



Marin County

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Informed Care for Serious Mental Health Conditions

Interactive Webinars

With Dr. Douglas Turkington, MD



Workshop topics:

- Principles of recovery
- Working with lack of insight
- Making sense of psychosis
- Managing challenging symptoms
- Talking about medicines
- Working with cannabis and substance abuse

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 am

January 20th, 2023

February 17th, 2023

March 17th, 2023

April 21st, 2023

May 19th, 2023

July 7th, 2023



Managing challenging symptoms

Doug Turkington, Psychiatrist, UK
Friday 21st April 2023

Managing challenging symptoms

1. Caring approaches for a loved one who is very anxious, angry, struggling with mood swings or low in mood
2. Different coping strategies we can share
3. How to help when a loved one is extremely deluded or has a system of delusions (or if you are brought into the delusion)
4. Making sense of speech that doesn't seem to be coherent
5. Helping when voices are very critical or commanding
6. Intercepting relapse
7. Question and answer

Learn to recognize “patterns”

It is often the case that challenging symptoms only occur in certain situations - “triggers”.

The pattern can be difficult to see but is often there....

By avoiding or figuring out how to cope with “triggers”, it is possible to prevent or reduce symptoms.



Caring when
voices cause
anger

Video Example Played

Common triggers

Stress (eg watching the news, anniversary reactions, running out of money)

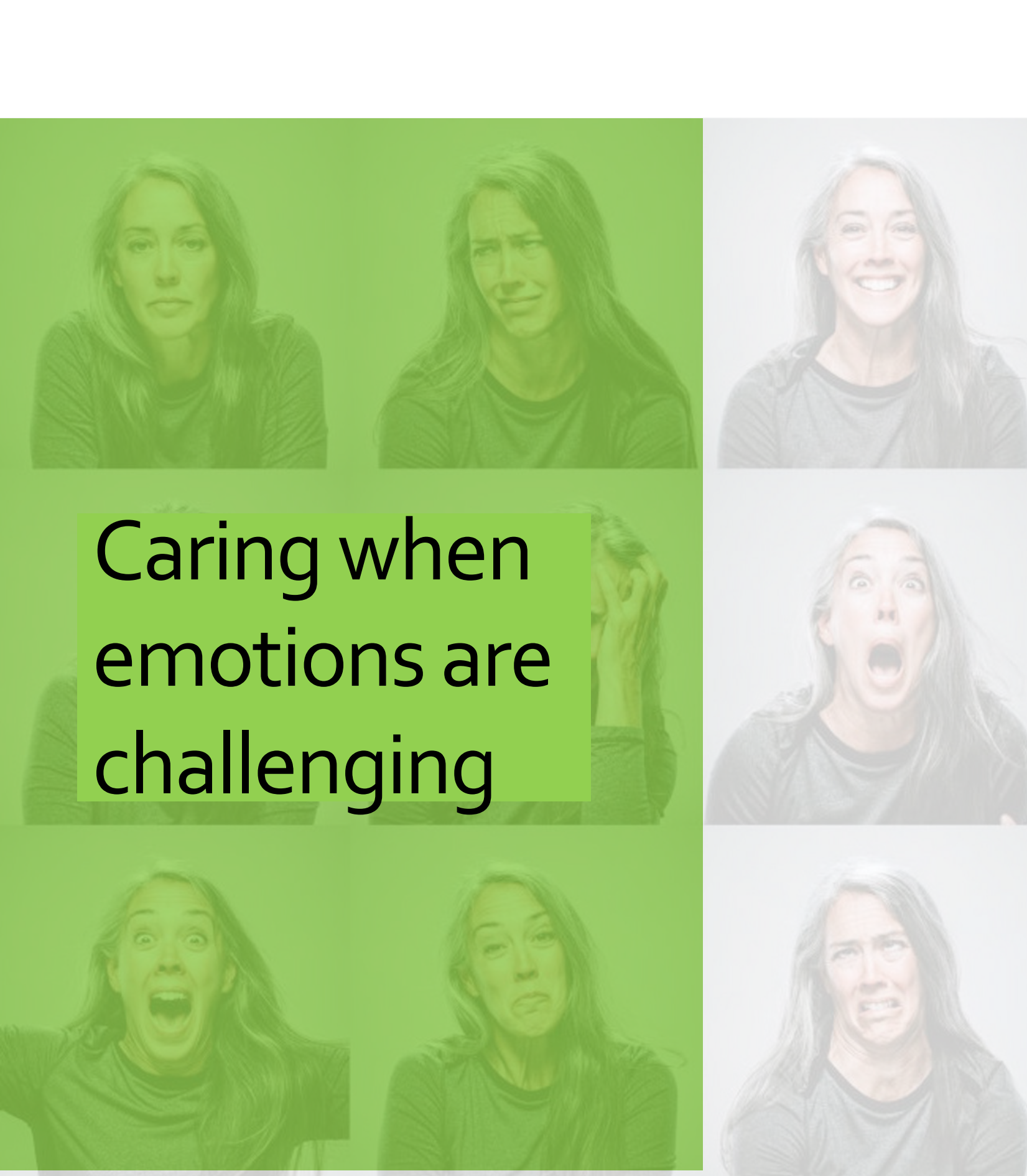
Relationship Difficulties (eg perceived criticism/control, being too kind, skew and schism, perceived rejection)

