



July Newsletter 2026

A Tribute to Marius Romme

1934 - 2026



Limbrick Centre, Limbrick Road, Sheffield, S6 2PE,

Tel: 07590837694

Email: enquiries@nationalparanoianetwork.org

Website: www.nationalparanoianetwork.org

support@nationalparanoianetwork.org

The articles are the views of the contributors and not necessarily those of NPN.

“

Professor Marius Romme has been one of the most influential psychiatrists of his generation. He revolutionized the approach to working with people who hear voices. This Tribute to Marius features short accounts by many of those he has worked with over the decades from both professional and lived experience perspectives. Thanks to his work and all those who have worked with him, hearing voices is no longer dismissed as a symptom of schizophrenia requiring medication, but as something to be understood in the context of each person's unique life history.

”

Tributes

‘A true social psychiatrist’. By Dirk Corstens

For more than 30 years, I have regarded Marius as my mentor in social psychiatry. From him I learned to look for simple, unconventional solutions to support people. To look for social factors that can mean a breakthrough from a certain situation. Their own story is the starting point for this. For example, at Marius' instigation, I got a patient who no longer wanted to live, who had had too many losses in her youth, and who had been unable to have children, to buy a young dog. That gave her a reason to live. That made it bearable. Simple, but very important.

Marius was at the cradle of the RIAGG. The Regional Institute of Ambulant Mental Health.

Ultimately, a nationwide network of ambulatory psychiatry that should make the dismantling of the large psychiatric hospitals possible and deliver care in the community. When I was finally allowed to work in social psychiatry, research into social roles and the social network was conducted under Marius' supervision. From these, very useful social interventions emerged. It is a pity that these systems did not

*"I have regarded
Marius as my
mentor in social
psychiatry."*

find a wider acceptance. In a way, Marius was warming up to the greater and more permanent work on hearing voices.

That is social psychiatry in its purest form! He met a desperate but determined voice hearer, who demanded that he listen to what she experienced. Together with Sandra, whose role in this is not to be underestimated, they came up with the idea of making an appeal through a well-reviewed talk show. There had to be people who could cope with their voices. A lot of people came forward. They wrote down stories, organized a congress, at which time most of the people who came were voice hearers who had never had anything to do with psychiatry. They eventually conducted many unconventional studies and created an international emancipating voice hearers' movement that is still very much alive. The three book titles they wrote: "Accepting", "Making Sense" and "Living with Voices", is just a program to learn to live with voices.

Meanwhile, Marius devised the construct. The relationship between voices and real life. When he first explained it to me, I couldn't believe it. You can't make things that simple. Unfortunately, many colleagues still think like that. When we were going to Denmark where he, for me the first time, was going to demonstrate the construct with voice hearers, he fell ill and I had to do it myself. That turned out incredibly well. The voice hearer was free of her voice six months later and, after more than 15 years, back outside psychiatry, with her child. Now, this approach is taken seriously but not yet sufficiently practiced. Since Marius and Sandra have been

*“I’m sure if people
say, I owe them
my life, it will be
true”*

active in this field, voice hearing has become a focus of academic interest.

We travelled a lot together with Sandra or the two of us to promote the emancipatory approach to hearing voices. Due to these activities I learned to know many voice hearers and allies. Outside the consulting room. Some of them became dear friends. I learned to work together

with experts by experience. For me Marius and Sandra meant a huge and adventurous personal and professional journey and I am sure that if some people say “I owe them my life”, it is true. The international hearing voices movement is still vibrant and developing, thanks to their founders who had the courage to stand up and stimulate voice hearers to speak with their own voice.

Dirk Corstens collaborated as a psychiatrist with Marius and Sandra Escher for 30 years in research, writing, treatment, lecturing and workshops.

‘The boxer against error in psychiatry’. by Peter Oud

Marius Romme. As early as my professional training as a nurse in 1984 I encountered his name in textbooks about psychiatry and also later in 1992 during my training as a

socio-psychiatric nurse. Marius was a professor of social psychiatry at the time. He was the founder of social psychiatry in The Netherlands. At that time, he was the one who explained there is a connection between the social situation of a patient and the problems he or she encountered in mental health care. This had to do with the way we as care providers in social psychiatry went about our work. At the time I had no idea that this man would influence my life so much and would become one of my most important mentors.

Around my 30th birthday I started hearing voices. These were always positive, helping voices. These voices were no problem for me. They gave me suggestions, they warned me of danger, showed me how to find my way or what to say. I did not discuss this with colleagues at the time. The phenomenon of hearing voices was not well understood then. I considered the voices to come from a Guide, an entity. In mental health practice, hearing voices was seen as a symptom of a serious illness, schizophrenia. I think if I had told my colleagues at the time that I was hearing voices, I would have lost my job. Yet, for fifteen years I wondered why there was a difference in that I heard voices but was not ill. I functioned well with the clients I encountered in

"I had no idea that this man would influence my life so much and would become one of my most important mentors."

our ward, who heard voices and had the so-called disease of schizophrenia.

That insight I gained in 2011, when I came into contact with “Stichting Weerklank” (the Resonance Foundation), a foundation that represents voice hearers in The Netherlands, founded by Marius Romme and Sandra Escher.

The penny dropped and it became immediately clear to me that we were driven into the wrong direction with our biomedical theories in mental health practice. That there was not such a big difference between neurosis and psychosis as we had long thought. That there was much more of a connection with what people had experienced, their (emotional) limitation in dealing with that situation, and that this was what made people ill. It was only in 2014–2016 that I found out that the biomedical theories were mainly built on assumptions, there was no scientific evidence for them.

Romme and Escher have been able to fight against this human error for years, they were ignored for years. Perhaps a disgrace at the time. Quite an honor now.

(Translation by Corinne Webster).

Peter Oud, chairman of the Weerklank Foundation, co-ordinating practitioner at the Stemmen Outpatient Clinic in Alkmaar.

