

TALKING TO SOMEONE WITH DELUSIONS, UNUSUAL BELIEFS OR HALLUCINATIONS

A hallucination is not a delusion and neither is it a false belief, hallucinations are sensory perceptions and can involve any of the 5 senses, hearing voices is the most common but other senses can be involved in hallucinations, these can be evident in a number of illnesses as well as schizophrenia, probably the most common being some anxiety states and high temperatures especially in the very young and elderly population.

- Don't dismiss the delusions: recognise that these ideas and fears are very real to the person – but show that you do not agree with them. Try, for example, "I don't believe.....is out to get you, but I can see you are really upset about it."
- Don't act horrified by bizarre words or unfinished sentences etc. Say, "I don't really understand what that means." Or remind them what the conversation was about "remember we were talking about....."
- Don't let others laugh about the delusion, hallucinations or the strange talk.
- Don't ask the person to try to force the voices to stop.
- Do act calm.
- Do try to distract the person by involving them in something interesting, looking for something, chatting or mixing with close friends or family.
- Do give the person space and time if they don't want to talk. Say, " I can see you don't want to talk now, but I'll be here for you if you want to talk later." Allow them time to recover their pride, their thoughts, their composure etc.
- Do find someone to talk to, to let off steam yourself – another carer, a support group, a professional who can guide / advise.