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Schizophrenia and basic needs

Fear and pain can stop your appetite and make too tired to cope with life as you will lose sleep. You will be unable to look after yourself being so tired out by paranoia and voices, again especially I you lose sleep. Escaping the spying neighbours meant I had to run off into the night so there was no warmth or shelter. Doing this you will then be too tired to be afraid and your survival instincts will take over. Then you make it back to the house to be safe form this.

I wasn't completely sensible of the danger I was in when out on the road even when it was winter, and I got caught in a blizzard. Then my survival instincts took over again and I was distracted by the imperative to get home safely. So, at least I was safe form the elements and had somewhere to sleep. Being on the move all the time meant I couldn't sleep rough, so I had to get back.

Back home there was no warmth in the shelter but it was a bit safer than being frozen out on the road. I thought the neighbours were CIA informants and so was still scared once again. This spoiled my appetite. I was often able to eat when the thoughts wore off but still lost a lot of weight and sometimes became emaciated. So, my basic needs were often not being met and this replaced fear with a more physical suffering. Then when having both together I was completely exhausted.

I thought the neighbours were banging on the wall each time I was thinking about 9/11. They were trying to play on my nerves about what was going to happen to me. Yet as long I kept being distracted, I wasn't thinking about 9/11 so again this allowed for some safety.

I couldn't control my thoughts altogether so when they drifted back on to the subject of 9/11. I started to get frightened again. So, I had to get away from the noise as people were passing information back to the CIA. This was more frightening than being out on the road as I thought the CIA were going to torture me. So, it prompted running off again. When I got back, I was so worn out with the physical experience that I wasn't afraid to go back in the house.

So having just made it home there was no time to think about being unsafe as I crashed out asleep with exhaustion. There wasn't time to think about the neighbours. So at least I got some sleep though with being frightened I was still going for long periods without rest.

When I woke up the whole thing began to happen again. The thoughts were still there and were the first things on my mind. Often, I would be out walking for days without rest and again my safety needs were not being met. I was frightened about being out in the night and at the same time about people reporting me to the CIA. So, trying to escape was only making things worse.

When out on the road the banging was following me which kept me on the move. I tried practicing breathing exercises and safe place imagery. Yet even if I calmed down, I still thought I was in danger. So that still made me run. In the end these techniques even when combined with some compassion. This didn't work as I still thought people were passing on information back to the CIA, so I still had to escape.

It felt like the whole world was out to get me. Then the fear reached terrifying levels. So, it was no wonder this prevented the other fear of being out in the night. Anything could have happened to me, but it was the thoughts about the CIA that were still uppermost in my mind.

When the delusions wore off it was possible to eat and stay warm indoors, away from exposure to the elements. This allowed me to keep my strength up for the next time I had to run off and helped get me through the fear it caused. With these basic needs being met I could be more exposed to the fear again.

The problem was I couldn't get these thoughts about 9/11 out of my head. So, there was no way of stopping the banging noise. The only hope was distracting myself and to put them to the back of my mind. Yet they were still there and that kept me frightened.

Another way around the problem was instead of running out into the night was to take some anti-depressants. These had sedatives so you could get to sleep. This avoided the banging noise and stopped me having to face the winter elements.

It also allowed for some rest as although the subconscious overload from the paranoia sometimes gave me nightmares. These kept my mind of the paranoia as I would dream of my experiences of being out in the night which was reliving it all. Being so realistic they were just as frightening, so I didn't feel much safer. In the morning I could be frozen with fear after them

If these woke me up, they could have triggered off the symptoms. So, getting back to sleep would be much more difficult. Fortunately, this only happened now and again so I wasn't too worn out with it all. Otherwise, the reoccurrence would have severely affected my functioning. Yet I found that eventually I could pull round and look after myself better afterwards.

I tried to stay awake at night when the neighbours would be asleep so they couldn't bang on the walls. Yet the noise went on through the night. Initially I thought they were staying up all the time so they could persecute me. Then I began to realise that they had to sleep at some point, and I tested this out by being awake at different times during the day and night. Still the noise continued

which convinced me it wasn't real. I began to have some insight.

I began to have some insight that although the neighbours were passing information back to the CIA nothing had happened to me. I came to regard the banging noise as a hallucination. Yet the insight was only partial, and I was still getting paranoid sometimes. All the same I started to calm down from time to time which helped me eat and sleep more. That helped keep my strength up as the fear was still exhausting.

