

Wiltshire Hearing Voices Group - Chris' Story

Video transcript

Chris lives in Wiltshire, is a keen video gamer and console collector... and shares how the Wiltshire Hearing Voices Group helped transform his life.

So I've got psychosis, I've been diagnosed with psychosis. I feel like I've had that all my life. With the hearing voices. That's what I suffer with the most. Hearing intrusive voices. It's hard to explain to anybody because everyone experiences that type of voice in their mind. This is more of an outward voice. Feels like it's somebody right next to you. They can be very mean sometimes. Or they can be, in my case, recently, caring.

1 in 10 people experience hearing voices.

So I've been accessing, it's called the Hearing Voices Group, Rethink, based in Wiltshire, Trowbridge. Every other Thursday. Help me with a lot of advice and reassurance that I wasn't alone.

The Hearing Voices Group is part of the Hearing Voices Network, which is a national charity for people who hear voices, see visions or have other unusual sensory experiences.

It's a nice place to get together for people who experience, have intrusive thoughts, that can be hearing, smelling, tasting, and seeing things. I was able to go to the Hearing Voices Group every other Thursday, and got a lot of help from the people that worked there, advice and coping mechanisms on how to deal with the intrusive voices. And it was very hard, but I felt at home, every time I felt at home, and I felt accepted. The place was good for my mental health. And I met some good friends. I think the place saved my life, actually.

Such groups as these offer a safe haven where people who see, hear or sense things other people don't can feel accepted, valued and understood.

So I've met a lot of people at the Hearing Voices Group, people I would call friends, people I would call family. At times, we've got together and gone on events, like playing golf, mini-golf – crazy golf I mean – and we've got together to volunteer in the sensory garden. We've had good times, we've supported each other. To anyone that's interested in joining the group, don't feel like you're not wanted here. We accept all people. Whoever you are, we can help you. And if we can't – we'd definitely try.

Groups offer a way for people to accept and live with their experiences in a way that helps them regain some power over their lives.

So I was attending the group and over time I was asked by one of the volunteers if I'd like to be a volunteer at the Hearing Voices Group. I was shocked that I was told I had something to give back. I spoke to my wife at the time, and she said that'd be a great idea. I went and said yes – even though I'd said yes before I'd even asked

her - but I knew she would be happy. And it's been brilliant to finally feel like I'm needed and helping other people. I still hear voices at times. I feel like they will always be with me. But they can be kind. It's hard to believe that over all these years that I've discovered some kindness in these voices.

The Wiltshire Hearing Voices Group runs fortnightly on a Thursday (1pm-2.30pm) in Trowbridge, Wiltshire. For further information please email whvg@rethink.org

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