‘Marius Romme: the first psychiatrist to treat me as a human being and help me understand my experiences’. by Peter Bullimore

I met Marius many years ago at Ashworth Maximum Secure Hospital, where he was delivering a presentation with his wife Dr Sandra Escher. What I heard him say really struck a chord with me as I was always told that my voices were a symptom of an illness called schizophrenia, but what they were saying about hearing voices, was that they were a common human experience

Western medical thinking about hearing voices has always been associated with mental illness and frequently seen as a symptom of schizophrenia. Yet, what they were saying is many people who hear voices do not have a mental illness and never seek help. During the break I felt too intimidated to approach them as I felt that they wouldn't speak to me, how wrong I was! Marius was running a supervision session for psychiatrists in the afternoon and as I was a voice hearer I was asked if I would join them to give a lived experience perspective. I agreed but I was nervous. I thought who would be interested in what I have to say. During the session I challenged a psychiatrist for over prescribing antipsychotics to a patient who heard voices. He tried to defend his actions then Marius said to the psychiatrist, "You should shut up and listen to him he is the expert on hearing voices not you". Wow! I thought this guy really does support voice hearers.

*"I became friends
with a very
honorable and
caring man."*

Over the years I got to know Marius and Sandra well and we became friends I would go and visit them at their home and every time I left, I had learned more about my voices just through conversations that we had. In 2004, we wrote the Maastricht Interview for Problematic Thoughts Beliefs and Paranoia. This highlighted to me how much they appreciated the input of someone with lived experience. Marius

came to Sheffield many times and visited our hearing voices group where he would share his wisdom to help people.

I always enjoy spending time with Marius in a social setting. Myself and my wife Linda have been to the theatre with him, dined out many times with him and Sandra. We were really pleased when they attended our wedding and Marius gave a speech. Getting to know Marius in a professional capacity and socially has been amazing. He has given me a fantastic education free of charge but most of all I have met and become friends with a very honorable caring man.

Peter Bullimore is a mental health trainer and is proud to say he is a voice hearer.

‘Marius: not your average psychiatrist’. by Ruth Forrest

I remember meeting Marius for the first time when he visited our Hearing Voices Group in Sheffield about 15 years ago. I had of course heard of his and Sandra’s work before I met him and was nervous to meet this famous psychiatrist in person. Marius treated me as an equal straight away. We spoke first about beer (a favourite topic of mine) and later about my experiences of voice hearing and of embarking on training to qualify as a mental health nurse. Marius was genuinely interested in what I had to say on a completely human level and I could see that he lives the values he advocates for in his work.

I felt honoured to have my story included in the “Living with Voices: 50 stories of recovery” book, published a couple of years after I met Marius, and although I have met him in person relatively infrequently over the years, I think of him as a friend. I won’t say that I have never felt at all intimidated by him. When I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to present some of my own work at the World Hearing Voices Congress in Melbourne in 2013, I was surprised and flattered to see Marius’ distinctive white hair in the front row. He paid full attention throughout and was not afraid to respectfully challenge some of the points I had made afterwards, which again made me feel like an equal, rather than a fragile patient to be protected, patronised, or not taken seriously.

Without the Hearing Voices Movement, and therefore without Marius, Sandra, and many others, I don't believe I would be where I am today. Reframing traumatic and stigmatising experiences into something we can own, take pride in having survived, and share with confidence enables us to control our narratives and take back power. This is central to how I practice nursing and how I teach student nurses, demonstrating the immense reach Marius' work has and will continue to have.

Ruth has been hearing voices for over 20 years and has been practicing as a mental health nurse for over 10 years. She qualified in Sheffield in 2009 and attributes much of her success to the support of the Hearing Voices Group she was a part of during her studies.

“Without Marius and Sandra I don't believe I would be where I am today.”

‘Marius Romme the voice of change’. by Joe Callega and Lyn Mahboub

We feel privileged to have had the opportunity to join with Marius in his ground-breaking contribution to strengthening the voice of lived experience and in changing the way mental health systems respond to psychosis. The Australian mental health system response to psychosis has never been the same since his visits here between 2008 and 2013.

Lyn was first introduced to Marius Romme through her university studies in Western Australia. Joe, as CEO of Richmond Fellowship WA, became aware of Marius through Ron Coleman and Lyn who approached him in 2005 to introduce the Hearing Voices approach in Western Australia. Lyn, in the role of inaugural Director of the Hearing Voices Network Australia (Richmond Fellowship), then met Marius in Dundee, Scotland, in 2006. Lyn says Marius was kind of like an academic “rock star” to many of her fellow students who learned about his work from our Professor, Mark Rapley. For Joe he was a force to be reckoned with, for those who wanted the mental health system response to psychosis to remain stuck in old ways.

As both a professor and a Doctor, Marius could easily have maintained a hierarchy and distanced himself from service users/voice hearers, but Marius’s stalwart refusal to treat people as “patients” at INTERVOICE and other gatherings will be forever sown into our consciousness.

Marius very generously agreed to hold the INTERVOICE meeting in 2008 in Perth Western Australia, at the urging of Ron Coleman. This was the first time INTERVOICE would meet outside of Europe. Through the Richmond Fellowship WA we held a two-day *Recovery from Psychosis* international conference followed by a three-day INTERVOICE meeting. Most of the key players in the Hearing Voices Network throughout the world spoke at the conference, including Marius’ partner Sandra Escher (*may she rest in peace*) who challenged us to think differently about children and voice

hearing. These events were made possible with the support of Lotterywest in Western Australia, and there was considerable fundraising undertaken by HVN networks throughout Europe and the Middle East to support the attendance of voice hearers.

These two events attracted people from all over Australia who literally came out of the woodwork looking for a different way to understand the experience of voice hearing. From it were born the Voices Vic, the Hearing Voices Networks in New South Wales and Queensland and a strengthened presence in Western Australia. Marius' vision to bring the Hearing Voices approach more broadly outside Europe sowed the seeds of change in Australia. The experience in Perth led him to decide that further meetings would be remodeled to become World Hearing Voices Congresses. He travelled to Australia on other occasions, but his final visit was to the inspirational World Hearing Voices Congress held in Melbourne in 2013. We witnessed his influence on psychiatrists here who during certain spaces allowed their guards to come down and relate as people which in turn enabled rich and real conversations and experiences that stay with us to this day.

"Like many others, our own work remains inspired and encouraged by Marius's tenacity and bravery."

