



Bay Area  
Hearing Voices Network  
**Newsletter**

March 2024 | Vol 4 #3

## **CA Prop 1 May Harm Mental Health Funding**

Prop 1 on the upcoming March 5 th Primary ballot may do harm to the future of funding for our peer and family groups and our peer group participants' civil rights.

The proposition authorizes: *\$6.38 Billion in bonds to “build mental health treatment facilities for those with mental health and substance use challenges and provides housing for the homeless.*

Governor Newsom loves what it will do to bolster his promotion of CARE Courts that will likely take vulnerable, voice-hearing individuals' civil rights away and compel them into treatment against their will.

NAMI endorses Proposition I, as well as mayors in major cities throughout California, but...As the ACLU says, “Don’t be fooled by Proposition 1’s false promises!” It is “a zero-sum initiative that pits California’s housing and voluntary community-based mental health needs against one another while taking us back to a dark era of forced treatment and institutionalization.”

BAHVN receives grant money from the City of Berkeley. Our grant has its origin in the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) established by the passage of Proposition 63 in 2004. It provides funding to counties (and to the City of Berkeley, which has its own behavioral health department) to expand local mental health services and fund innovative programs like ours. According to the California Legislative Office, Proposition I would not change the total MHSA tax amount, but would give counties less “money for other mental

health services. This means counties may need to use other county, state, or federal money to keep current service levels.” In short, this is a zero-sum initiative, giving more services money allied to state-initiated homeless services, and less money for county discretionary-funded mental health services.

**In completing your ballot for the March 5th primary, we hope you will consider our position on Proposition 1 and vote.**



## **BAHVN Works in collaboration with the Mental Health Association of San Francisco**

The BAHVN has been very pleased to work collaboratively with the Mental Health Association of San Francisco (MHASF) and the California Peer Run Warm Line since early in the pandemic in mid-2020.

The MHASF has been providing support specifically for the BAHVN Wednesday night, 6pm, online Support Group. Peter Murphy, MHASF Outreach Manager, says that “Bay Area Hearing Voices Network is a natural fit

for our agency, MHASF, as our values are consistent with each other. BAHVN sees the value of peer support in their programs and peer support is the foundation of everything that our agency (MHASF) offers.”

Murphy and MHASF are looking forward to a continued collaboration and want to highlight the services of the [California Peer Run Warm Line](#), a 24/7 crisis prevention support line that now includes phone support, texting and online chat for anyone in the state of California to call in. **To access the Warm Line call or text 855-600-9276 to speak with a counselor 24/7.**

In addition, MHASF will be hosting its conference, Redefining Crazy: It's the System, Not the People, on April 23 and 24, 2024 at the Marquis Marriott at 4th St. and Market in downtown San Francisco. [Bay Area Hearing Voices Network \(BAHVN\)](#) will be participating in the Redefining Crazy Conference, and all are welcome to join us. Please contact Peter Murphy at [peter@mentalhealthsf.org](mailto:peter@mentalhealthsf.org) with any questions.

## **BAHVN's Mission**



The Bay Area Hearing Voices Network was formed in 2014 by a collaboration peers, family members, and mental health workers who were looking for an alternative to the medical model and medicalization of those of us who hear voices and/or experience other unusual states.

We agreed upon a set of values that includes the proposition that hearing voices is a normal though unusual variation in human behavior and that the problem is not voice hearing but the inability to cope with the experience and the isolation that many of us feel due to society's stigma of this experience.

In our adult hearing voices groups we demonstrate the wide variety of voice hearing experiences, their origins, and approaches to coping. We seek to educate society about the meaning of voices so as to reduce ignorance and anxiety.

We believe that hearing voices can be understood as a natural part of the human experience and that diverse explanations are accepted for the origins if

voices.

Voice hearers are encouraged to take ownership of their experiences and define it for themselves and to become an expert of their experiences. Voice hearing can also be interpreted and understood in the context of one's life events and interpersonal narrative. This process of understanding and accepting one's voices and collaboration with others can be more helpful, empowering, and beneficial for recovery.