At first, I tried to hide away as I could not stop the banging noise by distracting my mind from 9/11. Again, I couldn't explain why nothing had happened to me. Having some insight, I dared to watch people out of the window and saw they were just going about their normal basis. I decided to test out the paranoia by going out into the shopping centre where I would be surrounded by them.

I began to wonder if people could read my mind and when walking into the village centre, I noticed people were not reacting to me. This didn't dispel the thought as I still thought I was being watched by some people. Yet it allowed me to leave the house which was concentrating my mind on the paranoia. I felt an immediate release from the confines.

Walking out into the village life was continuing as it always had and it all seemed so normal. Yet I thought my

thoughts were being broadcast on the television, so everyone was going to know I was responsible. So, I didn't understand why I hadn't been assassinated. Then it began to dawn on me I might be hallucinating things on the screen.

Media was a form of distraction I could do at home to stop me thinking about 9/11. Yet I was cut off from this by the visual hallucination. So, there wasn't much I could do to take my mind of the voices I was hearing talking about 9/11. Once I could get out of the house during the day my mind wasn't so concentrating on what I was hearing. Then I sit in pubs and relax with a few drinks during the day to take my mind off things.

All this calmed me down so far. Then my basic needs where still being met in terms of food and shelter. I couldn't do this all the time. Yet the insight meant I could stay at home and periodically eat properly. There was long enough to do all this. So eventually I could cope with safety needs better and use my insight to do something about these.

The problem was the insight was not all the time and even when thinking about it logically didn't always continue. Having been sheltered and fed properly I started to be more aware of my safety needs. Then the periods of paranoia actually became longer and more problematic and still the insight was only partial. Yet

having my basic needs met meant I could become a bit more stronger and bear up to it better.

This time the insight overcame the banging noise with the evidence I had collected. Yet the remaining paranoia meant I still felt I was being watched. This even if they could not read my mind. The thoughts about 9/11 were still there but I didn't react to the noise. I still hallucinated things on the television screen but could now know I was just seeing things.

Another symptom at this point was that I kept hearing voices about 9/11. This together with the delusion about it meant things were still terrifying. So once again I could not often eat or sleep. In between even when the insight got reduced there were still periods when I could question it. I still wondered if people were spying for the CIA why hadn't I been found.

There was no distraction around the house as I was unable to watch the media. It was only when the insight periodically returned that I could get out and do things outside. Yet once the symptoms started again, I had to go back home. Then being confined with the voices and delusions still just made it worse again.

At this point the breathing exercises and safe place imagery were not effective as the paranoia was so overwhelming. I wasn't getting out enough to make any difference to it. Yet with practice I found I could control

the lesser anxiety levels of the fear and using these techniques I could get over the doorstep.

Yet getting out meant I still did have some rest. Then that allowed me to find some strength to resist the more moderate levels of the fear. I was able to avoid a breakdown with this and to practice some graded supported exposure. This required insight to reduce the fear first, but it got me out the house more. So, I could eat in town and keep my strength up for going back home.

With the new insight I didn't run off into the night. This time I thought I had nowhere to go if everyone was spying on me in other places. That kept me indoors this time, so my basic needs were no longer compromised in this way. Either way I felt I could end up dead. So, it was better to hide than being out in the elements as then I could have been killed a lot sooner.

It also helped that I was on anti-depressants and sedatives. This meant I could sleep through the night without running off into it. If I was getting paranoid at these times, I could take my tablets early and knock myself out so there was no need to escape.

Also, during the day, I could then get out and about close to my house when at these times when I thought it this was safe to do. The insight I had helped with this but there was not enough of it to avoid the worst peaks in the

terror. This only happened now and again but they stuck in my mind, so I lived in fear of them too.

I began to associate the house as a place of suffering with the paranoia and again this could have affected my functioning. Yet sometimes in there my insight into why I hadn't been assassinated began to reoccur to me. Then the breathing and safe place imagery had more chance.

Slowly these association of pain began to change, and I came to regard it as similar to when I was going out. I could use the house as a safe haven when practicing this. So, the negative associations began to go, and my functioning returned. My house became my safe place.

All the same there were good and bad periods with the insight and in some phases basic needs were still being affected. The answer was again that I had to get out of the house more to stay functional. Yet to do this I had to learn new techniques to deal with the fear the paranoia this was causing.

Getting over the doorstep and the thought of this got to be a psychological barrier and the voices were reminding me of this. This part took some courage and thinking through about what would happen when out. Eventually I could test out being around the other people and with some practice this got to be a bit easier.

One way was to clear my head of the paranoid thoughts when out and to act normal when the voices got to be

terrifying. Yet without the partial insight this got to be more difficult. I had to be careful of not staring at the people when I was paranoid about them. Then they seemed none the wiser about me being there and my unusual behaviour was not being noticed.