Marius and Sandra's *Maastricht Interview Course* was set as an intensive as a part of a Mental Health Masters based in recovery in a Western Australian University. We now see throughout Australia research projects and PhD studies that continue the journey of understanding the power of the Hearing Voices approach.

As many service users might agree, one of the roles of "the professional" is to act in the capacity of ally in the mission of being a "door opener" and Marius has done this in abundance, via his conference presentations, prolific writing but especially in his conversations with fellow psychiatrists, commissioning bodies and government officials the world over. This door opening work, served to pave the way for numerous service users around the world to gain access to conference podiums, peer review journals and even the academy. His contribution in Australia will be enduring.

Like many others, our own work remains inspired and encouraged by Marius's tenacity and bravery.

Joe Calleja was CEO of Richmond Fellowship of Western Australia when they introduced the Hearing Voices Network to Australia in 2005. He is a life member of the Australian Association of Social Workers and Australian College of Social Work.

Lyn Mahboub was the inaugural director of the Hearing Voices Network, Australia and has been in the Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce for over 19 years and on a recovery journey since her first extreme states/kundalini

psychosis over 42 years ago. This experience propelled her to become a C/S/X hearing voices movement activist, independent consultant and trainer and lived experience academic.

‘Marius and the Irish connection’. by Harry Gijbels

I first met Marius, albeit briefly, when I was working in London as a community psychiatric nurse, and I attended a conference on voice hearing. Of course, as a fellow Dutchman, I had heard of Marius’ interview on the Sonja Barend show, which really started the Hearing Voices Movement. I then did not meet Marius again until April 2015 in Trinity College Dublin, when he, together with Jacqui Dillon, launched the Hearing Voices Network Ireland (HVNI). More recently, September 2021, it was good to see and listen to Marius’ insightful contributions at the annual World Hearing Voices Congress (online due to Corona) organised by the HVNI (<https://hearingvoicesnetworkireland.ie/intervoice-congress-2021/>). In July 2021, I met Marius, Marilien and members of “Stichting Weerklank” (the Dutch HVN) in Amsterdam for lunch at the end of my 2000 km cycle trip, dedicated to Sandra Escher his partner, who had passed away earlier that year. It is safe to say that without Marius and indeed Sandra, there would not be an International Hearing Voices Movement and I thank them both for having had the courage to break free from the constraints of traditional psychiatry.

Harry Gijbels is a retired mental health nurse academic, a board member of the Hearing Voices Network Ireland, one of the founders of the Critical Voices Network Ireland and a team member of the recently launched, Mad in Ireland.

‘Marius – a good man who uses his life to help people’. by Mary Farrelly

In 2012, I attended training with Jacqui Dillon in Hearing Voices Group Facilitation and the Maastricht Approach and went on from there, alongside many others to establish hearing voices groups, develop the Hearing Voices Network in Ireland and incorporating the approach into nurse education. In 2015, I had the pleasure of spending time with Marius when he came to Dublin to launch the Hearing Voices Network Ireland and deliver a series of talks and workshops, as I was his “chaperone” for much of the time. It was lovely to spend time with him and to experience him interacting with the many people who came to the events. His generosity with his time, ability to communicate his ideas to varied audiences and general good humour were impressive over those few days. Today in Ireland there are 22 Hearing Voices Groups operating around the country in both community and health care settings. The Hearing Voices Network Ireland is well established and active. Training in Hearing Voices group facilitation and Maastricht interviewing is available to voice hearers, health care staff and other interested people and there is an, as yet, largely undocumented groundswell of recognition that being

interested in “voices” and exploring them is helpful and worthwhile. While there is still much work to be done in the area, this is a seismic change from where we were when I trained as a mental health nurse in the 1980s, when talking about voice hearing was not only considered not to be helpful but actively discouraged and considered dangerous. For mental health nurses and others, the approach offers a helpful framework for understanding and helping people to make sense of their experience and recover. Our Hearing Voices Dublin 1 group, was one of the first established in the country and has now been running for nine years. As a group facilitator and a Maastricht Interviewer I have seen at an individual level the difference adopting the Maastricht approach makes to people’s lives; changing a stigmatising and pessimistic diagnosis into a life experience that can be the catalyst for healing and recovery. All of this emanates from the work of Marius; not only from the original work in re-imagining voice hearing as connected to life problems, but also from his activism and energy given to working and connecting with people around the world who are involved in the networks. He has inspired many others who work alongside him such as Jacqui, Peter Bullimore and Rachael Waddingham, to name but a few and this has meant that the work has proliferated and reached far due to his generosity and collaboration.

When I think of Marius I think of humility, courage, intellect and compassion. When he was challenged by a person (Patsy) for whom the “medical” approach was not working he

was humble enough to admit that he did not have the answer. He has had the courage to forge into the uncharted territory of asking the people who were experiencing the problem to be partners in the journey of discovery, risking ridicule and isolation from his psychiatric community. His intellect in researching the issues, asking the right questions, such as “why do some people cope better” has led to ground breaking research from which meaningful and helpful responses have been developed. His recognition of the importance of life problems in voice hearing experiences demonstrates his compassion for people. His skill in communicating this work in accessible language, reaching well beyond the professionals to whom research is generally confined, has meant that the approach has proliferated widely amongst voice hearers, families, activists and healthcare staff. Since 2015 I have corresponded with Marius sometimes requesting information, at others seeking his advice and support for research projects and sometimes just to say hello. He is generous with his time and encouragement, signing off always “with warm feelings”. And that is how I think of Marius, “with warm feelings”, for a good man who uses his life to help people.

Mary Farrelly is a mental health nurse, currently working as a lecturer in mental health and nursing at Dublin City University. She is also a facilitator with the Hearing Voices Network Ireland and a Maastricht interviewer.

'Marius: a hero in the realms of psychiatry'. by Tori Reeve

I first met Marius in 2008 at a conference I attended with Peter Bullimore in Manchester. Hearing about Marius' work with voice hearers was inspiring and refreshing and enabled me to look at mental ill health, as a whole, in a new way. It also helped me to make sense of some of my own experiences, giving me answers to questions I had had for

"Marius is a true legend and a hero in the realms of psychiatry."

many years regarding the relationship between traumatic life events and subsequent mental ill health. This learning informed my practice in a more positive way as a result.