Isolation or inactivity

Health Problems (eg type 2 diabetes, allergies, long COVID etc)

Poor nutrition or sleep habits (room at wrong temperature, uncomfortable bed, sleep pattern reversal)

Alcohol & drug use



Caring when emotions are challenging

- What is the emotion? (anxiety/anger & depression/blunting can look similar)
- What words or image can describe the feeling?
- Are there thoughts passing through the mind?
- Have you felt this way before? Can you score it out of 10?
- What happened to the emotion then?
- Personal disclosure and empathy....
- Make the situation safe....if need be, excuse yourself to 'visit the restroom'.
- Refer to the safety plan or devise one...

Role Play

Bob is furious because his brother Doug is “staring” at him....

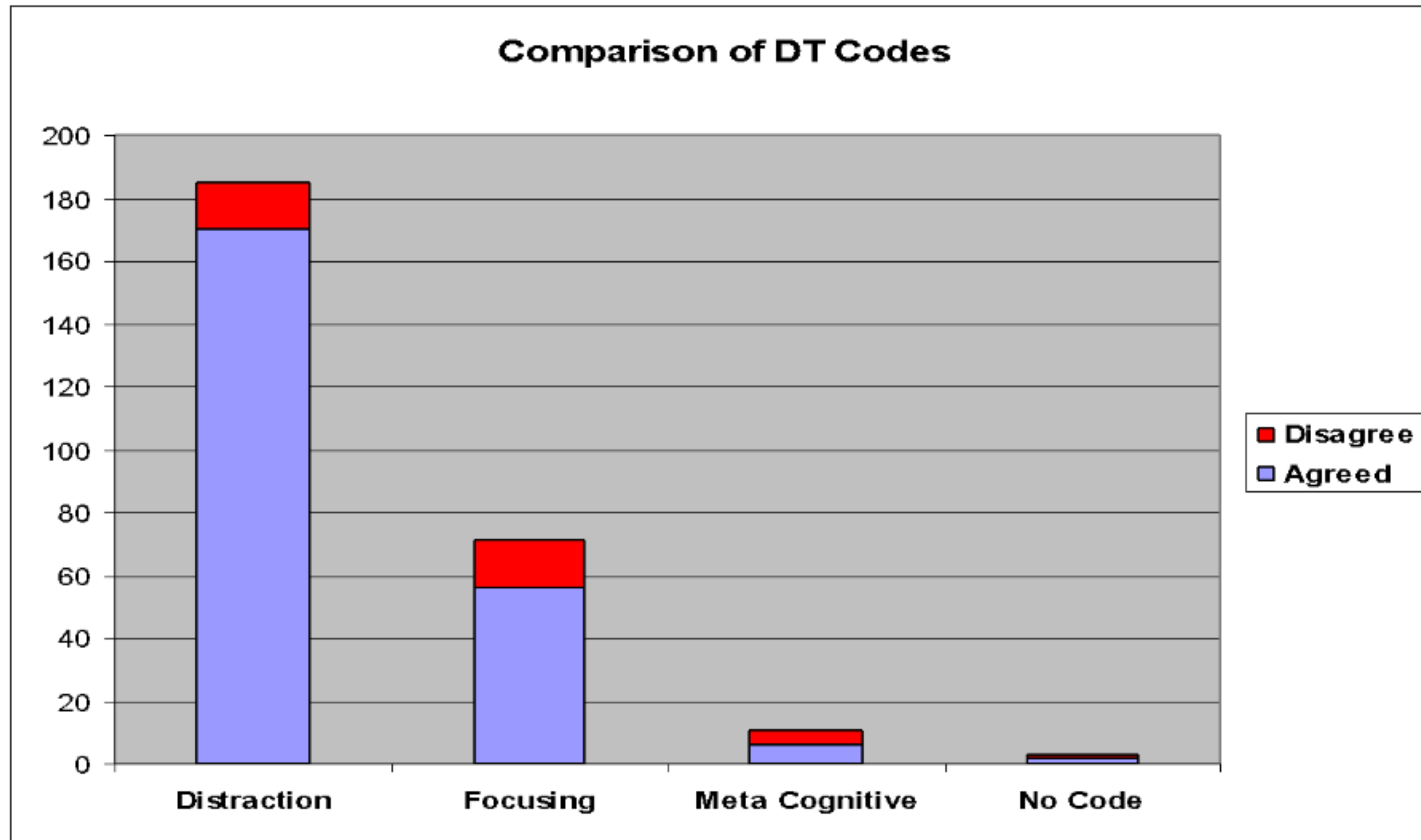


Ideas & questions



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the William Gorrill Swigert Fund

How well do people with very frequent voices cope?



