

# Unravelling hay-bales: Helping clients make sense of the voices they hear

**Kirshen Rundle**

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2018

10.00am-4.00pm

Only  
**£65**



**Hearing voices is often diagnosed as a symptom of mental illness but there are other ways of thinking about this experience.** For instance, there is a strong association between the development of voice hearing and adverse childhood events or trauma. Furthermore, hearing voices, in itself, is not always a cause of distress.

Person-centred therapy offers clients the chance to explore their own understandings and uncover the meaning that hearing voices has for them. This can often feel healing in a way that the more usual treatment of medication and/or hospitalisation does not. It also avoids the potentially harmful effects of stigma and medication side-effects associated with psychiatric treatment.

A lack of recent research into the approach with people who are diagnosed with mental illness means that person-centred therapy is not recognised as a valid intervention by healthcare providers and so is rarely offered to clients in psychiatric settings. Person-centred therapists, therefore, have limited opportunities to find out what it is like to work with people who do not always share the same reality.

The workshop will include some theoretical input which will cover person-centred approaches to working with this client group, and discussion about the notions of mental health and illness. But the emphasis will be on experiential learning that can inform participants' ongoing practice.

Opportunities will be offered to reflect on how to work with people who, perhaps, experience a different reality, and to develop further ideas about how best to conceptualise mental distress and help alleviate it. Together we will explore;

- What participants understand unusual experiences to mean and whether there are alternative ways of understanding them.
- What it might be like to be confronted with someone who hears voices, what meanings the clients attach to them and how that might change over therapy.
- How participants feel about the possibility of engaging with the voices their clients might be hearing within therapy sessions.
- Implications for therapists of challenging a medical model of hearing voices in relation to clients and other professionals/agencies within which they may be working.



**Kirshen Rundle PhD, MBACP (Accred.)** qualified as a person-centred counsellor in 2006 at UEA and completed her MA there in 2007 on her experiences of setting up a counselling service in a prison.

In 2017 she was awarded her PhD from UEL for a thesis exploring the lived experiences of hearing voices and of having person-centred therapy. <https://t.co/RGsQTox6fE>

Kirshen's clinical practice has included work with clients in prisons, a mental health trust and a low-secure psychiatric unit. Currently, she volunteers as a counsellor at Sue Lambert Trust, a charity that offers therapy to survivors of abuse.

Her academic experience includes teaching on undergraduate & post-graduate counselling & psychology courses, as well as a recent appointment as an External Examiner to a collaborative BA in Person-centred counselling with Middlesex University.

She has published several book chapters and delivered papers at conferences in the UK and Europe on person-centred research and practice with voice hearers. A publisher has asked her to write a book on new approaches to therapy with people who have unusual experiences but it's going very slowly!