

# Making sense of psychotic experience

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**Madness is a creative way of dealing  
with pain**

**Psychosis is an understandable  
response to difficult life experiences**

**How do we recover from painful life experience?**

# **Recovery from Trauma**

**.Safety – healing relationship ways to feel safe, manage anxiety**

**.Making sense of experiences**

**.Social reconnection -valued social roles and activities**

**What will create safety?**

**Relationships based on Truth, Trust  
and Choice – being involved in  
decision making**

Voices and unusual beliefs are messengers, they hold the key to trapped emotions and needs



We need to decode their meaning



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.Commanding voices – may represent the need to learn assertiveness, to strive for ones dreams.



# Blaming voices

·May represent the need to reconcile with past injustice (e.g. sexual abuse or bullying) and transform (learn to dialogue with) feelings/thoughts of guilt and self blame.



# Angry critical voices

·Many possible meanings –

*Anger is often a cocktail of emotions such as fear, grief, hurt, self doubt & outrage.*

An angry voice may represent the need to resolve feelings of fear, self doubt, outrage invoked by an angry care-giver/ authority figure.



# Manipulative voices

- .Need to overcome the effects of deceitful relationships.
- .Understand manipulative tactics in past or present relationships.
- .Need to find trusting relationships.
- .Need to learn to challenge falsehoods express one's own truth (e.g. Non-violent communication Marshall Rosenberg).



John believed he could build a time machine

His belief was about wanting to change the  
past

Marco believed he could foresee the future  
and it scared him

Emotionally he felt responsible about the  
death of his brother and had not had any  
counselling for this

David believed people including the police  
could read his mind

It turned out a teacher who had beaten him  
for writing with his left hand and was very  
controlling, had told him God knows all your  
thoughts.

Persecutory ideas are rooted in experiences  
of persecution

Paranoia is similar to Post traumatic  
flashbacks in some ways



We need to make friends with our difficult  
experiences

e.g. “Say hello paranoia my old friend!””

We need to listen deeply to extreme states.  
We can all learn from these stories.

# Need to learn Calming and Expressive techniques

.Calming - e.g. mindfulness, relaxation, massage, breath-work, yoga, tai chi, swimming, gardening, walking in parks/ nature.

.Expressive techniques – e.g. Creativity, bodywork, singing, non-violent communication, dance,

drama, letter-writing, martial arts.

# When we accept emotions they often change

- .Stepping back
- .Respectfully acknowledging our energies
- .Looking after our feelings
- .Deep looking –understanding historical contexts  
developing compassion

# Drama work

- .Empty chair - confronting figures who have been oppressive. We can also role play the oppressor.
- .Role-playing difficult experiences and then confronting figures from the here and now.
- .Using finger puppets to dialogue with different parts of ourselves

# Mindfulness

.Techniques that anchor someone in their senses (e.g. sound, touch, breathing, sensation, smell) can allow difficult thoughts and feelings to be acknowledged and held lightly. We can become more able to recognise difficult feelings and more comfortable being with them and observing them change.

# Working with Anger

- .Creating safe places to express aggression, e.g. martial arts
- .Working with underlying feelings e.g. grief, hurt, self doubt.
- .Writing letters to people who have let us down.  
Creating our account of the truth.
- .Poetry singing and other creative activities
- .Campaigning work - yet avoiding getting stuck in one person vengeance crusades

# Learning self defence





# Power of Togetherness



When the going gets tough...



We need to take risks together



# Solidarity helps us deal with fear and oppression



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**THE DOCTOR WHO HEARS VOICES**

**Monday 21st April Channel 4 10pm**

Thank you for listening

