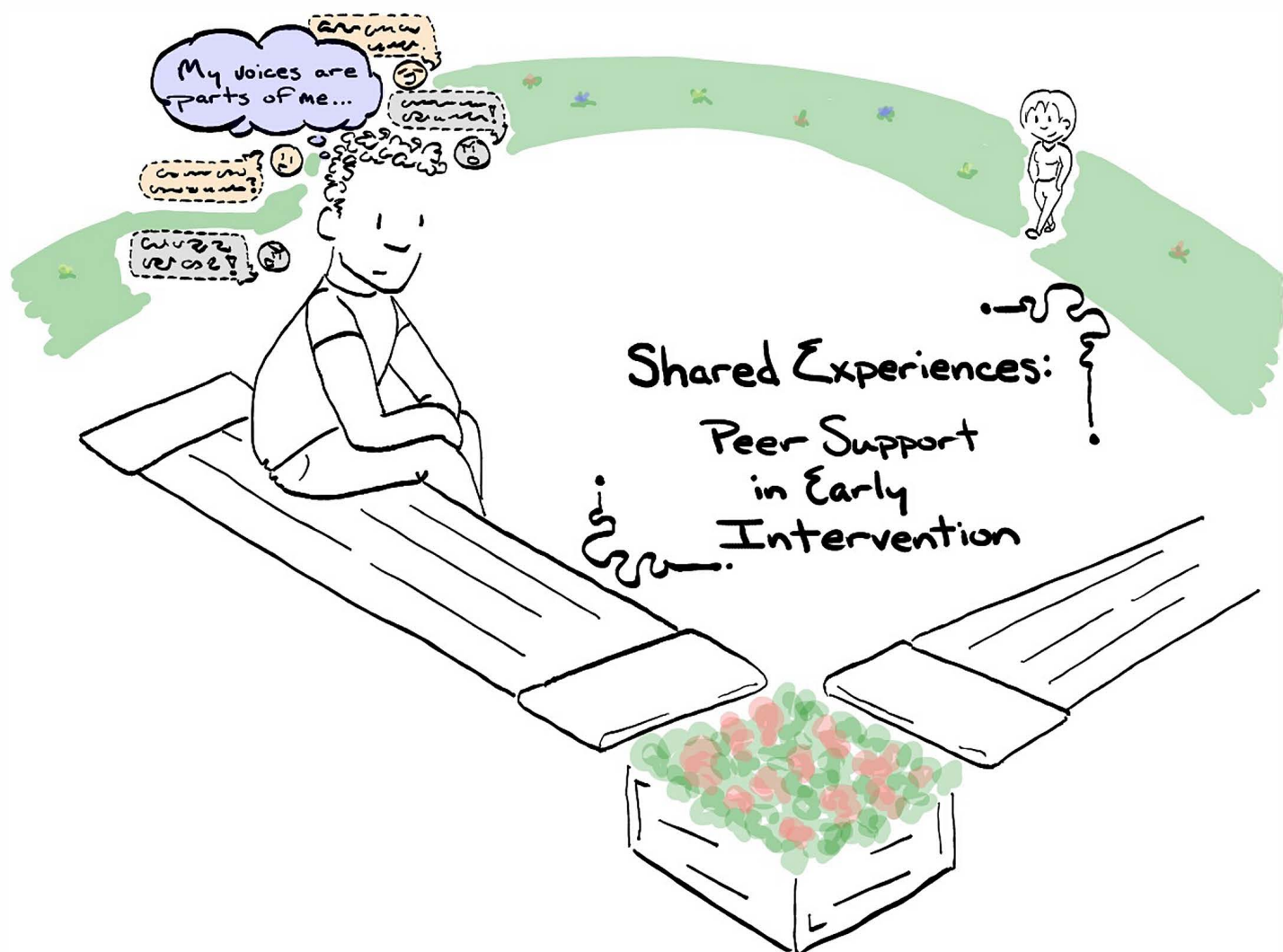


Understanding My Voices





Lynn
age: 23



Lynn is a Professional Peer Specialist who uses her experiences hearing voices to help others with similar experiences.

Sam
age: 20



I can hear my own inner thoughts...

But there are other voices too?

Recently, Sam started hearing voices.

Some good voices, and some challenging voices...