In 2009, I attended my first World Hearing Voices Congress which was held that year in Maastricht, home of Marius and Sandra, where Peter and I presented on the topic of deaf

voice hearers. The congress was a huge learning experience for me. The following year, Peter, Linda and I organised the Hearing Voices Congress at Center Parcs, Nottingham. The greatest thing about the Hearing Voices congresses is that they are attended by both service users and professionals alike; a place where learning and knowledge can be shared by all. This initiative, started by Marius and Sandra, made it possible for voice hearers to talk openly and freely about

their experiences without judgement and has helped to dispel the myth that hearing voices is a symptom of an illness. The work that Marius, along with Sandra, has achieved over his lifetime has been extremely important in helping us to understand the phenomenon of hearing voices.

World Hearing Voices Congress, 2010.

I am proud to be able to call Marius a friend. I admire Marius' direct, forthright approach when speaking; some of his comments have amused me greatly. Marius also has an admirable work ethic – “we finish work at 5 o'clock, then we have a beer”. This could not be more poignant right now, at a time when healthcare staff are busier than ever and feeling burnt out due to working long hours. My favourite memory of Marius, however, is dancing with him to the Jungle Book classic “I wanna be like you” at Peter and Linda's wedding, where Marius showed that he still had the moves of a man thirty years his junior!

Marius is a true legend and a hero in the realms of psychiatry. *Tori Reeve, friend of Marius and mental health nurse.*

‘Man on a mission’. by Paul Baker

I met Marius in Trieste, Italy 1988, with his then new partner, Sandra Escher. We were attending a WHO Congress aptly

named “The Question of Psychiatry” organised by the Basaglia led mental health service in the city.

This meeting has resulted in over thirty years of friendship and collaboration so far.

To explain how such a serendipitous meeting led to such a long-term relationship it is important to understand Marius’s intellectual energy and force of personality. This was and is a man on a mission.

The insights that Marius and Sandra had gained into the hearing voices experience even in those early days was profound. For people like myself, who identified as mental health activists and were critical of the dominance of the biological model of psychiatry, learning about their research into hearing voices, was like a drink of cold water on a hot day.

Over the many years I’ve worked with Marius I have admired his tenacity and determination. From the early days when the hearing voices approach was regarded by his psychiatric colleagues as dangerous and heretical, to the present time where it is increasingly recognised as an important and empowering counter to the mainstream psychiatric perspective – that voices are primarily a symptom of a disease process. It is also very important to acknowledge that Sandra Escher was his principal collaborator and source of support over the years and without her, he could not have achieved what he has.

It was due to Marius' grounding in social psychiatry, that he was able to understand that working with people and acknowledging their expertise by experience was crucial to finding ways to how people experiencing overwhelming and distressing voices, voice-hearers, could be supported in exploring and making sense of their experiences. It was through developing a partnership between experts of experience and experts by profession through the establishment of INTERVOICE, the international hearing voices organisation, that the research was able to be translated into action, leading to the formation of over 30 affiliated networks around the world, including most recently Brazil and the Czech Republic, supported by INTERVOICE. INTERVOICE has been co-hosting the World Hearing Voice Congress, held in different national venues since 2009. These meetings reflect the values and principles of the movement giving a platform for voice hearers and allies to connect share and ideas, promoting a hopeful and rights-based approach to hearing voices, seeing visions and related experiences.

One of the main achievements of Marius and Sandra was establishing and promoting hearing voices support groups across the world, one of the first such groups met in Manchester, England with Marius' and Sandra's support. It also became the base for one of the first national networks, now there are hundreds of such groups in many different countries and dozens of national networks too.

Another significant contribution of Marius and Sandra was the publication of a series of books about the research and

practice. Starting with “Accepting Voices: A New Approach to voices outside the illness model” (1993), followed by “Making Sense of Voices: A Guide For Mental Health Professionals” (2000) and then “Living with Voices 50 Stories of Recovery” (2009), they traced the development of new ways of thinking and practice.

There is still much work to do to get the hearing voices approach fully accepted in the way it deserves to be, however with Marius, we have a magnificent example of how this objective can be achieved. Through his courage, empathy and leadership INTERVOICE and the hearing voices movement has become a potent instrument for change.

We owe him a great debt of gratitude and we can repay this with our own determination to continue and extend his work. Thank you Marius!

Paul Baker, is a community development worker and activist, co-founder of the Hearing Voices Network England and Intervoice.

‘Marius, a beacon of hope’. by Olga Runcimann

I met Marius Romme for the first time in Scotland in 2006 at the Intervoice meeting, when the movement was still so small it was more like a big family gathering. Marius was this tall, impressive figure with a booming voice, a shock of white hair and piercing blue eyes. Having found my way out of psychiatry after so many years, I remember I was

discombobulated at meeting a psychiatrist who spoke so easily and naturally about the most taboo of psychiatric topics; voice hearing. And not only that but he spoke about it as if it were the most normal thing in the world! This was indeed a wonderful and precious family that he and Sandra welcomed me into as the father and mother of a movement, which has now grown and is found in more than 30 countries. So inspired were we that the Danish HVN spontaneously decided to offer to host the following year's gathering.

However no good family relationship is without its tussles and Marius and I had one, over the way I, who in the meantime had become chair of the Danish HVN, chose to organize the Intervoice gathering in 2007. Like a proverbial father/teenage daughter relationship, I broke the rules of how these family gatherings were usually organized resulting in much shouting back and forth both on the phone and in our written correspondence. Fortunately, much to our relief the gathering held at a youth hostel went well and when we parted ways that year, we agreed that we were each the most stubborn person we had ever met. I believe this was when the start of a deep and mutual respect started to

“Marius has changed not just my world but that of countless voice hearers over the years”

blossom, and our relationship has continued to deepen over the years both in private and professionally.

Marius Romme has changed not just my world but that of countless voice hearers over the years. His research has revolutionized the psychiatric world with his insistence that hearing voices is deeply meaningful when placed in the context of people's lives and connecting them to their trauma. Yet it is his role as the beacon of hope that I most admire because he proved that if a voice hearer has access to making sense of and creating meaning out of their voices, they can become free from psychiatry to live life as they see fit.