Another answer was to take a Walkman with me when out and about. So, I could plug into it to distract me from my thoughts and voices. Then I couldn't hear the banging noise and I didn't need to run off into the night again when the insight about this was lost. Unlike the television I wasn't hallucinating things in what I was listening to, and this provided a bit of a lifeline when at home and cut off from other distractions. I could cook and eat doing this and this again helped to keep my strength up a bit more.

This only worked so far, and it became apparent that I needed someone with me. To stay strong, I had to have a rest from being in the house. So, I was more capable of tackling my safety needs. Being exhausted all the time without my basic needs prevented this. I needed some help for being distracted when confronting the paranoia. Then I could then think about dealing with the fear.

The supported graded exposure allowed me to handle the fear, so I didn't become visible. Having someone to go with me like listening to a Walkman meant I had a voice to focus on their voice in the same way. Yet this was not just a voice as there was a face to go with it. So, it captured more of my attention. The conversation was

interesting in the way the music was and I became engrossed in that too. Of course, going back home alone meant I would lose this focus, but it still provided for another longer rest.

Eventually I had to do this by myself, and my mobile phone came in handy here. Talking to editors and academics captured my whole attention. So, I wasn't so aware of the people around me. I was completely absorbed in this. Then the talk from the voices just merged into background chatter of the people around me when out and about. This then continued at home and I could distract myself in the same way. It meant that when on my own with the voices there were ways of ignoring them.

Medication helped with basic needs. It stabilised me so I knew things were not going to get any worse. Then I could size up what I had to do when confronting things. I knew what my goals would be. These came more into sight as I practiced the exposure therapy. So, I could get a sense of making gradual progress towards them. This in turn made going home easier and I could practice what I had learned in there too.

Once I began to calm down through going out the more extreme fear of being indoors could be tackled. This time the breathing and safe place imagery began to be a bit more effective. Things still got to be very frightening at times. So now I was given some Valium. Then I didn't have

to run and hide in the dark and at this point my basic needs for warmth and shelter were going to be met. Again, my appetite returned.

With the partial insight and supported courage another problem began to interfere with my functioning. The paranoia was causing some depression. I was sick of being frightened a lot of the time and this was affecting my ability to cook and clean. That again lowered my mood a lot more and I had to find a way of motivating myself. The answer again was to get out of the confines of the house and that helped my mood for going back.

As I began to feel a bit safer, so the house didn't seem to be such a hell hole. Then without the associations of suffering I began to cheer up again. I could enjoy the getting out and about more and was able to use the various distractions that this offered for this. I began to feel the mood benefits of distraction and exposure therapy. This allowed the possibility that the anxiety and depression were not combined. These had prevented me from keeping busy and dealing with the delusional symptoms. I had to force myself to keep busy with this as the inactivity makes you lazy.

In the end these techniques had to be combined with some compassion. This meant that with some training I could soothe some of the fear that was stopping me getting out and about. Then with being calmer and stronger I could combine it with other approaches like

distraction and confrontation. So, I could get some further rest from the terrifying symptoms stopping me functioning.

With the compassion I wasn't so frightened, and it was easier to confront the delusions. I could concentrate better. So, when hearing voices, I could focus more on the music I was listening to on my Walkman or the conversations I was having with the support worker. I wasn't so aware of the people around me and stopped staring at them. I felt less visible and could merge into the crowd by acting more normally. This allowed for getting out more and increased opportunities to rest.

Another benefit with the compassion was that when afraid I could use it to calm down and put the thoughts about 9/11 to the back of mind. This allowed some distraction when the delusions resumed and when thinking about something else the spying neighbours could not notice it. So, in turn it stopped the banging noise, and I didn't have to run. With the compassion there was more hope for the supported exposure as finding the courage needed for was very gradual. I stopped being daunted by what I was up against and again the goal of tackling the terror episodes came into site again. I began to feel more hopeful and then with some practice more confident that I could achieve all this. Again, this was very good for mood. In the end all this allowed the possibility of finding an emotional footing

with life. It created the possibility of replacing all the pain I had experienced with something happier. Then I could enjoy these phases in between the symptoms more and to build some further strength for tackling the paranoia. Again, it allowed for more rest when confronting the symptoms alone and in the house.

