



PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING VISIONS

Following are some practical strategies that can be used to help you to control visions or at least reduce the interference and distress they may cause.

Distraction

- ***Naming objects*** – One useful method of distracting your attention is to spend one minute looking around the room and naming all the objects that you see. You will find that this is actually quite a demanding task and may distract you enough to help “take the edge’ off your distress.
- ***Being with others*** - Being around other people, playing games or just talking can distract your attention from the visions and help reduce your distress.
- ***Engage in enjoyable activities*** – choose activities that absorb all of your attention.
- ***Using aversive distracters*** – Using aversive distracters (e.g. holding ice, taking a hot / ice cold shower, eating a sour lemon or ginger) can be useful to move your attention away from the vision and onto something else.
- ***Focus on your breath (mindfulness)*** - close your eyes (or cast them towards the floor) and focus your attention on the breath. Notice the rise and fall of your chest/tummy, the length and depth of your breath, the temperature of the air, whether it is smooth or rough... any sensations at all.
- ***Do your household chores*** - such as cleaning, washing up, washing clothes, do the food shopping etc. This helps to take attention away from visions while doing something useful.

Visual Stimulation (competing visual input)

- ***Go for a walk (or even just change room)*** - Try not to continue focusing on your thoughts or distress. Try to distract yourself by naming things you see on your walk.
- ***Describe the visual details of objects (not the visions) in the room*** - shift your visual attention to other things in the room. Name the objects and describe them in detail (what shape are they? What colour are they? How large are they? Etc)
- ***Reduce visual input by closing your eyes or turning out the light*** - only do this if you are not too afraid. Maybe try saying self soothing statements to yourself, such as “they are only visions. They cannot hurt me. I am safe”.
- ***Watch TV or read***

Physical stimulation or reduction

- ***Relaxation*** – Reducing your stress levels will also help to reduce any hallucinations.
- ***Exercise*** – Exercise or physical activity has many positive benefits, including; positive effects on your mood and reduced tension. Getting outside and going for a walk can break the strength of the voices and develop feelings of wellness.

Cognitive exercises

- ***Selective attention*** – practice ignoring or dismissing the visions when they are frightening or come at an inappropriate time by saying “go away, I’m not interested”, while paying attention to the visions when they are more pleasant or come at a reasonable time.

Other strategies

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