Every year I am witness to the revolution he fathered, for I see voice hearers who a few years earlier were trapped in psychiatry coming to Intervoice for the first time. A few years later they are the ones speaking of their emancipation from psychiatry inspiring the next generation and so our movement grows. Thank you, Marius, for this gift to the world -and to me.

Olga Runcimann is an international trainer and speaker, writer, campaigner and artist. She co- founded the Danish Hearing Voices Network. She is a psychiatric nurse working in social psychiatry and a soon-to-be-certified psychologist. She is also a voice hearer.

‘Marius Romme, A Doctor Without *Mental* Borders’ by Yann Derobert, founding member of the French HVN

Finding the right balance between exerting power over people and inspiring them to find their own power is challenging. I guess this is what might be called *influencing* others in a good way. Because one certainly has to find their own power in order to be able to inspire others experiencing it for themselves, it comes with the risk of simply *forcing* others into a model of doing things that might not suit them. This is definitely a challenge awaiting anyone stepping into the field of mental health with the desire to *help* others. And with all the current remodeling of old practices under the guises of *care* and *empowerment* in psychiatry, it can easily be forgotten how much of a rather personal challenge it is, more than an institutional one! And with all the seemingly consensual ideas around the *continuum* of human experiences and *dimensional* classification of those into psychiatric symptoms, one could readily not realize what taking up that very challenge would have meant for those who came before us to break down barriers and enlighten previously unexplored paths.

Marius Romme was certainly such a pioneer, breaking down barriers (maybe while not seeing them himself) and enlightening paths (he seemed to walk on in a very natural or even casual way), and I feel lucky enough to have met him precisely at the right moment, i.e. when I was studying psychology and could have just taken what was taught to me at uni for granted. I didn't understand exactly why at the time but it struck me hard enough that I knew I was witnessing something special when I saw Jim van Os apologize to Marius Romme during the first World Hearing Congress held in Maastricht in 2009. I remember he apologized for not having taken Marius seriously when he first started talking at medical conferences about the need to consider hearing voices as a normal human experience and not the symptom of a psychiatric disease. Later, I learned that, at the time, Marius had been laughed at as *crazy* and dismissed as maybe being *psychotic* himself (that tells a long tale about how *traditional* psychiatrists consider their psychotic patients: people not to be taken seriously I guess?).

What I understood much later are the consequences of considering hearing voices and other *psychotic* experiences as human experiences, rather than symptoms of an illness. These consequences are still mostly ignored and, when not ignored, misunderstood by almost everyone in psychiatry. The first consequence is that, suddenly, things that didn't make any sense and were deemed *crazy* make perfect sense. Looked at as human experiences, voices make sense put in

the context of the life of the person who hears them. Very often, it's even starkly simple! Still hearing the voice of the person who abused me and made me feel powerless, and that voice making me feel powerless is such a strikingly straightforward illustration of that. But it always makes sense, even when things get more complicated, like, for example, when tortuous relationships within my family are reflected within a conflicting network of voices trying to influence and get the upper hand over my life. Not easy to deal with, whether within my family system, the voices, or both... But easy to make sense of. And making sense of something is at the same time an unescapable (unless by drowning it in drugs) human feature and a key to personal freedom. Deprived of that opportunity, I might end up locked down forever, whether on the side of the patients or on the side of the *carers*.

Another consequence of considering voices as a human experience is that it opened doors for a whole field of research that had previously been stuck in endless chicken and egg debates, which resulted in the consensually meaningless (and, for that reason, disempowering) “theory” of *bio-psycho-social* causality of psychotic illnesses. Having everyone’s point of view being acknowledged in a scientific debate probably never led to any discovery... and it certainly never helped anyone make sense of their experience. One cannot *please* everyone when trying to make sense of their experience. Especially when that experience is the result of

abuse. Abusers won't be happy by my denouncing their abuses! By standing up to tell my story in my own words, I will almost certainly walk on a few people's toes and have to live with the consequences... from losing relationships to transforming others sometimes for the (much much) better. But coming back to scientific discovery, looking at specific human experiences like hearing voices or paranoia, researchers John Read and Richard Bentall and their teams were able to show how they highly correlate with adverse childhood experiences including, rather specifically, sexual abuse for voices and physical abuse for paranoia. Before that, when researchers looked at psychotic diagnoses, these correlations were obscured. When considering things from a social point of view, one has to wonder if this obfuscation through diagnosing is not, indeed, a function of psychiatry, one of its social roles: masking the prevalence of abuses... and if psychiatric drugs, not in an individual life but as a whole, in the systematic way they are used in our society, are not meant to contribute to that silencing of *voices*, including the ones of victims? That's the question of the use of power and how it shapes our relationships. Our relationships with each other, whether in our families, our businesses, our couples; our relationships to institutions as represented with people with delegated power, like doctors, nurses... But also our relationships to our own experiences, including voices, visions... as well as our emotions and feelings. Who's to say how we should relate to them? And on the basis of what?

That's where Marius Romme's contribution goes much further than giving a place to voices. By framing the *difficulties* with our experiences around our relationship to our own experiences and making it a matter of open and public discussion and interest, I credit Marius Romme for helping me make my way to a level of understanding that breaks barriers between clinical psychology (which, in my eyes, has proven so weak in helping people) and social psychology (that, unfortunately and until now, has proven so efficient in manipulating them into compliance). What if we used our social abilities in order to gain freedom from the limitations of our current relationships to some of our most challenging experiences? We find courage and inspiration when we are able to share honestly about what we are going through and by having the opportunity to hear from people who have been struggling with similar experiences. The process might go (apparently) very quickly or it might take some or a lot of time. But I believe it's a way to freedom that has yet not been much explored. When we don't start by envisioning an ideal world and forcing it upon ourselves and others but from finding the courage to look at the world as it really is, as witnessed by the most exposed to its violence among us. Doing so we might be surprised to hear what some of the most silent ones have to say but also by what of the most vocals might express differently when they finally become convinced, they no longer have to *show off*. We might be closer to each other than we were led to believe.