Effective coping is highly individualized

- Writing down the voices
- Asking trusted friends/family if they can hear them
- Localizing the voices
- Trying to record the voices
- Test out explanations
- Modify the environment
- Taking a baseline voice diary
- Finding out if you can bring the voices on



Coping Strategies for Psychosis - Distraction

Humming/singing

Prayer/meditation

Sub-vocalization

Exercise

Painting

Imagery

Yoga

Dismiss the voices

Reading out loud

Relaxation training

Listening to music

Attention-shifting



Remind yourself that no one else can hear the voices

Phone someone, e.g. a friend to tell them that the voice is active

Dog, cat, horse, fish interactions

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Music



- Mozart's music K.448 (piano sonata in D major) composed in 1781 listened to daily (7 minutes) has been shown to significantly reduce seizure frequency in epilepsy (Rafiee and Valiante, 2020).
- Pinar et al (2019) music improved voices and quality of life in schizophrenia depending on dose and type of music.
- Jumbled or non-rhythmic music worsened both seizure frequency and voices.
- White noise (whirring fan, radio/TV static/hissing radiator/humming air conditioner/traffic) worsens voices.

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Coping Strategies for Psychosis – Focusing (not avoiding the experience and trying to understand it)



Correct the cognitive distortions

Activate the opposite emotional state

Mindfulness

Respond rationally

Acknowledge that the psychosis is a burglar-alarm and you understand that it has an important message about events in your life

Attention shifting



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Role Play

Doug is very ashamed and frightened of his voices. Can his father Bob help him to talk about the experience?



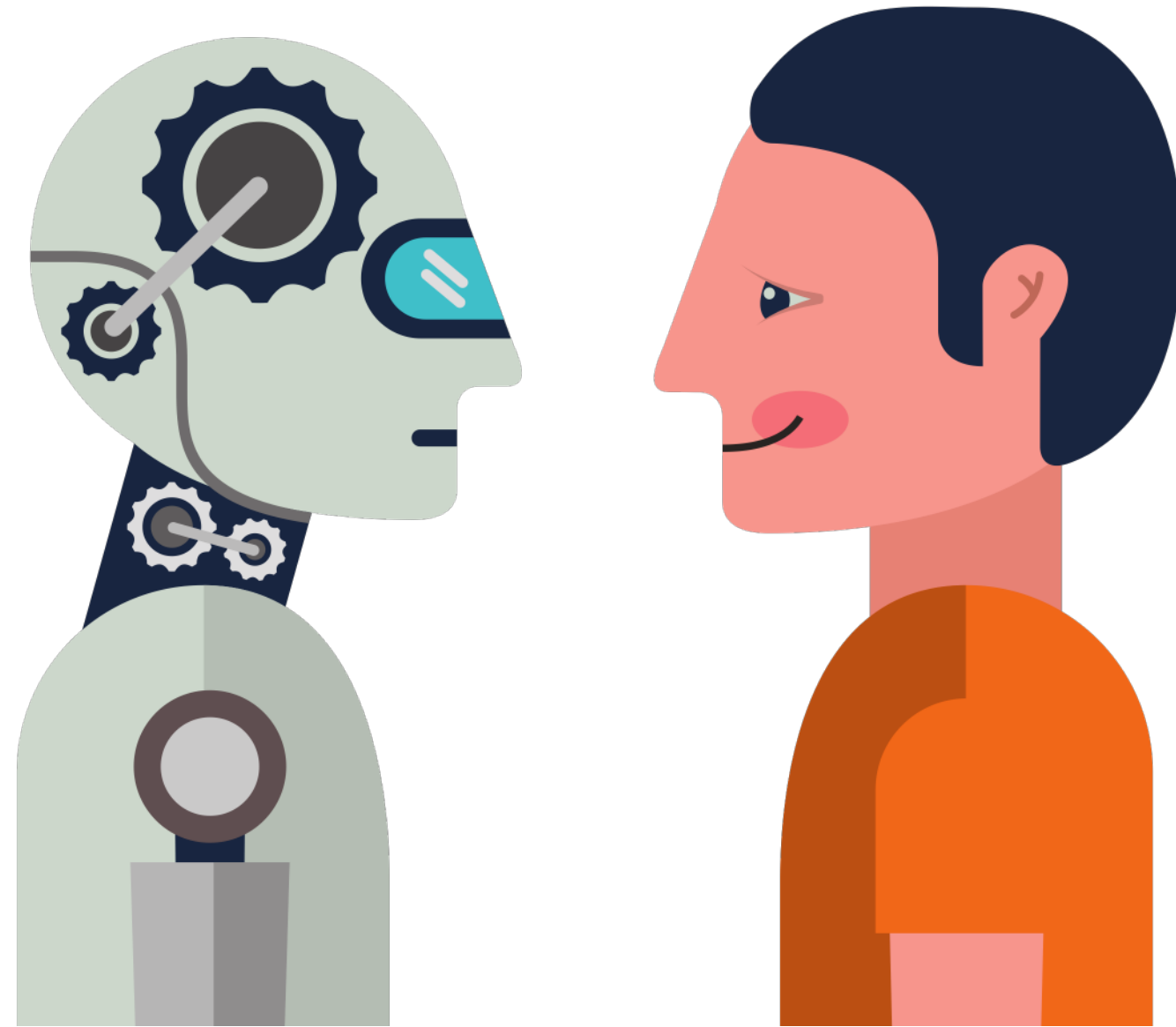
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Caring when there are extreme delusions/systems (and you are part of the plot)

