

Thank you

In 2020 or 2021 you took part in a research study called

Hearing nasty voices: developing new ways to measure the experience.

We're contacting you because you asked to receive the study results.

591

participants took part. All heard voices that criticised or threatened them ('nasty voices')

58% had to listen to the nasty voices (they had no sense of control over listening)

Higher levels of listening and believing was associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety

32% listened out for nasty voices, despite knowing that they would upset them

51% believed what the nasty voices say most of the time

There were seven groups of understandable reasons for listening to and believing the nasty voices.

Participants in the study said: "I pay attention to what the nasty voices say because..."

1. I'm too **WORN DOWN** to resist;
2. voices sound like **REAL PEOPLE**;
3. I'll be better able to **UNDERSTAND** the threat;
4. I might **LEARN** something insightful from the voices;
5. voices try to capture **ATTENTION**;
6. voices sound like **PEOPLE I KNOW** (e.g. family or a past bully);
7. I'm **ALONE** with time to listen."

Feeling **WORN DOWN** (feeling defeated, lacking confidence, and energy) was particularly important in determining whether or not participants believed the threats and criticisms that they heard voices make.

What are the next steps?

The next steps are to use the learning from this study to develop a talking therapy (a type of psychological treatment called cognitive behavioural therapy). For example, boosting people's confidence in their own views might help them to question whether the threats and criticisms made by voices are true. We will work alongside people with lived experience of hearing voices to develop the talking therapy.

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS?

Please do get in touch with me (Dr Bryony Sheaves, lead researcher, University of Oxford) for further information:
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