



# Support Groups – Let's Embrace Them

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# Support groups are a fundamental necessity in the mental health system



# Mental Health Reform

- Pre reform the focus was on a combination of individual and group support
- Post reform the focus is on individual support



# Groups that survived

- Psycho educational
  - CBT based
- Goal focussed

And others facilitated by professionals



# Groups that didn't survive

- Peer support groups



# Mentis Assist – Support Groups

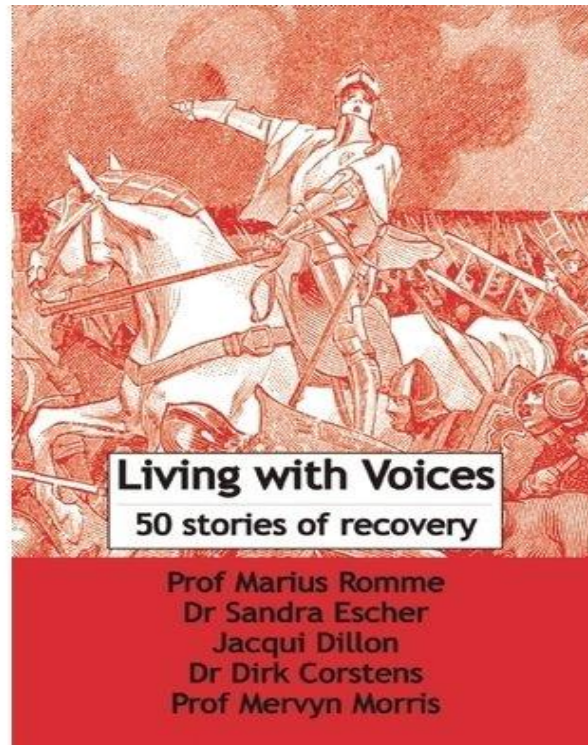
- Post reform Mentis held discussions with a wide variety of people to ascertain interest in support groups
- Mentis partnered with Mornington Community Contact to run the groups at the Community contact
- Many of those who attend do not receive support from services



# Peer Support Group

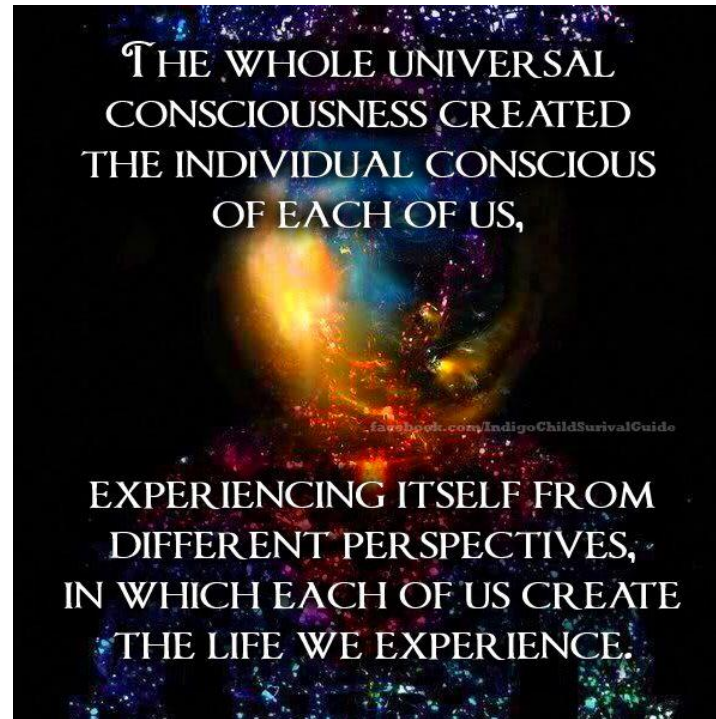


# Hearing Voices Group





# Ontology Group



# What are they?

- Attended/facilitated by people who share a common experience
- An opportunity to share stories in a safe place
- Traditionally held in community settings
- No formal referral/assessment process
- Not time limited
- Not difficult or costly to maintain



# Why are they important?

- Emphasis is on the human element of recovery in emotional, mental and spiritual distress
- Creates mutual/reciprocal relationships outside of the context of “illness”
- A space to explore the person apart from the symptoms of mental distress
- A space to explore the meaning of experiences in context of the person’s story
- Provide a sense of belonging and community
- Non-medical



Peer Support Groups are a space where one can create a deeply meaningful narrative that makes sense and brings with it what seemed lost – hope



# “Jack’s” Story



# “Sarah’s” Story



## The Evidence – mental health peer support

- Increases a sense of control and ability to bring about change in one's life
- Increases self-esteem, self-worth, self-efficacy and security
- Increases positive feelings towards oneself and one's family/friends
- Increases a sense of community and belonging



## Cont...

- Increases the ability to engage in treatment
- Increases a sense of hope
- Decreases hospital admissions and use of emergency services
- Decreases symptoms of mental illness including symptoms of psychosis

*Peers for Progress – Science behind peer support*

*Global Evidence for Peer Support: Humanizing Health Care – Peers for Progress*





Further resources or email me  
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