Bob believes that many people in the neighborhood have been replaced by cyborgs (robots who are programmed to kill those few humans who remain alive)....Bob is very suspicious of Doug during today's visit



Techniques: what Doug might say/do....

- When did I change?
- What happened to your brother?
- Was it something I did or said?
- Ask me something that only I would know...
- Let's look at some family photos from over the years....
- I've been here for 10 minutes now...have I been threatening or shown any cyborg behaviors?
- I know you are very anxious about this subject can we do something relaxing together....

Improving joint understanding when speech is mixed up

- Slow the speech down
- Write down the key points
- Use thought linkage
- Reduce emotions that are driving incomprehensibility
- Go back to the start
- Can we draw it?
- Explore new words (neologisms)

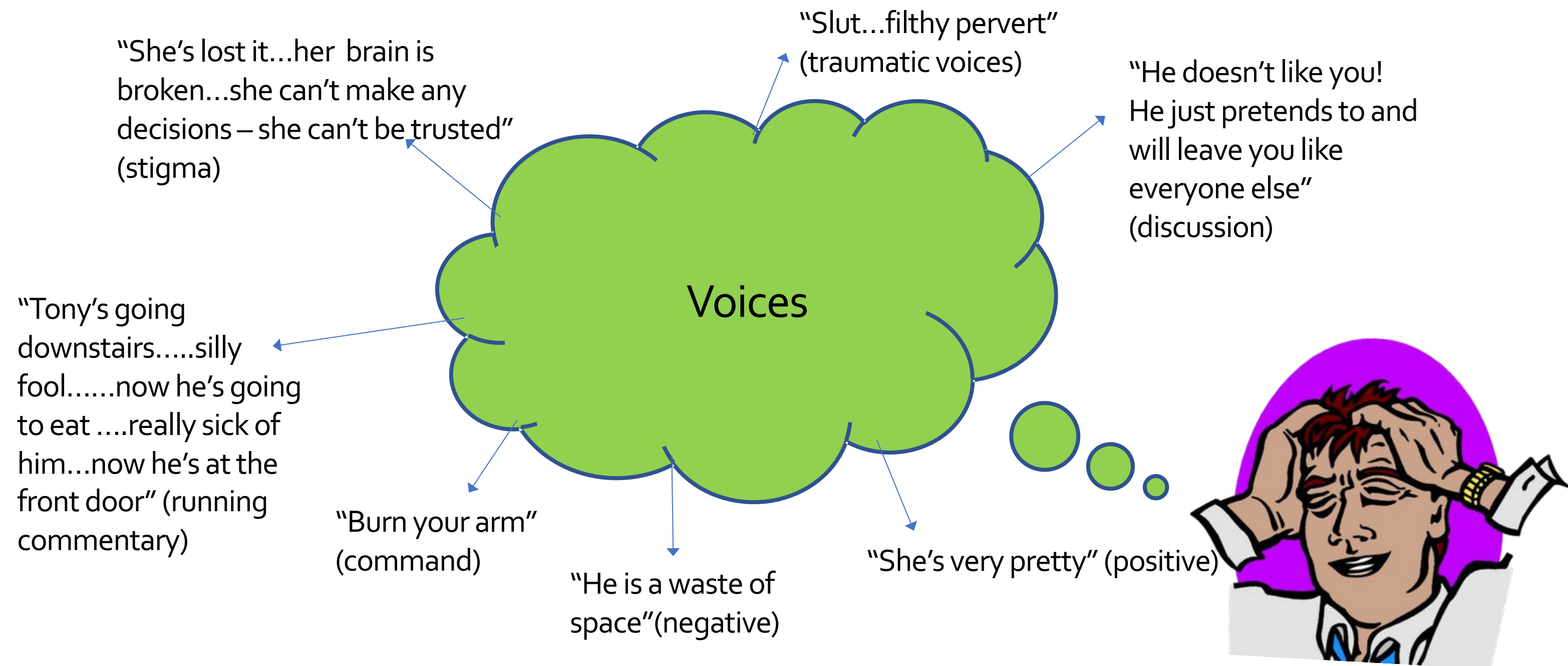


An example John Frusciantecoping with overwhelming voices