Conclusion

Until we meet basic needs for sleeping, shelter, warmth and eating we are unlikely to have the strength to tackle the fear caused by schizophrenia. The impact of schizophrenia as it affects our lives in these ways is shattering and prevents normal functioning and emotional regulation. There will be much fear and emotional pain with what we go through here and we will be exhausted. Various techniques interrelated techniques such as partial insight, confrontation, distraction and compassion can help with this. Then we will be in more of a stronger position to feel safe from the frightening paranoia and threatening voices. That should allow for climbing the Maslow tree to the next level so that we can get back some normal emotional relations in life with this illness.

Mark Ellerby

Suicide Prevention

Suicide Prevention for me is about in those moments when suicide thoughts enter your head about Compulsive Gambling when the feeling comes flooding in that all hope is lost, remember your safe place. I practice mindfulness my safe place is I'm in a circle that surrounds me, within my circle with me is Beautiful Blue Sea, I listen to ebb and flow as the ripples of water gently connect with each other onto the beaches edge. The sun is glistening on the water, I look down into the water and see my reflection looking back at me, at that moment I reconnect with myself I know I'm ok I know I'm safe. I can smell the freshness in the air and feeling of exciting untapped potential and Opportunities coming my way, if I decide to live and not commit Suicide. Within my circle with me is a blue nosed dolphin looking up at me, I feel at one with the dolphin. The energy from the dolphin helps me feel well it penetrates every barrier I put up. Mental Physical Emotional and Spiritual and Restores me to Wholeness. I feel Alive, I want to Live. I feel free from the darkness that came over me. My suicidal thoughts come when I don't feel connected to human beings, in the world, and my community, God and the earth. I have a strong need to connect, being dis-connected as a very negative impacted on my ability to cope ability to function ability to communicate, all these things leave me feeling naked, frightened, abandoned. These feeling

led to triggers and thoughts from the past. This chain of events leads to me having suicidal thoughts, I'm running from these experiences, and I want a way out, that's when thoughts of suicide begin to feel the best option. I learnt the thoughts of suicide comes in 3 levels. One having fleeting thoughts that come into my mind and go straight out. Two they stay in my mind, and I start to begin to like the idea and start mentally constructing the ideas giving precedence to these ideas above all others creating a reality based on them around acting on suicidal thoughts. Three after allowing the reality I've created to bed in my consciousness then acting on it and going to get the stuff to commit suicide. I have learned over many years to prevent me from committing suicide I have to tell someone I'm having these thoughts at Level 1, so they don't progress onto level 2 or 3. Everything about me doesn't want me to tell anyone, I have a real battle in my head. Don't tell anyone they don't want to listen; stay with me I will look after you. it's a lie, its one big lie. Telling someone breaks its power and telling someone keeps me alive

Glyn Butcher:

Talking to a
trusted person
helps

How to Identify Low Emotional Integrity in a Loved One

People can have high moral integrity but still be lacking in the emotional kind.

KEY POINTS

- Many with high ethical and moral standards are deficient at facing and owning their feelings, making them low in emotional integrity.
- Even if one has high general integrity, having low emotional integrity undercuts authentic connection and trust and may drive others away.
- Understanding why a person shows low emotional integrity is crucial to deciding how to protect yourself in your interactions with them.

Sadly, the world is full of people who have poor emotional integrity simply because they lack basic integrity overall. But, equally sadly, if not more so, there are also legions of people who have high general integrity but who still lack integrity of the emotional kind.

These are folks who would cringe away from ever misrepresenting themselves or lying to a friend, spouse, or family member because they know it's morally and ethically wrong and harmful. They follow a moral code

and try to do right by others. Yet, on an emotional level, they are too quick to deceive themselves and others.

It's important to note that emotional integrity is vitally important to be able to flourish, enjoy, and thrive in relationships of all kinds. Even if one has general integrity, having a dearth of emotional integrity undercuts the authentic connection between them and you, undermines your ability to trust them, and may even drive you away from them.

But not all people who struggle with emotional integrity deserve to be left—not at all. It depends on the reason for their low emotional integrity.

5 Signs That Someone Lacks Emotional Integrity

Their apparent feelings don't seem to match their words. This happens when someone is visibly angry, hurt, or sad, for example, but they claim that nothing is wrong. It's remarkably common for some people to claim they aren't having an emotion that is clearly evident to an outside observer.

Their words don't match their actions. Every day, we humans make decisions about how we will behave and what we will do. Many of these decisions are conscious, whereas others happen outside of our awareness. Sometimes we can find ourselves behaving in a way that

surprises us, and that's because our actions are driven by our emotions in a deeper way than our thoughts. Unacknowledged, unaccepted feelings can propel us in surprising ways, and in these situations, we can easily say one thing and do another, perplexing ourselves and the people around us.