Marius had a very special way with power and the ways power plays in society. After having experienced ideologically driven experiments in France with moving barriers around, removing them from one place to finally put them back in place elsewhere, I was deeply moved in 2009 in Maastricht when we would all simply live together in a *family* retreat, sharing homes and meals and having informal discussions at nights... hanging out in a prestigious conference center and having lunch at a classy golf resort... all of us mixed up. And I also experienced it myself when, with my partner, we would go on a boat tour with Marius and his wife Sandra, in Amsterdam, in 2016. I was working at organizing the World Hearing Congress in Paris that year. Far from lecturing me on how I should do it, Marius shared with me how frustrated he felt that *we* (as a movement) hadn't moved far enough from the psychiatric perspective on voices (as reflected by the fact that *undiagnosed* people wouldn't join the movement). In sort, he was sharing with me something much more precious than his own accomplishments, but his motivation for them! And when I found myself struggling in directing that boat the four of us were in, Marius simply extended his arms and gently gave a stir in the right direction, preventing us from bumping into a much bigger ship full of hundreds of tourists... Fearlessness, I believe, inspired Marius to walk into unexplored paths. While he has left us with our fears (and I do have a lot of them!), he also left us with a movement within which we can inspire each other to move beyond those fears. At the end of the 2016 Congress in Paris, Marius came to me glowing: because of the way it was organized, it

gave him the opportunity to see contributions of anonymous people (instead of the most famous ones) and he enjoyed it so much! Marius had a special way with power: not ignoring it but not letting it get its usual way. My way to put it is that Marius made us the incredible gift of socializing our fears allowing us to transform them into courage and discovery. Who wants to join in and experience the difference it makes in one's life?



Yoga Section

All scenarios are from real life experiences of paranoia, either through questions submitted by readers like yourself or my own personal experience, or second-hand experience from others. Names, places and locations have been changed to protect identities and some stories are composites.

Sunlight is banned

I've got the curtains closed and I'm peeking through the windows

A helicopter flies over head and I quickly retreat.

If I could remember what started this maybe...

But I don't, because they're all listening you see? Watching my every move from every house down the street. There's cameras on every corner I'll bet too.

Money is running low; food is running low.

My patience is wearing thin. I feel like I've stayed up all night and maybe that's because I have. That kind of wearing, intrusive silence that seems completely questioning, interrogative, obstructive.

I'm sat frozen, completely terrified, I feel it in all my cells.

I've seen fear like this on videos of people who encounter a bear while hiking. Just stopped, breath holding

Why do I have it here?

I'm sweating and I feel like if I move a muscle I might die, or something bad will happen.

Practice - somatic kundalini

A powerful practice to remember in times that are very difficult is a movement one.

When moving my body feels like a death sentence, it is because I have lost sight of myself.

We can start standing or seated.

- 1. Bring your hands out in front of you*
- 2. Face palms up*
- 3. Turn them down*
- 4. Rotate through this a few times*
- 5. Start to roll through both wrists*
- 6. Pause and wait for an invitation to current movement through your arms. You are witness to this movement, curator but not creator.*

This might be enough, but pause again to see what else wishes to flow through you...

What is happening?

As you may have read from last week's stunning infographic, kundalini is the healing and enlightening energies and practices that is the purpose of some yoga. In Somatic Kundalini, a practice from Embodied Flow™ we begin by cuing simple movements and then try to let our body move before we think consciously of movements. This allows kundalini energy to move freely through the body, informing the dance and opening the energy channels of the body at the same time.

By letting our bodies be moved by this energy, we are selectively paying attention to cues in the body mind that are not anxious, not paranoid and are responding to the good hormones that are released when we exercise.

This practice can be simple but powerful to let go of paranoid thoughts for a moment or two and encourage calm, clarity and healing.

*If you wish to use a playlist, I've created one on Spotify here:
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6nvt0FNcuTRs2Kok7o6RQD?si=ragkkxEjTniLNSnl4hCxRg&pi=0Wcjm8P8RICTH>*

I hope this helps

Jazmin Ali

WORKING WITH HEARING VOICES & UNUSUAL BELIEFS (JULY '26)

By

PETER BULLIMORE & ROOTS UP



LEARN

from an
experienced
trainer and team



GAIN PRACTICAL

tools and strategies
to support voice
hearers and others



DEEPEN YOUR

understanding
of voices, beliefs,
and the Maastricht
approach



CONNECT

with others in a
supportive online
community



ONLINE EVENT



MONDAY, JULY 27 – WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5



3 PM – 7 PM GMT+1



OVERVIEW

Join our 6-session class starting in July to learn how to work with hearing voices and unusual beliefs in a supportive online environment!

Participants in this 6-session training will learn how to better understand and support people to make meaning of their experiences with voice hearing and/or unusual beliefs or what gets called “paranoia.” Attendance at all sessions is required to fully complete the training. All sessions will be held on-line, and all times listed are in Eastern USA time. Registration is required. Space is limited. All sessions will be led by Peter Bullimore & company.



MONDAY, JULY 27, 10–2PM:

Three Stages of Hearing Voices



TUESDAY, JULY 28, 10–2PM:

Three Stages of Unusual Beliefs/“Paranoia”



WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 10–11:30AM: Maastricht Interview Overview



MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 9–4PM:

Using Maastricht for Voices



TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 9–4PM:

Using Maastricht for Unusual Beliefs/“Paranoia”



WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 10–2PM:

How to Use What's Learned from Maastricht



SPACE IS LIMITED – REGISTER TODAY!

Don't miss this opportunity to expand your skills
and make a difference.



Scan to
register!



Or visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/6-session-class-working-with-hearing-voices-unusual-beliefs-july-26-tickets-1985561863985?aff=oddtcreator>

Maastricht = INTERVIEW FOR PROBLEMATIC THOUGHTS, BELIEFS & PARANOIA

Let's
talk about
it.



MAYFAIR COMMUNITY CENTRE
CHURCH STRETTON,
ENGLAND



WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER –
THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER



9:30 AM – 4:30 PM

OVERVIEW

Join us in Maastricht for a professional, in-person training event exploring tricky thoughts, beliefs, and paranoia. This event offers an opportunity to learn from leading experts, engage in meaningful discussion, and develop a deeper understanding of complex thinking patterns in a supportive and respectful environment.