"I had just so many mental problems. It wasn't until I was 28 that my brain actually felt like a spacious place. When I was 18, 19, 20, my brain was just clogged all the time - non-stop voices. I couldn't figure out what was going on. There was a lot of confusion inside me, this flood of voices, often contradicting each other, often telling me stuff that would happen in the future, and then it would happen, voices insulting me, telling me what to do."



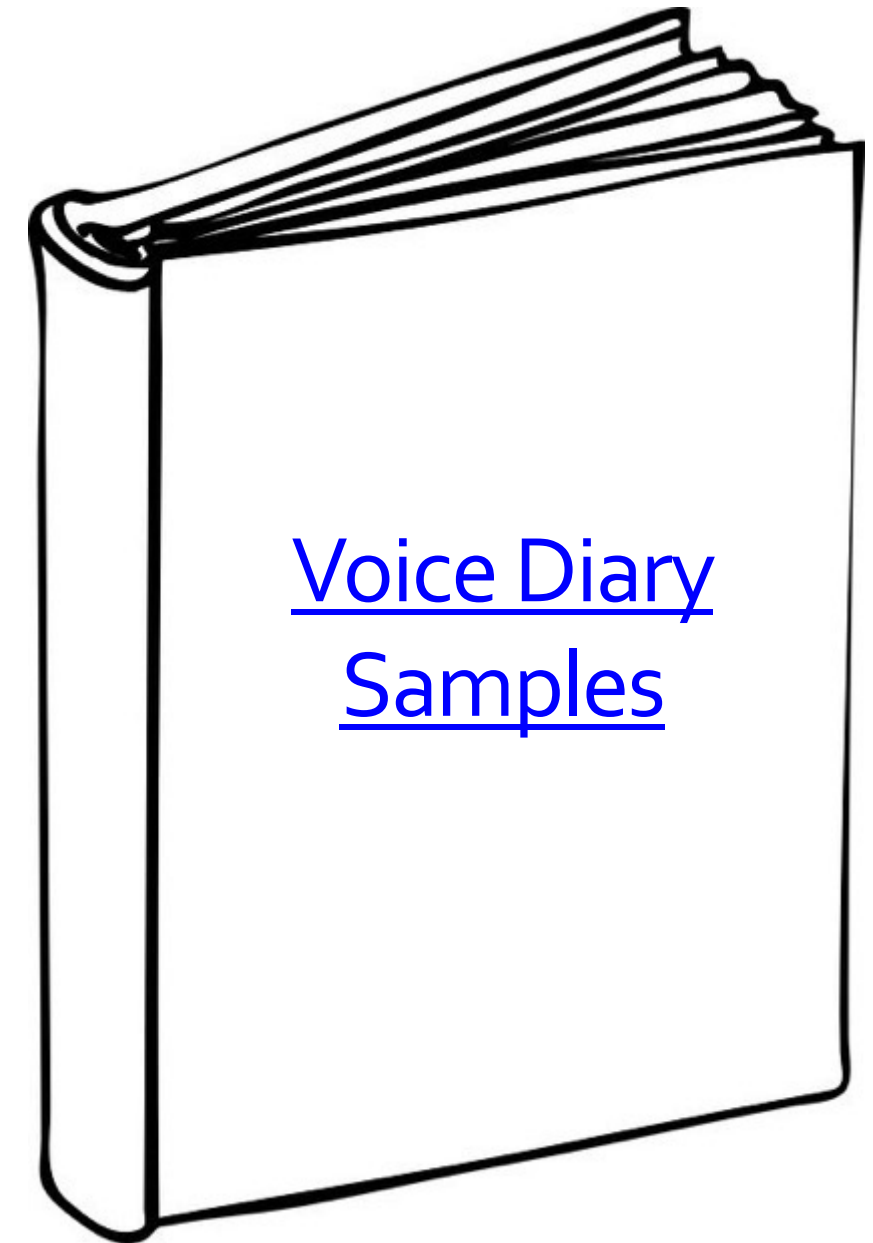
Voice Content: each person's voices are unique



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Take control of the voices using a simple voice diary

- Three columns for each day
- Morning, afternoon and evening
- Activities engaged in
- Voice intensity scored out of 10 in terms of distress caused or loudness.
- Over the course of the first week voices will be seen to vary depending on time of day and activities engaged in.



