

## Activity 6

An exercise in how to replicate the experience of hearing voices.

The following exercise was developed by Ron Coleman as a way to simulate what it is like to hear voices and was developed to try to give mental health workers and relatives some insight into what it is like to hear intrusive and commanding voices.

1. Form a group of three people. The first person takes the part of the "voice", the second person is the voice hearer, the third, a person with whom the voice hearer is conducting a "real" conversation. The "voice" positions him or herself close to one of the ears of the voice hearer whilst the other two face each other seated on chairs. There can be a number of threesomes carrying out this exercise at the same time.
2. For two minutes the "voice" talks to the voice hearer whilst at the same time the voice hearer conducts a conversation with the third person. The "voice" is instructed to talk softly to the hearer (using scripts provided) in a clear voice and to try to engage the attention of the voice hearer. At the end of two minutes the three switch roles until everyone has experienced being a voice hearer.
3. At the end of the exercise the threesomes are brought together and are asked to describe what it felt like to hear voices (ie. confusion, frustration, annoyance, anger, depression, weariness) how it affected their ability to hold a

conversation (ie. loss of attention and concentration), what strategies they employed to reduce the intrusion of the voice (ie. trying to ignore it, answering back, changing physical position). Other questions could include asking what they would feel and do if the voice was permanent? (depression, suicidal feelings, a desire to avoid people, to hide away, to talk to the voice more). You might also ask what they thought about trying to conduct a conversation with someone who is hearing a voice (and being a voice!).

## **Hearing Voices Exercise – SCRIPT 1**

**S/he's not listening to you**

**Warm jumpers can bite**

**Woolly jumpers used to be sheep**

**I wish I was a sheep**

**Do you think s/he is a sheep?**

**My mum likes jumpers**

**Is she your Mum?**

**She isn't my Mum**

**My mum used to like jumpers then one bit her**

**Does your Mum bite?**

**Parsnips don't bite**

**I bite parsnips**

**I wish my Mum was a parsnip**

**Dr Freud would have fun with that wouldn't he?**

**Would you like to have fun with Dr Freud?**

**S/he definitely isn't listening**

**Not even remotely interested**

**Crumpets don't listen**

**Is your Mum a crumpet?**

**Dr Freud isn't a crumpet**

**Sheep don't eat crumpets**

**But they do eat parsnips**

**Is anyone listening to this?**

**S/he definitely isn't**

**S/he's more interested in Dr Freud or your Mum**

## **Hearing Voices Exercise – SCRIPT 2**

**Sausages are dogs with short legs**

**Short legged dogs in a bun**

**Hot dogs**

**That's funny**

**Has s/he got short legs?**

**Wouldn't taste good in a bun**

**They think you're mad**

**Are you mad?**

**I don't think so**

**That picture on the wall is very talkative**

**I wish it would shut up**

**Any chance of switching off the brain?**

**It's causing me some grief**

**I wish I had a dough nut**

**Dough nuts are bad for teeth**

**How are your teeth?**

**Mine are right in your ear**

**Spaghetti is good in eggs**

**Eggy spaghetti**

**It's Italian you know**

**I'm not Italian**

**Is your Mum Italian?**

**Mine makes good spaghetti**

**She gives it to dogs**

**But not sausage dogs**

## **Hearing Voices Exercise – SCRIPT 3**

**Limit your remarks to words of one syllable**

**Otherwise s/he can't understand you**

**S/he is a bit odd don't you think?**

**I'm thinking that s/he's thinking that you're a bit odd too**

**Are you odd?**

**No I think you're even**

**Is this your even ear I'm speaking into?**

**They say the answer is a lemon**

**My answer is a trumpet**

**His/Her answers don't make sense**

**Do trumpets make sense?**

**Mine is silver**

**Silver tongued trumpet**

**Right in your ear**

**Or left ear**

**Could you possibly ask him/her to shut up?**

**She's interrupting my thinking**

**How are you doing with your thinking?**

**Perhaps you could try switching off the TV**

**Or switch off that person who is speaking to you**

**Boring or what?**

**I'm much more interesting**

**Funny old life this**

**Only people with faces get listened to**

**Is it bedtime yet?**