

Imagery rescripting may help people who hear trauma-related voices

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Credit: Brooke Cagle/Unsplash

A new study is providing hope for those suffering from trauma-related voices and suggests that imagery rescripting may be a promising future treatment option.

Post-traumatic stress is common among people who hear [voices](#) (auditory verbal hallucinations), with many hearing voices related to past trauma.

Preliminary evidence in a new study published in *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice* suggests that imagery rescripting, a technique using imagery and imagination to intervene in [traumatic memories](#), may be more effective at reducing post-traumatic stress and voices, than treatments based on existing models of PTSD or positive symptoms.

Murdoch University's Adjunct Associate Professor and Director of the Perth Voices Clinic, Dr. Georgie Paulik-White and Professor Peter McEvoy (Curtin University) supervised lead author Dr. Laura Strachan (Curtin University), who undertook the research.

Dr. Paulik-White said the research found imagery rescripting with therapist support could alter participants' perspectives of their [traumatic experience](#).

"We explored voice hearers' explanations of voices and experiences of change, as we looked into potential maintaining factors," Dr. Paulik-White said.

"We found that the voices may have underlying protective functions, support [emotional expression](#) and improve self-worth and coping mechanisms.

"They can alter participants' perspectives of their traumatic experiences, provide the freedom to experience emotions and improve their ability to cope with distress.

"The change processes which have been uncovered in this research may

have clinical implications in how we use imagery rescripting and other treatments for trauma-affected voice hearers."

Although [imagery](#) rescripting does not explicitly teach coping strategies, it was found that it may help clients to develop new coping skills and strategies.

The study highlights the need for further studies to test the relationships between attachment, emotion regulation, and coping self-efficacy within clinical samples experiencing trauma-related voices.

More information: Laura P. Strachan et al, Voice hearers' explanations of trauma-related voices and processes of change throughout imagery rescripting: A qualitative exploration, *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice* (2023). [DOI: 10.1111/papt.12491](#)

Provided by Murdoch University

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