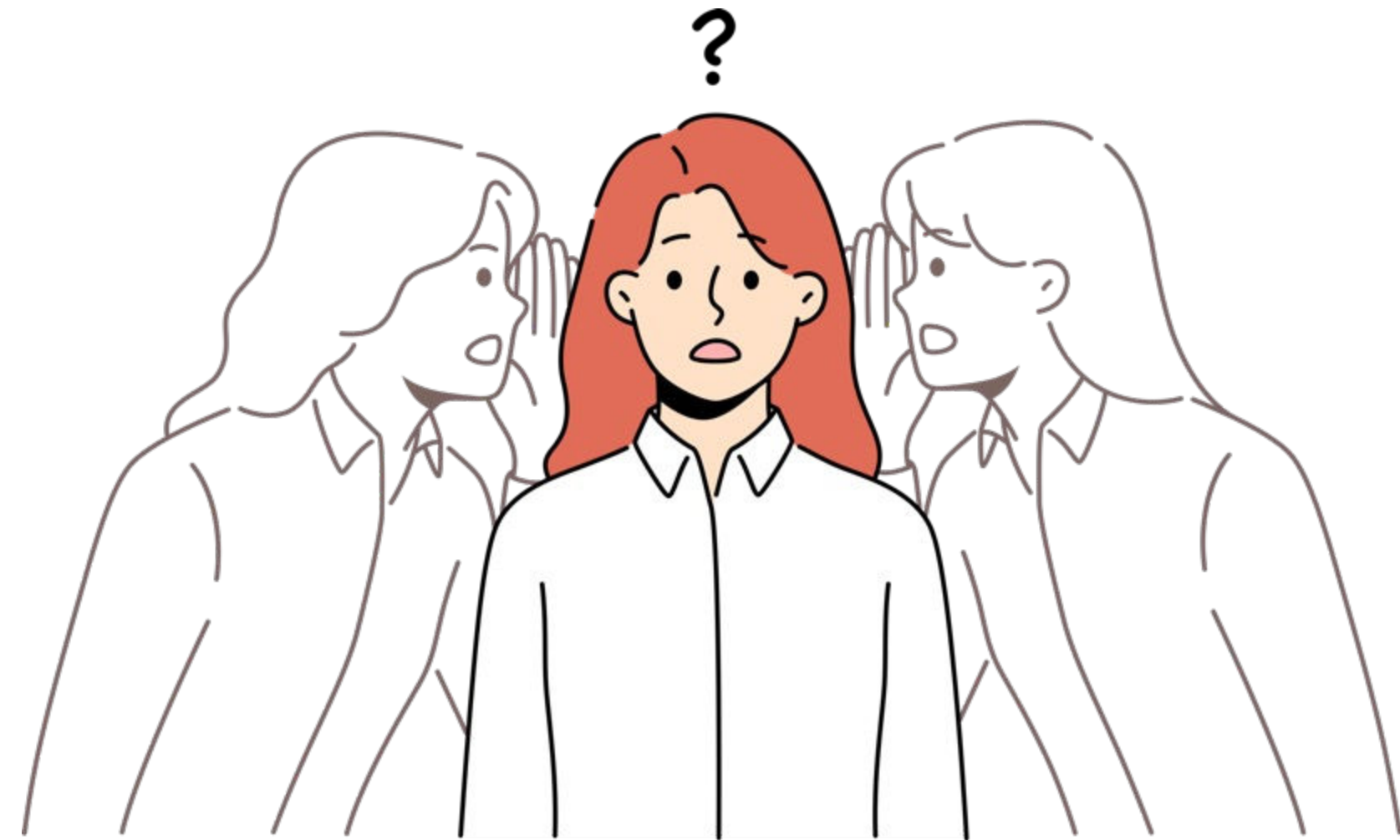


Voices are
often
critical
and
commanding

- Really important to talk about the voice content and emotional impact.
- Which person, machine, spirit or creature is thought to be producing the voice?
- Can we draw it?
- How do we know?
- How powerful is it?
- How much does it know, and does it have physical power?

Critical voices...commonest type of voice

- Due to low self-esteem and reduced self-nurture the person with psychosis often believes the voices
- Is the voice behaving like a bully?
- Would you ever say things like that to somebody over and over every day?
- Who has said the most helpful and kindest thing to you over the years?
- What would they say to the voices?
- Can we start to think “thanks for being there over the years but could you say something a bit more positive?”