WHAT TO EXPECT



Engage in meaningful discussions about tricky and confusing thought patterns



Learn from world leading experts in the field of paranoia and problematic beliefs



Share insights and experiences in a supportive and respectful environment



Gain practical perspectives to better understand and make sense of your own experiences



ABOUT THE EVENT

Join the Maastricht Interview for Problematic Thoughts, Beliefs, and Paranoia

Looking to understand and explore thought patterns that might be tricky or confusing? This in-person event in Maastricht is your chance to dive deep into how we think, especially when paranoia and unusual beliefs pop up.

The training is offered in a supportive environment which allows us to chat, learn from world leading experts, and share insights with others interested in the challenging topics of Paranoia and Problematic Beliefs.



Don't miss out on this eye-opening experience with Peter Bullimore and his team, in partnership with **Neuro SENter**.

BOOK YOUR
PLACE!



TICKETS & INFO:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/maastricht-interview-for-problematic-thoughts-beliefs-and-paranoia-tickets-1986715969947?aff=ebdssbdsearch>



Come as you are. Leave with new perspectives. Let's explore the mind—together.





Since 1986, Asylum Magazine has provided a forum for discussing mental health politics, practice, and policy, influenced by democratic psychiatry and progressive social movements, including psychiatric survivor and Mad liberation movements.

Design by Maximilian Pogorzelski, adapting Nicola Field's art cover for Asylum Winter 2025.

"Makes any other mental health magazine look like Women's Weekly"

-Dolly Sen, activist, artist, and author of DSM69

"One of the most consistently thought-provoking voices on mental health in the UK... And still a bit Punk."

-Vaughan Bell

► What: We publish voices that the system ignores. Your perspective is the substance of this magazine.

► Who: We welcome contributions from service users, survivors, activists, friends, family members and frontline workers.

► Content: Critiques, poetry, creative writing, artwork, cartoons, and personal experiences regarding mental health policy and practice.

► Privacy: Contributions can remain anonymous.

► Support: Email us at editors@asylummagazine.org.

Asylum Magazine is volunteer-run, and not-for-profit. We depend on your support and subscriptions.

Receive the magazine in hard copy or digital via PCCS Books:

www.pccs-books.co.uk/asylum-magazine

or call 01600 891 509

Visit asylummagazine.org to access back issues and sample articles for free.





Now Virtual!

Full Maastricht Training for Voice Hearing

With Peter Bullimore



What is Maastricht?

The Maastricht Approach, created by Sandra Esher and Marius Romme with Voice Hearers in the UK, views hearing voices as a normal experience linked to personal history. It emphasizes acceptance and understanding of these experiences to foster relief and recovery.



Goals of The Approach:

Voice Hearers Will Learn:

- Skills to cope, negotiate, or build positive relationships with voices
- To have pride in their experiences
- To give their voices personal and positive meaning
- To create a life in which the voices become a part
- Skills to make their own choices without being dominated by voices



Training Description:

This training is for providers and supporters to gain insight into the experience of voice hearing and learn strategies for supporting a person to navigate their personal experience with voice hearing.



Peter Bullimore

Chair of the National
Paranoia Network

Reserve Your Seat Now!
20 Spots Open

\$250 Registration Fee



<https://tinyurl.com/4je4kc5n>

Dates:

9/1/26

9/2/26

9/3/26

Attendance is Required for
all Sessions

Time:

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Location:

Virtual Through Zoom

Earn 21 CEUS!



info@advocacyunlimited.org



www.advocacyunlimited.org



(860) 505-7581



2075 Silas Deane Highway
Rocky Hill, Connecticut 06067

Eating Disorders & Disordered Eating in the Perinatal Period

WEDNESDAY 16th SEPTEMBER 2026

VIRTUAL, Online

This conference will update delegates on the important issue of Eating Disorders & Disordered Eating in the Perinatal Period, and how we can better Support Women with Eating Disorders and Pregnancy. The event will focus on learning from lived experience, understanding why pregnancy can be triggers for eating disorders and exploring how we can better identify women with first episode eating disorders or disordered eating during pregnancy and support those with existing eating disorders that may experience relapse during the perinatal period. The conference will learn from expert interactive sessions to identify strategies for improving practice in support and treatment.

For further information and to book your place visit

<https://www.healthcareconferencesuk.co.uk/virtual-online-courses/eating-disorders-perinatal-period> or click on the title above or email aman@hc-uk.org.uk

Follow on Twitter @HCUK_Clare #PerinataLED

[CAMHS National Summit](#)

[Transforming Mental Health Services for Children & Young Adults](#)

THURSDAY 17th SEPTEMBER 2026

VIRTUAL, Online

This national conference focuses on transforming mental health services for children and young people. The conference will support you to improve prevention, access and early intervention, and develop integrated services with clear care pathways from first intervention to crisis and inpatient care. There will be an in-depth focus on how we can improve early intervention through mental health and wellbeing support in schools. The conference will develop your skills to improve outcomes and will include a focus on crisis management, co-production involvement of children and families in CAMHS, inter-agency working, management of online influence, and supporting children in transition to adult services.

<https://www.healthcareconferencesuk.co.uk/virtual-online-courses/camhs-national-summit> or click on the title above or email aman@hc-uk.org.uk

Follow the conference on X @HCUK_Clare #CAMHS2026

[Improving Services & Outcomes for Children and Young People who Self-Harm](#)

FRIDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2026

VIRTUAL, Online

Through case studies and expert advice this conference will explore how we can support people who self-harm by ensuring a compassionate approach, understanding the common causes and drivers, as well as developing safety plans with a path to recovery.

This conference focuses on improving services and outcomes for children and young people who self-harm. The event will look at the latest national developments in self-harm interventions including current initiatives to reduce the gap in service provisions. We will also learn from findings from a report into the influence of social media platforms on self-harm and the impact of the Online Safety Act.