I was worried
I wouldn't get to meet
you after you cancelled
the last few times.

Yeah, sorry...



I told you, she's
just like the
others!

...But I wasn't sure
I wanted to meet you.



Believe me, I understand that. I
used to have a hard time meeting
someone new. I had a hard time
feeling I could trust anyone, and I
cancelled a lot of appointments be-
cause I didn't feel like anybody
could help me.



Huh, yeah. I've had so
many Providers lately, all
asking me the same ques-
tions: Am I hearing voices?
Am I taking my meds? Am
I going to kill myself? They
feel like robots to me.

I hope I can
help show him there
are better Providers
out there... and I
can help get him
there.



Isn't it nice
to not
feel alone Sam?

Maybe she
gets it...

You can't
trust her!



Right... like when I was hospitalized, they didn't have a lot of time to spend with me and it was hard to answer the same questions OVER and OVER, especially if the questions don't get at the REAL me.

I hope sharing my experience helps...

I get what you mean.

Maybe this meeting isn't the worst thing ever...

Wait, you were hospitalized?

Yeah. I was 21 and going through a pretty difficult time. My mom didn't know what to do... so she took me to the hospital.

I didn't sleep for five days, I was hearing voices, and I didn't feel connected to myself.
I still hear voices... but I've learned how to deal with them that makes it easier not to get so distressed.



I think she's telling the Truth?

I've never had a Provider tell me their story before.

Be careful... she's still a Stranger?

So you hear voices too? I've never met anyone outside of the hospital who hears voices, and those people were not doing very well.

At least she's better than the last therapist.

I've been afraid that if I tell people about the voices, I'll be hospitalized.

I don't know... think about it!

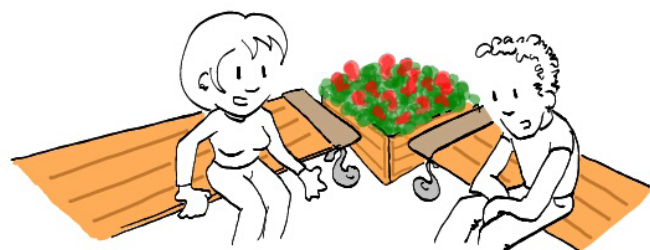
One thing that helped was meeting others through Peer Support Groups.

I lost a lot of friends when I got a Diagnosis because they didn't understand what I was going through...

Whoa, Diagnosis. I don't wanna go there.

One step at a time...
Diagnosis ≠ Identity

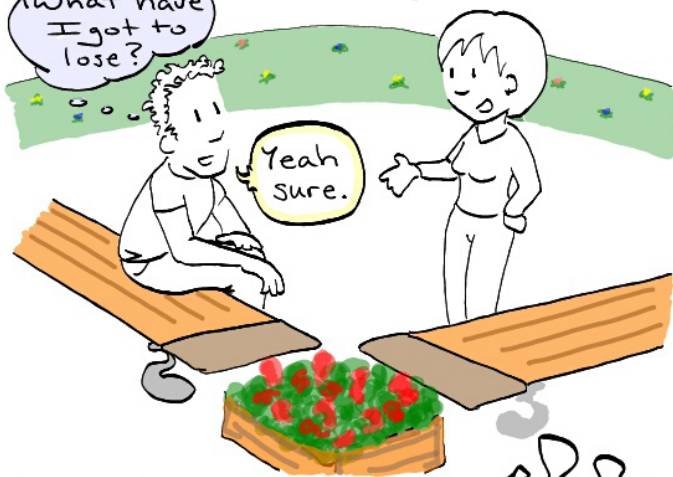
... and maybe I didn't know how to explain my situation either.



Would you like to come to a peer support group with me? I find it can be really helpful to meet and talk with others who have similar experiences. Plus it's a great way to make some new friends!