Improving self-esteem and self-nurture



Remembering positive events and people from the timeline

Use a positive nurturing image

Compassionate self-talk

Compassionate letter writing

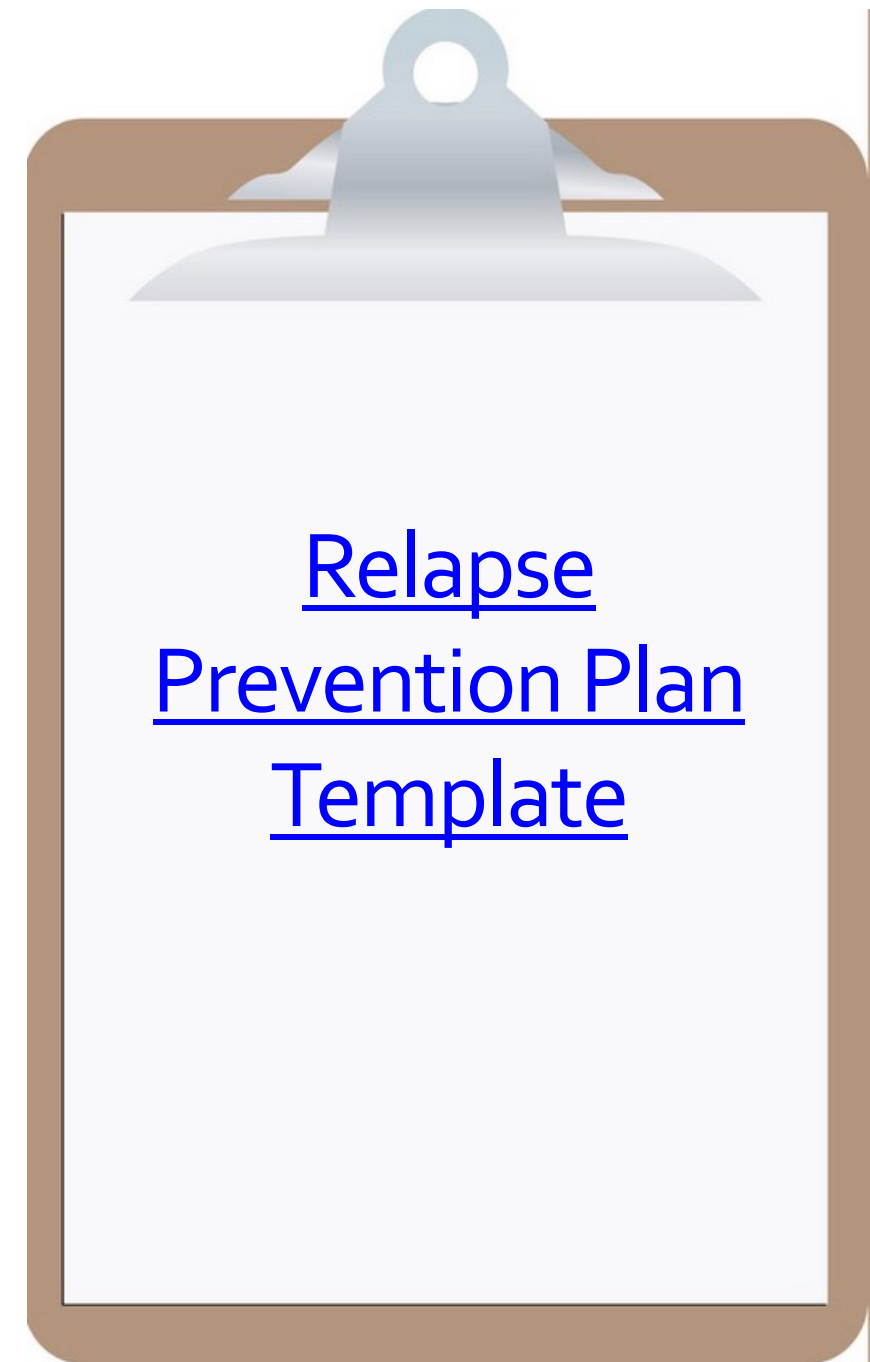
Compassionate meditation

Ideas & questions

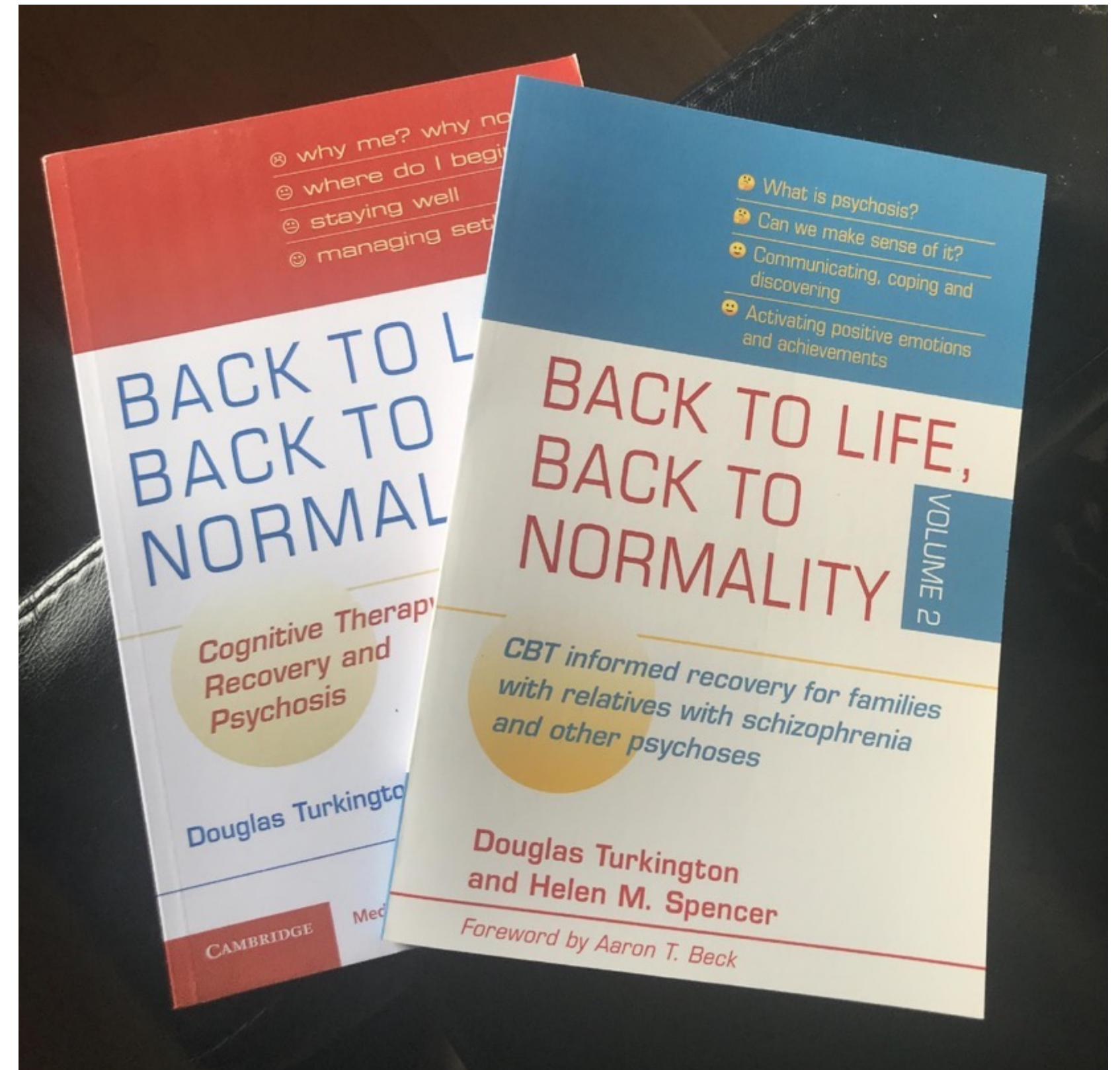


Intercepting relapse

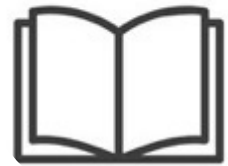
- Keep the relapse prevention plan handy
- Be vigilant for the early signs often an increase in anxiety, insomnia or reducing self-care.
- Use sleep hygiene, effective coping and stress reduction.
- Temporary increase in medication (antipsychotic) or use of night sedation
- Book an early appointment with your health care professional.



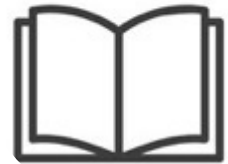
Two recovery guides (2009 & 2019) for families with a loved one with psychosis....volume 2 has an excellent chapter on making sense of psychosis.



Reading List



Turkington D, Lebert L and Spencer H (2016) Auditory hallucinations in schizophrenia: helping patients to develop effective coping strategies. *BJPsych Advances*, 22, 391-396. (a clear description of how to cope with voices)



Turkington D (2005) Appendix 6.3 Understanding what other people think (MD thesis) Newcastle University. (useful for ideas of reference, thought broadcasting and thought insertion)



Turkington D & Lebert L (2017) Psychological treatments for psychosis: what is around the corner? *BJPsych Advances*, 23, 16-23. (useful for critical and commanding voices)



Wright, N. P., Turkington, D., Kelly, O. P., Davies, D., Jacobs, A. M., & Hopton, J. (2014). *Treating psychosis: A clinician's guide to integrating acceptance and commitment therapy, compassion-focused therapy, and mindfulness approaches within the cognitive behavioral therapy tradition.* New Harbinger Publications.

Visit

<https://treatingpsychosis.com/resources/other-resources/>

for additional materials from Nicola Wright, Ph.D., C.Psych.

Ideas & questions



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