



BOSTON UNIVERSITY
AUGUST 16, 17, 18, 2017



*The
Montgomery
County Hearing
Voices Network
at the World
Hearing Voices
Congress!*



Mary Fala, RHD/CIC, , Berta
Britz, Board, Hearing Voices, -
USA, and
Dr. Ken Blatt, CT



*Eric Ayers
with Marius
Romme
portrait*



Michael Nelson, RHD/CIC,
Dr. Dirk Corstens, the
Netherlands and Mary Fala,
RHD/CIC

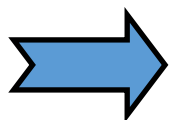


RHD was well represented at the "Congress" - Mary Fala, Creating Increased Connections (CIC); Sheila Hall-Pringleau, United Peers; Berta Britz, former RHD employee; Mike Nelson, CIC; Peggy Maccolini, CIC; David Son, CIC
(missing from photo, Sheryl Newton and Conrad Lawson from United Peers)





Berta Britz—from her speech



“We are the Hearing Voices Network Movement. We are human beings walking together with curiosity and compassion to discover and create paths to freedom, wholeness, and unity in diversity. We are a movement of listening and hearing, learning, unlearning, co-creating meaning. We create and hold space strong and flexible enough to hold tension, ambivalence, ambiguity, contradiction, paradox, and uncertainty. We meet as mutual questions, trusting the space between us to hold our connecting, human being to human being. We listen, recognize, acknowledge, and honor our mutual integrity embedded in our cultures and environments.

The Hearing Voices Network Movement is deeply personal to me. My learning about, and involvement with this movement, marked a sea change in my life. I moved from an individual trying to live “as-if” I were human, to fully embodying and embracing my humanness, including the rights and responsibilities that I discern as necessary for claiming and sustaining my identity and role in human community.”





Marty Hadge, Massachusetts
If voices say kill yourself—"something in your life needs to die, not your heart."



Gogo Ekhaya Esima—California
Trauma—
"the goal is not to relive it but 'review' it , with support."



Barry Floyd, Hearing Voices Facilitator,
New York , shared his moving life story.

Keynote Speakers



Akiko Hart, UK—"Connection" is the best response to hopelessness.



Val Resh doesn't "forgive" because assuming such power over another person is playing god. That is going to stay with me. Sue

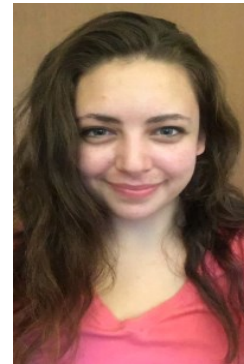


David Walker - "A psychology of liberation means deconstructing domination metaphors within ourselves & the mental health system ."

Some Presenters



Will Hall, California
Author of "Harm Reduction Guide to
Coming Off Psychiatric Drugs and
Withdrawal"
Presented "Psychosis and Spirituality"



Alison Branitsky, Junior at Mount Holyoke—
presented "How to Survive College as a Voice
Hearer" (with Sarah Felman, graduate of Mount
Holyoke)

Last summer Alison worked with Dr. Eleanor
Longden at the Psychosis Research Unit in
Manchester, England looking at psychosocial
and trauma-based etiology and interventions
for psychosis.

Eve Mundy, Voice Collective—
London

Discussed work in prisons—
"supporting young offenders who
hear voices"

The Voice Collective team are
working with two researchers from
Manchester Metropolitan University
and the University of Manchester to
find out more about the experiences
of young people hearing voices.



David Son and Mary Fala presented
"Accepting our Voice—A Movement of
Liberation"

Presenters, cont'd

THE VOICE COLLECTIVE "WHERE VOICES UNITE"

London, England

Jenna Rai Miller—CT

Language is important. "Labels"

dishonored me and my

experiences. I don't use

"paranoia" - I say "terrified being."

I don't say "mental illness" - I say

"emotional mental distress."

Eve Mundy from Voice Collective in London presented two very interesting workshops— "Creating and Sustaining Safe Spaces for Children and Young People Who Hear Distressing Voices" and "Death by a Thousand Cuts? Rethinking Self-Harming by Children and Young People Who Hear Voices"

Interesting discussion especially from young people in the room who have self-harmed. Need to be curious—what role does self-harm play? Some people shared their experience -

- Expresses difficult emotion
- Releases rage
- Sense of reclaiming myself
- A form of punishment
- A way to connect with my body—felt outside my body due to sexual abuse

"In the 1980's,
psychiatry lost its mind."

Ken Blatt, MD

World Hearing Voices Congress—did you know?

