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Choosing how to respond to voices:

An experiential workshop of Mindfulness-Based Therapy for distressing voices and Relating Therapy

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Background

Distressing voices often leave people feeling overwhelmed and disempowered – feeling they have little or no control in their own lives – that voices have all the power and control. Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) can be helpful, but it may only help to a small extent and not everyone benefits.

In our work we have built on the early work of CBT – developing and evaluating novel ways of responding differently to distressing voices. We hope that this may help to increase feelings of empowerment, personal control and personal choice – ultimately reducing the distress and personal impact that voices can have.

Mindfulness-Based Therapy (Morning Session)

Inspired by and working with Paul Chadwick (Institute of Psychiatry, London), a pioneer of mindfulness-based therapies, we have evaluated a mindfulness-based intervention for 108 people distressed by hearing voices in a randomised controlled trial. We will tell you a little about the promising outcomes from this study, but the workshop will focus on teaching the therapy skills and giving opportunities to practice these skills and to reflect on our learning.

Relating Therapy (Afternoon Session)

Relating Therapy highlights the parallels between people's relationship with voices and with people in their social worlds. It uses extensive experiential role plays to change people's relationship with voices by enhancing assertive responding skills – learning to respond assertively to voices and people. There are encouraging findings from our recent pilot randomised controlled trial that we will present, with the remainder of the workshop giving the opportunity to observe, practice and discuss the core Relating Therapy skills.