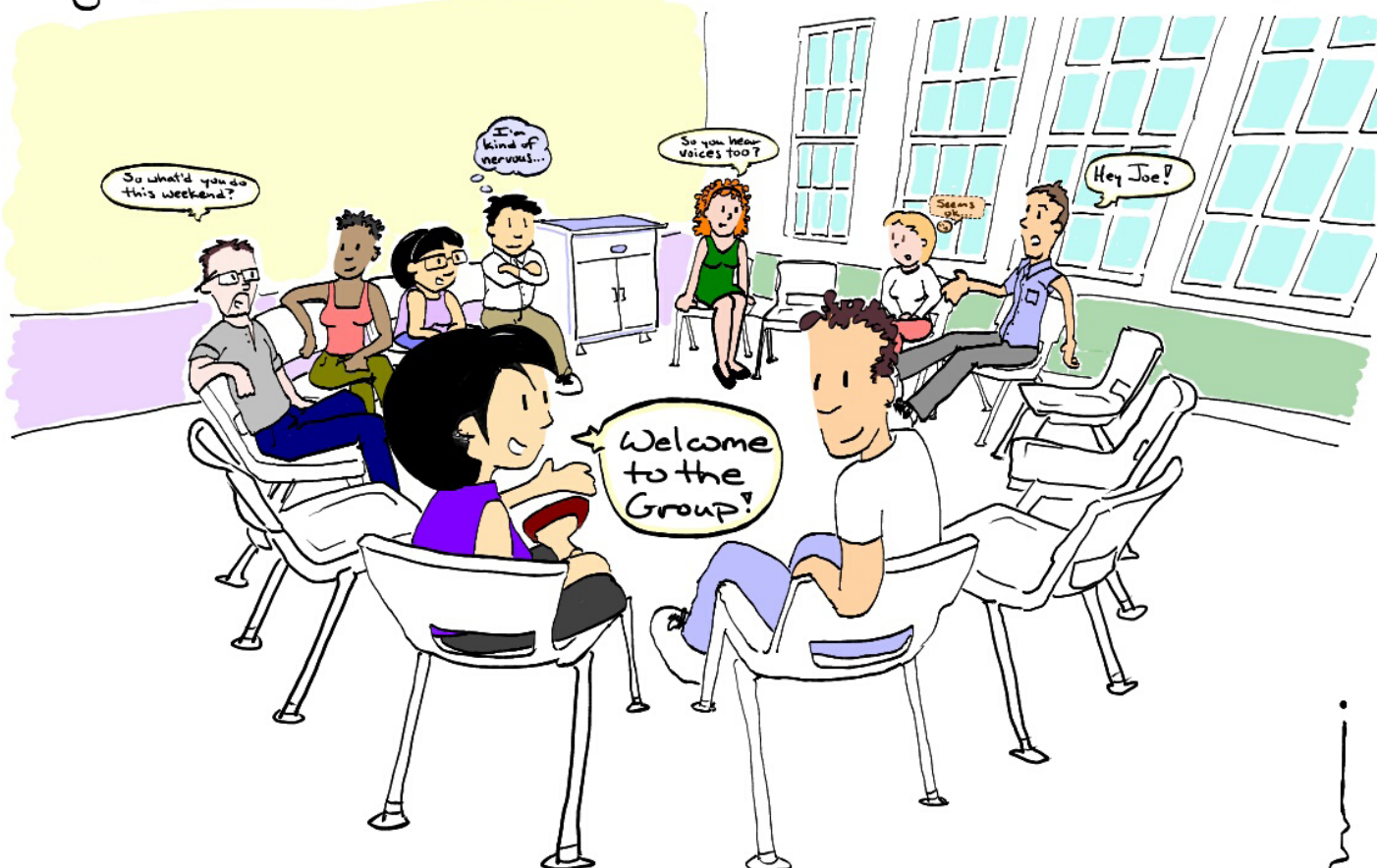
What have I got to lose?

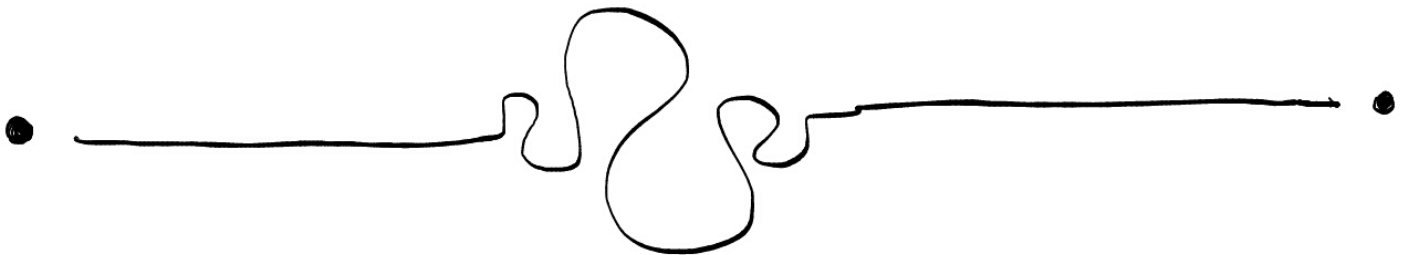
Yeah sure.

