



## Finding Your Voice

A Skill-Building Course for Voice-Hearers

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# COURSE GUIDE

## Welcome!

You have arrived at a very special place  
A dedicated space  
For people who see the world differently  
For curious minds  
For wide open hearts  
For those who believe  
That madness is only  
A thing that is misunderstood.

The Voice Sanctuary | Sunshine Coast | Queensland

[www.voicesanctuary.com.au](http://www.voicesanctuary.com.au)

## A note about this university

Now you may think that universities are dry and dusty, but not the Mad Hatters University. We love to learn about the mind, which is always a peculiar and fascinating subject. And even though we love books, in our view, there is nothing so worthy of study as the study of Oneself.

The Mad Hatters University provides a space where you can learn about yourself, be inspired by peers, have fun, and remember what an amazing human you truly are. There are no tests or things you have to do to prove your worthiness, and if you leave the course with a happy heart, then we will have done our job.

### And a small note about NDIS

While we call ourselves a “university” we are NOT a registered training organisation; this program is only open to people with psycho-social disabilities. It is both a capacity-building program as well as providing core supports for social and community participation. For more information, please ask to see our service agreement.

## Course overview

“Finding Your Voice” is a course especially created for people who hear voices and/or experience a sense of inner conflict, negative self-talk, or dissociated parts of self.

The program teaches coping and empowerment skills based on CBT for psychosis and the peer-led Hearing Voices Approach. We help you identify and strengthen your own unique voice, and overcome the things that are getting in the way of your own authentic expression, such as:

- ∞ Parts of yourself that criticise you
- ∞ Judgments of others
- ∞ Voices that control or hinder you
- ∞ Lack of confidence or fear of taking action

Working weekly in a small group with other peers, you will gain:

- ∞ clarity about your own recovery vision and goals
- ∞ coping skills to help with negative voices and other distressing experiences
- ∞ assertiveness skills and stronger personal boundaries
- ∞ emotional awareness
- ∞ confidence to express yourself
- ∞ friendships, inspiration and support



## Schedule overview

The following schedule is a guide only and is subject to change on the whim of a Mad Hatter! Expect the unexpected...

DATE (2025)	TIME	TOPIC
Monday February 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2025	1:30 – 4:30 pm	<b>Welcome to the tea party</b> Introduction to the course Getting to know each other Activating your imagination and exploring your intentions and hopes for the future
Monday February 10 <sup>th</sup> 2025	1:30 – 4:30 pm	<b>Self-care and lifestyle</b> Understanding the links between your happiness and your environment and habits Identifying your own unique ways to soothe, centre, ground, rest and feel safe and joyful
Monday February 17 <sup>th</sup> 2025	1:30 – 4:30 pm	<b>My voice/other voices</b> Learning about different types of voices and parts Identifying which ones are worth listening to Drawing a “voices map” of your own experience
Monday February 24 <sup>th</sup> 2025	1:30 – 4:30 pm	<b>Your story</b> Thinking about different layers to your story Understanding where your story came from Knowing how to change it
Monday March 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2025	1:30 – 4:30 pm	<b>Learning to be me</b> How to assert boundaries with voices, people and life! How to take back your power and feel worthy.
Monday March 10 <sup>th</sup> 2025	1:30 – 4:30 pm	<b>Learning to feel</b> Developing emotional awareness and self-compassion Honouring your feelings as guides and messages Learning how to process your emotions with less distress
Monday March 17 <sup>th</sup> 2025	10:00 am – 4:30 pm	<b>Finding your voice</b> Sharing a short presentations to the group Plus our break-up Mad Hatters tea-party!

## Homework

Because we are a university, we set homework... which is really “home-play”. We want you to keep learning between sessions. We promise it will be fun and very, very useful. PS: we also promise not to get mad if you don’t do it. We are already quite mad enough, thank you.



## Venue and vibe

The venue is at the House of Hope, a charming and peaceful place with nice gardens to relax in during the breaks. The address is 10 Redmonds Rd, Woombye West. The venue has plenty of parking, wheelchair access and air conditioning.

