Schizophrenia is not insanity whatsoever. It's just the effect of too many brain chemicals in the center of your brain which produces unchangeable false beliefs like you get in dreams. It's just an error which can send you loopy off on adventures that aren't really happening.

A pill cannot cure neuroses; they give them out to cure O.C.D. because they don't know any better. Your best hope with O.C.D. antipsychotics is for them to just stop your brain working so you don't have to experience your neuroses. I recommend instead baby steps and a will to actually get better and not wallow in it.

I think my great anxiety suffering was mostly down to bacteria in my gut. I have been working on cleaning it with Oregano Oil pills and everything else I could find and feel now like the outside world doesn't emanate fear into my home anymore.

In conclusion after picking up all my lost marbles I know that insanity is fundamentally not understanding the

truth. Few of us know what the truth really is. We're still finding it as a species. When we do, we must find how to adapt to it to be healthy. To not be freaked out by germs but to understand what they are and that we're designed to touch them for example.

Anyone can misunderstand the truth and have a loose grip on it and those people often end up in prison. If you hate Jewish people and drive your car into their place of worship on a killing spree; then your version of the truth is wrong because there was no reason to do that despite what you believed. You may become insane just on your own even if you're not predispositioned to be schizo. If we all work together to find what is real inside us as people and around us, then we can act in ways that work with that truth and give us better lives.

A book can tell you this is the kingdom of God and God alone will take care of us. Pollution doesn't matter so just litter the streets and the seas. We can gang up and go on a crusade in a foreign land for no other reason than a book. Sanity is truth, knowing as much of it as you can and adapting yourself in realistic ways to it. We do not know much of the truth, no world leader does, no alien. Without a sound philosophy and way of thinking to cope with that you too are more or less insane. My best advice is when you notice you have a strange thought: DO NOT ACT ON IT

<https://cfsn.wordpress.com/>



[https://www.eplog.media/thesosshow/2020/12/19/ep-57-
voice-hearers-network-ft-kate-crawford/](https://www.eplog.media/thesosshow/2020/12/19/ep-57-voice-hearers-network-ft-kate-crawford/)

Listen to Kate Crawford talking about her experience of hearing voices and her involvement with the hearing voices movement on a podcast into India.

Canterbury Christchurch University

Research Participants Wanted

My name is Zafirah and I am a trainee clinical psychologist.

I am currently looking for adult voice hearers from minority ethnic groups to participate in my doctoral research project.

What is the research? This study aims to explore the experiences of voice hearers in the UK who identify as belonging to a minority ethnic group.

Background In western communities such as the UK, voice hearing is mainly viewed as a symptom of psychiatric illness. Medication is often the first-line treatment provided to voice hearers with the aim to eliminate voices.

However, research suggests that hearing voices may be a common experience within the population, and that many people belonging to minority ethnic groups may attribute their experiences of hearing voices to spiritual, religious, guiding forces, or other explanations. Therefore, this study aims to explore the experience

and perceived impact of having a different explanation whilst being immersed within dominant western perspectives and explanations of hearing voices.

We are looking for individuals who:

- are 18 years old or above.
- identify as belonging to an ethnic minority group in the UK.
- have alternative culturally informed voice hearing explanations (i.e. other than the predominant medical illness perspective).
- have been hearing voices for at least one year.
- have previously accessed/currently accessing mental health services for psychosis in the UK.
- have not been admitted to an inpatient unit in the last three months.
- are not currently experiencing high levels of distress
- have not had a change in medication in the last 2 months

What would you need to do?

An initial brief telephone conversation + An online interview (about 60-90 minutes) Benefits? You will receive a £10 amazon voucher as a thank you token for your participation. If you are interested in participating, please email Zafirah Sathar at zb79@canterbury.ac.uk for more information

**The Hearing Voices Network Ireland
(HVNI) is pleased to host the Intervoice
Congress 2021 in Cork, Ireland, from
1 – 3 September 2021.**

We are planning a hybrid type format (delegates joining us in Cork and delegates joining us virtually/online, with events online and events in Cork). Of course, everything depends on Covid19 related restrictions (travelling, social distancing etc) now and in the future. With this ongoing uncertainty, we are interested to find out about the nature of the attendance at the 2021 Intervoice Congress. It will help us in planning the Congress events. Thanks for taking the time in completing this brief survey:

<https://forms.gle/LbBYFLHQVr1WHP4s8>

We would also like to introduce and welcome you to Cork via this brief video:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HJLB79DKYWduEVpi2LjGbe5sxwweFjWm/view?usp=sharing>

If this does not entice you to come to Cork, we don't know what will!

We look forward to welcoming as many of you in Cork on 1-3 September. And if you cannot come in person, we would like to welcome you virtually.

Could you please respond to this survey and forward the email to your contacts?

Thank you HVNI.

Maastricht Interview for Hearing Voices Training online

(Organised by Western Mass Recovery Learning Centre USA)

Learn to use the Maastricht Interview tool to support people who hear voices to make meaning and take control of their experience...**This training has been split into three days to maximize the on-line learning potential.**

Attendance at ALL sessions is required to complete the class. Dates and times are as follows:

- Monday, April 5, 9am to 4pm Eastern USA time**
- Tuesday, April 6, 9am to 4pm Eastern USA time**
- Friday, April 9, 9am to 4pm Eastern USA time**

At this training, you will:

- Learn how to conduct the interview
- Undertake 2 interviews with voice hearers
- Write reports and develop constructs
- Develop shared understanding of voices and ways to support people

To REGISTER email sera@westernmassrlc.org

Maastricht Interview for Hearing Voices Training online

(Organised by Organic Recovery Learning Community UK)

Learn to use the Maastricht Interview tool to support people who hear voices to make meaning and take control of their experience...**This training has been split into three days to maximize the on-line learning potential.**

Attendance at ALL sessions is required to complete the class. Dates and times are as follows:

- Monday, April 13, 9am to 4pm UK time**
- Tuesday, April 14, 9am to 4pm UK time**
- Friday, April 15, 9am to 4pm UK time**

At this training, you will:

- Learn how to conduct the interview
- Undertake 2 interviews with voice hearers
- Write reports and develop constructs
- Develop shared understanding of voices and ways to support people

To Register email paul.baker1955@icloud.com

Maastricht Interview Training for Hearing Voices & Problematic Thought Beliefs & Paranoia Is available online from the National Paranoia Network. Other training available online Working through Paranoia, Making Sense of Hearing Voices & Working with Childhood Trauma

It can be delivered across the world for more information and costings Email enquiries@nationalparanoianetwork.org

Online Hearing Voices & Paranoia Support Groups Join our online Hearing Voices & Paranoia Support Group Meetings on ZOOM

Thursday 3pm -4.30pm with Paul Meeting ID 88460268952 Password 375878

Sundays: HVN USA on ZOOM 6:30p - 8:00p USA Time with Cindee 11.30pm – 1.00 am UK Time Meeting ID 827 5463 8654 No Password Needed

Saturdays Texas USA HVN Meeting on ZOOM 10am-11.30 USA Time with Paul 4pm-5.30pm UK Time Meeting ID 83079149464 No Password Needed

Monday Sheffield Hearing Voices & Paranoia Support Group with Emma & Lyn On ZOOM 11am- 12pm UK Time Meeting ID: 558 685 8263 Password 6DyVca