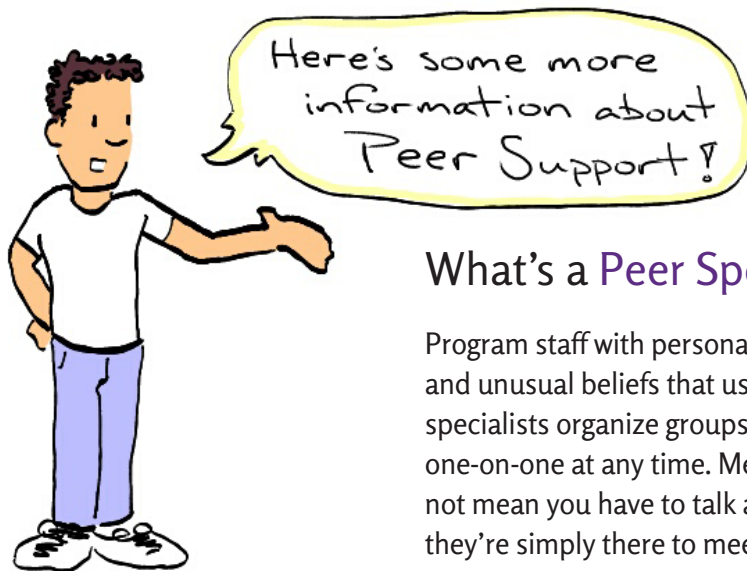


It was hard at first to go to a group. I was afraid I wouldn't relate to anyone... But it was something.

I don't really have any friends anymore either... I feel pretty embarrassed that I hear voices, since no one I know hears them. But I want friends.





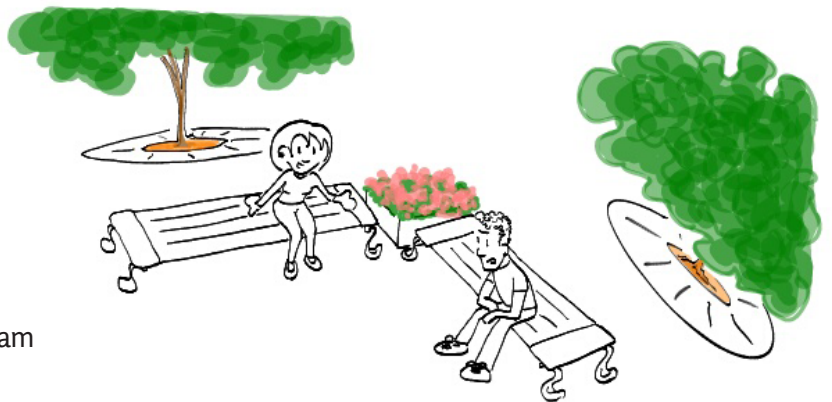


What's a Peer Specialist?

Program staff with personal experiences such as voices, paranoia and unusual beliefs that use their experience to help clients. Peer specialists organize groups and events and can meet with clients one-on-one at any time. Meeting with your peer specialist does not mean you have to talk about your experience or treatment; they're simply there to meet you 'where you're at'.

How can a Peer Specialist Help?

- One-on-one meeting
- Talking by phone, text, email or in person
- Concerns about your experiences
- Support with a crisis
- Support in a peer group or event
- Support meeting other clients in the program
- Support navigating a program
- Peer-led field trips and group activities



Need Support, or More Information?

Connect with your providers to see what options you have in your area.

You may also contact the (re)MIND®, BEAM or Felton BEAM UP® programs at talktoremind@felton.org, or visit us online at felton.org/early-psychosis for locations and additional information.



A Felton Institute Project

Designed and Illustrated by Amanda Lipp & Chris Ferrell