A Mad Hatters' morning tea will be provided.

The space is created to be trauma-informed, with sensitivities of voice-hearers in mind. The content is designed to appeal to a range of learning styles, using a mix of clinical research and knowledge, lived experience story and art, and discussion.

## Costs

This training may be funded privately or by NDIS, if your NDIS package allows. We will provide a service agreement for NDIS participants with relevant item codes. Private payment plans are also available.

OPTION	DESCRIPTION	PRICE/SESSION	PRICE/COURSE
Solo participation	For people who are participating on their own	\$220 x 7 sessions	\$1,540
Supported participation	For people who require a support person to accompany them and participate in the training. This option allows us to include a support person in our limited space.	\$360 x 7 sessions	\$2,520

Please note, if you would like to bring a support person but you do not wish to include them in the cost of your training, your support person can pay for the course at a 35% discount (\$980).

### Commitment policy

In order to cover the venue and staffing fees, please be aware that when you enrol, you are committing to pay for all the sessions, regardless of attendance. If you do have to miss a session, no problem... we'll provide resources and activities to help you catch up.

### Cancellation policy

Once you have been offered a place and you have signed the service agreement, you may cancel without charge up to 3 weeks before the course: i.e. by 12<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

If you have to cancel after 12<sup>th</sup> January, you may be invoiced for the course unless we can find someone to take your place. You are welcome to have the workbook and slide materials in the event that you are charged but cannot attend



## Your mad teachers

The best teacher you have is yourself... At the Mad Hatters University, we are all teachers and we are all students. But of course, it can help to have some guidance. And someone to organise the afternoon tea. Here are a couple of mad people happy to do that job!

### Louisa D Pearce

Louisa is a Social Worker, Peer Specialist and author. She has recovered from multiple diagnoses (her “PhD’s in madness”), including schizophrenia. This helped her gain direct insight into psycho-spiritual distress and healing.



In 2011 she began work as a researcher, peer worker and trainer for a consumer-led organisation, Voices Vic, helping people who heard voices. Louisa has since worked in community mental health and in private hospitals; at Healthscope, she became the National Consumer Consultant. More recently, she was the Peer Practice Supervisor and trainer for Peer 4 Peer on the Sunshine Coast.

Louisa now works in private practice as a mental health counsellor and teacher. She has a Masters of Social Work and is also trained in Embodied Processing and Energy Medicine. She is the author of *Spirit-Gnosis: Hearing Voices* (2020) and *The Little Girl that Nobody Wanted* (2013), a memoir about recovery from childhood trauma.

### Paul McKessy

Having managed to live through his own mental health challenges 40 years ago, Paul committed his life to walking alongside and assisting others to do the same. Paul is a gifted communicator with an amazing capacity to see the potential in others and help them take the practical steps to realize it as he walks alongside them in their journeys of recovery.



Paul shares a simple yet life-changing recovery framework that includes practical baby steps to not just recovery but the opportunity to live your best life yet as a person who hears voices.

With formal qualifications in Mental Health, Counselling and Community Development, is an author with one best-seller and another about to be published.

Paul is a great person to have on the team and is looking forward to meeting you at the Mad Hatters University soon.



## Is this course for you?

Before you apply, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- ✓ Am I ready to participate in each class for up to three hours at a time?
- ✓ Am I ready to engage within a small group of people?
- ✓ Am I willing to learn new things and be curious about my own recovery?
- ✓ Do I like afternoon tea and will I wear a silly hat at some point? (not essential but highly regarded)

If you answered yes to these questions, then this is the course for you!

## Enrolment process

Interested to join our tea party? We would love to hear from you. Here are the next steps:

1. Visit the website and fill in the enrolment application
2. We will arrange a time to meet you over the phone, video conference or in person
3. When your enrolment is confirmed, we will send you a Service Agreement to sign and return

## More info | contact

For more information, please contact:

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We look forward to learning with you soon!