<https://www.healthcareconferencesuk.co.uk/virtual-online-courses/self-harm> or click on the title above or email aman@hc-uk.org.uk

Follow the conference on X @HCUK_Clare #SelfHarm

Reducing and Improving the Use of Restrictive Interventions & Practice

Managing Acute Disturbance, Violence and Aggression using Least Restrictive and Proactive Approaches

WEDNESDAY 23rd SEPTEMBER 2026

VIRTUAL, Online

This virtual conference will focus on reducing restrictive interventions in line with national guidance to improve care and support. The conference will also delegates on practical steps to reduce restrictive practice, implement the CQC recommendations, and bring you up to date on legal developments including the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act.

For further information and to book your place visit

<https://www.healthcareconferencesuk.co.uk/virtual-online-courses/restrictive-interventions-practice> or click on the title above or email emily@hc-uk.org.uk

Follow on X @HCUK_Clare #ReducingRestrictivePractice

Improving the Management of Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Misuse

WEDNESDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 2026

VIRTUAL, Online

This conference focuses on improving the management and outcomes of people with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse conditions. The day will cover learning from lived experiences and organisations that have improved services, challenging stigmatisation, early intervention and prevention, adherence to the NICE Quality Standard for Co-occurring Severe Mental Health and Substance Misuse and implementing the update to the Quality Standard for Alcohol-use Disorders, effective assessment, assertive outreach and there will be specific case studies on making dual diagnosis services accessible and supporting people who are homeless.

For further information and to book your place visit

<https://www.healthcareconferencesuk.co.uk/virtual-online-courses/substance-misuse-mh> or click on the title above or email **emily@hc-uk.org.uk**

Follow on X @HCUK_Clare #DualDiagnosis

[Recognising and Responding to Deterioration in Mental Health](#)

[Preparing for Martha's Rule in Mental Health Settings](#)

THURSDAY 15th OCTOBER 2026

VIRTUAL, Online

This conference focuses on recognising and responding to deterioration in mental health settings, and looks ahead to the implementation of Martha's Rule in mental health which is now established in the acute sector and currently being piloted in mental health.

This conference brings together leading experts at the forefront of recognising and responding to deterioration in mental health, and learning from implementation of Martha's Rule. Throughout the day, there will be interactive sessions, small breakout groups, and collaborative exercises, providing a dynamic learning experience. The conference will explore implementation of Martha's Rule across mental health wards and in the community and reflect on the recognition of both physical deterioration in people with mental health conditions, and deteriorating mental health including the role of early intervention and averting crisis. A legal update will also be provided.

For further information and to book your place visit

<https://www.healthcareconferencesuk.co.uk/virtual-online-courses/Deterioration-Marthas-Rule-Mental-Health> or click on the title above or email emily@hc-uk.org.uk

Manchester Hearing Voices Group

Thursday 3pm -4.30pm with Paul

Meeting ID 88460268952 Password 375878

Sundays: HVN USA on ZOOM 6:30p - 8:00p USA Time with Cindee.

11.30pm – 1.00 am UK Time Meeting ID 827 5463 8654 No Password Needed

Saturdays Texas USA HVN Meeting on ZOOM

10am-11.30 USA Time with Paul

4pm-5.30pm UK Time

Meeting ID 85737775621 No Password Needed

Families/friends can contact families@usahearingvoices.org for support groups.

Sheffield Hearing Voices & Paranoia Support Group.

The group runs face to face every Monday

11.00am-12.00pm at the Gardner's Rest

105 Neepsend Lane,

Sheffield S3 8AT

Contact peterbullimore@yahoo.co.uk Tel 0759083769

Online Hearing Voices Group in Ireland

An online group for people who hear voices or experience paranoia and unusual beliefs. Please contact derekpwalsh.dw@gmail.com for further information. The group meet every Sunday at 6.15pm over Zoom.

The group link <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81086179561>

Unusual beliefs group St Mungo's

Every Thursday 2.30-3.30

93 Shirland Road, London W9 2EL

Contact Helen Claire Taylor (tayloh15@lsbu.ac.uk)

Hearing Voices Group – Hull & East Yorkshire

Every first Monday of the month

- 11:00am – 1:00pm
- Townend Court (Old Building), Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 8QR

The group is open to any adult who hears voices or has similar sensory experiences and follows Hearing Voices Network principles. Sessions are non-clinical and focused on shared understanding and peer support.

- Maximum group size: 12 people per session
- Ages 18+
- Booking required in advance, session by session

- Book via the Humber Recovery College website once registered:

<https://humberrecoverycollege.nhs.uk>

☎ For enquiries or help with booking: 01482 335959

This group replaces the previous "Talking Heads" listing for Hull.

Doncaster Hearing Voices Group

The Wellness Centre
45 Montrose Avenue

Intake

Doncaster

DN2 6PL

Tel: 01302618507



The MuslimVoice.org.uk

At The Muslim Voice UK, we strive to be a dynamic and inclusive platform amplifying the voices, stories, and perspectives of Muslims across the world (we've had attendees from Colorado).

Our mission is to foster understanding within and beyond Muslim communities, challenge stereotypes, and ensure that authentic narratives are heard from a mental health perspective. The Muslim Voice UK invites you to engage, explore, and connect.

Join us. Be part of a movement where voices are heard, stories matter, and change begins.

Info@themuslimvoice.org.uk

Tennessee Voices and Paranoia Collective

Meeting location: Nashville Public Library Bellevue Branch,
720 Baugh Rd,
Nashville,
TN, 37221

Time: Tuesdays at 3:30 starting on March 4th.

The group will be a hybrid meeting. [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83043345272?pwd=QkVETKEJ5lZtVz32kUa6xXMWVvazdpE.1>

Meeting ID: 830 4334 5272

Passcode: 095416

Brave Brothers is a community-led organization with a mission to **redefine men's mental health and wellness**, placing emphasis on suicide prevention, domestic and family violence awareness, and holistic well-being inclusive of voice hearers. The charity strives to **break down stigma**, promote healthy mindsets, and advocate for integrating mental health into overall wellness. All of this underpins their broader goal of advancing health, social, and community welfare.

The Brave Brothers motto reflects a proactive, compassionate stance: "**listening to and working with men... before it's too late.**" bravebrothers.org