Since 2009, with the support of Intervoice – the international hearing voices network, there has been an annual World Hearing Voices Congress. These congresses bring together people who hear voices, family members, supporters, mental health professionals, researchers, academics and other allies to think, share, learn, and connect with one another. They are hosted by a different national network each year and began in the Netherlands.

Tricia—

“A high point for me was the roll call of countries. At first it seemed like a routine exercise to rally the spirits, but I quickly became overwhelmed with emotion, fighting back lots of tears, when I reflected on my daughter’s long, difficult, lonely journey with the voices culminating in such a beautiful moment of kinship and compassion from around the world. Still when I think of it or discuss it, the tears well right up.”

Our Group and Reflections

Annie—

“as a young person who hears voices, it’s great to have the kind of environment and safe space to be surrounded by the kinship of the whole movement”



How are you feeling?

Myra-

“excited, exhausted, strong,
more normal and
respected”

Alexa-

“relaxed and peaceful”



Will—my "hope" for the Congress—"learn, meet as many people like me as I can."

David—"I felt good energy at the Congress. There was an atmosphere of excitement about how the Hearing Voices Movement is not only having a positive impact upon individuals here in the USA, but also helping to transform our system of care to be more respectful of diverse backgrounds and experiences. I think we must fully embrace trauma-based approaches of healing when engaging those in distressing states and/or challenging periods of life. The Congress brought people together from around the world to affirm diversity in human experience and the precious meaning that each life holds—hearing voices is one of those many experiences. I am grateful to the organizers, participants and supporters who made the Congress successful. I thank Montgomery County Office of Mental Health and Magellan for their support and encouragement, too."



Eric—"I'm living my Dreams of Hope, not a Diagnostic Horrorscope."





Reflections,
cont'd

Sue—The connection of domination metaphors used in our history and are now repeating to oppress the "other" is powerful.

It was one of the best conferences that I have ever attended. I really learned a lot about the different ways that people experience voices.

Everyone's experience was valued and respected. If everyone in the world was as loving and kind as the people who attended, I think this whole world would be a better place.

Sheila

("United Peers" will be starting a Hearing Voices Support Group in Philadelphia in Fall, 2017)



Jason, striking a pose!

Reflections, cont'd

Will— "I am so proud and blessed to have been included in this year's Conference. I am proud to be a Voice Hearer, and now I belong to a world wide movement, defeating fear of engaging, learning that I am perfectly made and I am not alone.....no longer alone...no longer ALONE;

I AM ONE OF MANY. "

Berta—"For me to be there with Montgomery County felt like a gift beyond any prior experiences I've had in our movement. We're living into our dreams, and it was a privilege to be there. That juxtaposed with the violence and nightmare of our world, felt like a message of raw hope. We participated in living our values--truly a blessed community."

HEARING VOICES NETWORK



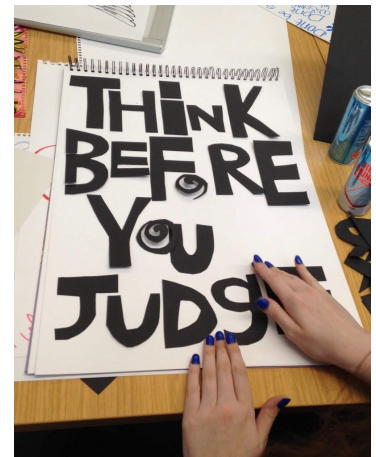
Mary—"I was struck with how a couple of the workshops facilitated a process of going deeper into my own experience of trauma, dissociation and voices in a way that made possible new understanding and has opened up a pathway toward further integration of myself! I have never experienced that before at a conference, so that was definitely the highlight for me."

Michael—"I enjoyed the Conference and I heard so many powerful stories of resilience and connection. I walked out of the conference with this unyielding ringing in my ears which said - 'You'll never be defeated by what people say about you, you can only be defeated by what you say about you.' I discovered I can't have triumph without tragedy. I can't be a conqueror if I've never been in a battle. I can't call myself an overcomer unless I face something I had to overcome. The conference allowed me to witness triumph, conquerors and overcomers."

*Ready to
start the
day!*



*Smile
says it
all!*



The Hearing Voices Movement is a call to action. It's a call to create a world where people can talk openly about their voices, visions and other sensory experiences without fear of the consequences. Where friends, family members and colleagues react with empathic curiosity, not fear. To create a society that accepts collective responsibility for so much of the distress people face – poverty, abuse, prejudice and inequality. For each of us to refuse to look away from these injustices and commit to addressing them in our own lives. Every word and every action matters. I hope you answer the call.

Rachel Waddingham, Chair of Intervoice



Photography by Eric Ayers