

# About CCOR™

Client-Centered Outcomes Research  
in Public Mental Health (CCOR-PMH)

Felton's CCOR (see-core) Division, one of only a handful of public mental health-focused community-based research centers in the United States, grounds its work in the belief that stakeholder and community insights are fundamental to transformative change.

Felton CCOR aspires to leverage client- and community-centered research and program evaluation in the service of innovation, health equity and sustainable impact.

CCOR partners across the public and private sectors, pursuing research and research-driven program development with the agility and flexibility that a community-based organization affords. Attention to the intersection of culture/race/ethnicity, social adversity and access to quality services is at the forefront of all of CCOR's work.

CCOR works hand in hand with Felton Institute's award winning direct service programs and divisions as well as Felton Institute training and technical assistance initiatives throughout California and across the United States.

For more information please contact:

## **Nev Jones**

Director of Research

415.474.7310 x731

[njones@felton.org](mailto:njones@felton.org)

or

## **Anthony Vasquez**

Stakeholder Engagement Manager

415.474.7310 x707

[avasquez@felton.org](mailto:avasquez@felton.org)

Please visit our website:

[www.felton.org/research](http://www.felton.org/research)

*Interested in informing CCOR's research and program development in early psychosis? Felton is currently forming an early psychosis/early intervention stakeholder research advisory board. Please contact us for an application and additional information.*

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## Voices, Visions & Alternative Realities Groups for Young People

*what you need to know about*

THE HEARING VOICES MOVEMENT

PEER PERSPECTIVE

RESEARCH & EVALUATION FINDINGS

[www.felton.org](http://www.felton.org) | 415.474.7310  
1500 Franklin St. San Francisco, CA 94109

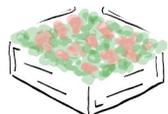
## THE HEARING VOICES MOVEMENT

Voices, visions & alternative realities groups provide a productive environment for young people who hear voices, see or perceive things others don't, receive special messages, or experience alternative realities, to meet, discuss and explore these experiences.

Voices groups are firmly grounded in the work of the international hearing voices movement (HVM). The HVM was founded in the Netherlands in the late 1980s by the social psychiatrist Marius Romme, psychologist Sandra Escher, and voice hearer Patsy Hague.

Core principles of the hearing voices movement include the belief that:

- Voices and similar experiences are real; that is they are real experiences to the person experiencing them, like other thoughts, emotions or internal phenomena
- ⇒ The source of distress is often the relationship between the individual and his or her voices (or alternative realities) rather than the voices (or alternative realities) themselves. This claim is backed by findings that a significant percent of the general population hear voices and/or experience other “psychotic-like” phenomena but do not find these experiences distressing or seek-out help (Johns et al., 2014).
- ⇒ Voices are often connected to individuals' lives, life events and cultures and the exploration of these connection can be deeply healing



## PEER PERSPECTIVE

Group Member Perspectives  
(from Beavan et al., 2016)

### Sharing and feedback

- ⇒ To be able to share our weeks and know we all experience basically the same thing.
- ⇒ A chance to talk to others with similar experience and find inspiration.
- ⇒ Getting the week off my chest and having a good chat.
- ⇒ To learn more things with other people's experiences.

### Support and understanding of relatedness

- ⇒ Contact with other voice-hearers.
- ⇒ Feeling less isolated, friendly atmosphere, empathic.
- ⇒ People who understand me.
- ⇒ Talking with people with similar experiences. I feel less isolated. There is only so much a clinician can do for you, or understand what it is like.
- ⇒ Being with those who have had similar experiences to me.
- ⇒ Getting to meet people that are going through similar things. Having support.
- ⇒ To feel a sense of belonging, encourage others with support and sharing lived experiences.
- ⇒ Everyone is accepted, there is no judgement.
- ⇒ There is a sense of family, where we share and learn from each other and offer each other support.

### Changes in relating to the voices

- ⇒ Acknowledging voices.
- ⇒ It helps me with my voices, helps me mainly to take control of them.
- ⇒ Method to reduce distress/ disturbing / fearful voices.

### Normalising of experiences

- ⇒ Knowing my experiences are not abnormal.
- ⇒ A sense of belonging to a group that accepts hearing voices as a part of normal human experience.

## RESEARCH & EVALUATION FINDINGS

Summarizing a review of the empirical literature on hearing voices groups (HVGs), Beavan and colleagues (2016) note that

“there is growing and consistent evidence to suggest that HVN groups are helpful, with all five studies [we reviewed] reporting improvements for the group members. Strong support was found for increased self-confidence/empowerment and self-esteem, with all five studies reporting improvements in these areas. Four of the five studies reported reduced sense of isolation and increased understanding/acceptance of voice experiences. Fewer studies (two or three) reported on areas such as confidence to talk about voice experiences with others, confidence to cope with voices, hope, frequency of voices, and hospital admissions, but those that did reported favourable outcomes.”



### REFERENCES

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- Bentall, R. P., de Sousa, P., Varese, F., Wickham, S., Sitko, K., Haarmans, M., & Read, J. (2014). From adversity to psychosis: pathways and mechanisms from specific adversities to specific symptoms. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 49(7), 1011-1022.
- Johns, L. C., Kompus, K., Connell, M., Humpston, C., Lincoln, T. M., Longden, E., ... & Fernyhough, C. (2014). Auditory verbal hallucinations in persons with and without a need for care. *Schizophrenia bulletin*, 40 (Suppl 4), S255-S264.