They hide their weaknesses, mistakes, and life struggles. In this case, the person may or may not be aware of their weakness, mistake, or problem, but the important thing is that they hide it from people around them who really need to know.

They "Yes" you when you share something emotional, but then do not show understanding, awareness, or interest afterward. This is a sign that the other person may be listening and is claiming to understand and agree but isn't putting in the effort or energy to truly understand you on a deeper level.

They negate your feelings. This involves telling you that you don't feel something you are feeling, insisting you shouldn't be feeling your feelings, or telling you that you are wrong for feeling your feelings. In other forms, it may involve minimizing or insulting your feelings.

If you are experiencing any of these at the hands of someone in your life, it's important to sit up and take note. It's also important to try to understand why this person is acting as they are because understanding the

“why” will help you sort out what you should do to take care of yourself.

3 Potential Reasons for a Lack of Emotional Integrity

Childhood emotional neglect: Families who ignore or discourage emotional expression, emotional awareness, and emotional needs fail to teach their children how emotions work. Many people who struggle with emotional integrity earnestly want to treat others well and believe they’re being honest, but they’re out of touch with their own feelings, so they don’t know what they feel. They also misinterpret and undervalue others’ feelings due to their lack of emotional awareness and emotional intelligence.

Avoidant tendencies: Those who have a general tendency to avoid unpleasant or challenging things may also be prone to avoiding unpleasant or challenging feelings, both their own and others’. This can make them likely to pretend their feelings don’t exist or that yours don’t because they’re simply trying to avoid dealing with any of it.

Low general integrity: These are the folks to truly watch out for. They purposely deny your feelings or try to bully you out of them for their own convenience or benefit. They can’t be trusted to be honest with you about their own feelings and are willing to twist your emotional truths at will.

What to Do

When you have a general sense that you are dealing with someone who lacks emotional integrity, it's important to sort out the reasons why.

If they grew up emotionally neglected and simply don't have the emotional knowledge, awareness, and skills, you can still likely trust them overall. Moreover, they can learn how to identify their feelings, how to put them into words, and how to share them. Emotionally neglected folks are teachable and changeable if they want to learn and change. Asking them to learn more about the effects of childhood emotional neglect is a good place to start. If you are in a romantic relationship with a person who may have low emotional integrity, let them know clearly that you need this to change, that they must learn the emotion skills.

Avoidant folks usually tend to avoid more than feelings. They may struggle with avoidance in various areas of their lives. Avoidant people can be challenging because they will tend to avoid the solution, which is beginning to directly acknowledge and address their own feelings and emotional needs as well as yours. The best solution in a relationship with an avoider is to set clear limits with them and hold fast to those limits, requiring what you need firmly and without letting them off the hook.

Dealing with the third group, the people who have low emotional integrity because of low general integrity is very different from either of the above. The best thing you can do for yourself here is to protect yourself. Accept that you cannot trust this person with your feelings and vulnerabilities. Emotionally, expect little and give little. Take as much distance as you need to stay emotionally safe, and always put yourself first.

Maastricht Interview Training for Hearing Voices & Problematic Thought Beliefs & Paranoia Is available online and face to face from the National Paranoia Network. Training available, how to use the Maastricht Interview for Hearing Voices & Problematic Thoughts, Beliefs & Paranoia, 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 peterbullimore@yahoo.co.uk

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 85737775621 No Password Needed

Sheffield Hearing Voices & Paranoia Support Group. The group runs.

Every Monday 11.00am-12.00pm at the Gardner's Rest 105 Neepsend Lane Sheffield S3 8AT

Contact peterbullimore@yahoo.co.uk

**Online Hearing Voices Group in Ireland Facilitated by
Michael Ryan**

Hearing Voices Group Ireland

A group for people who hear voices or experience
paranoia and unusual beliefs, on Zoom

Facilitated by Michael Ryan

Every Sunday @ 4pm

Zoom Link <https://us02web.zoom.web/j/89201253186>

Email: vhmichael9345@gmail.com

With enquiries

Families/friends can contact

families@usahearingvoices.org

For support groups

Unusual beliefs group St Mungos

Every Thursday 2.30-3.30

93 Shirland Road, London W9 2EL

Contact Helen Claire Taylor (tayloh15@lsbu.ac.uk)

'Talking Heads' Support Group runs on every first Tuesday of the month at Brunswick Centre, Strand Close, off Beverley Road

Hull, HU2 9DB from 3pm – 4:30pm. People with voices/visions and unusual beliefs are welcome

Contact Dan 07816 864727