## Resources



**Wildflower Presents: 'As Prescribed'** is an award-winning film by Holly Hardman about the damage being done to so many people across the globe without informed consent.

### **Paid Opportunity for Voice Hearers to Share Their Wisdom**

Murphy Halliburton, a professor from the City University of New York is looking for people to be interviewed for a research project that aims to bring more awareness of voice hearing experiences. Interviews would take about 30 minutes, and

From the film's website: Xanax, Klonopin, Valium, Ativan – all belong to a class of drugs known as benzodiazepines (benzos). News and entertainment media portray them in terms of addiction and abuse or as innocuous medications that relax nerves.

'As Prescribed' documents a strikingly different narrative, following eye-opening stories of invisible illness and disability. Boston-based survivor Geraldine Burns leads a grassroots army of "good patients" that help other victims and advocate tirelessly for benzodiazepine harm awareness. But resistance is strong. Geraldine and her cohorts are opposed by powerful forces that include pharmaceutical giants and a medical culture that has denied the problem for decades. To see the film go to Wildflower Alliance website.

[Watch Film](#)

### **When Conversation Turns to Suicide On-Line Training**

Thursday, March 14, Friday March 15, Thursday March 21 and Friday March 22, 12pm-4pm (EST 11-3 pm; CST 10-2 pm; 9-1 pm PST

When Conversation Turns to Suicide is a 16-hour training based on the Alternatives to Suicide approach and intended as an alternative to ASIST,

participants will receive \$50 compensation. If you are interested, please contact by phone, text, email or WhatsApp:

Murphy Halliburton, PhD  
914-525-6508  
mhallibu@qc.cuny.edu

### **Non-Pathologizing Spaces to Explore Spirituality**

"Hearing Voices" is an umbrella term that is meant to encompass a vast array of human experiences. Some experiencers prefer more spiritually specific language such as Divine communication, ancestral connection, psychic phenomena, angels, ghosts, entities etc. to describe the depth of their experiences. While all experiencers are welcome in "Hearing Voices Network" meetings, some of our allies are now offering spaces specifically for spiritual phenomena.

Wildflower Alliance's "Spiritual Explorations" group is facilitated by voice-hearers and psychiatric survivors. It provides a non judgmental space to discuss phenomena that we self-define as Sacred. This could include a specific wisdom tradition, sacred text/poetry, Nature, or our life's purpose. "Spiritual Explorations" group celebrates many paths. This discussion group is a place of sharing, connecting and witnessing but will not include group meditation

OPR and similar approaches that remain rooted in conventional medicalized systems. The training is open to providers, family members, peer supports, first responders and anyone else who want to learn how to offer support to someone who is suicidal.

or chant. Join on Zoom every Tuesday at NOON Eastern/9AM Pacific. If you have any questions feel free to reach out to Wildflower Alliance.

[More info](#)

[Online groups](#)



## Blogs on the Air

(To access these blogs go to Madness Network News [madnessnetworknews.com](http://madnessnetworknews.com))



## **“A Dangerous Substance”: The Impact of Social Media on Youth Mental Health “**

The teenager on the other end of the phone struggles with social media, struggles with body shaming and feelings of inadequacy, struggles with depression and anxiety. Since age 10 or 11, when she first started dancing with a youth ballet company, she would pull up Instagram and fixate on other dancers—looking at their bodies, comparing them with hers...This is what social media does, she says. It draws people in. It hurts people. In the worst cases, it kills people. It killed one of her close friends from grade school, a boy who was bullied so horribly, so repeatedly, in person and online, that he took his own life.”

## **Schools are sending more kids to psychiatrists out of fears of campus violence, prompting concern from clinicians**

in a collaboration between The Hechinger Report and The Guardian, Rebecca Redelmeier reports on the increasing numbers of children being sent by schools for psychiatric evaluation: “The practice can keep students out of school for weeks or even months, and cast children into an already- overburdened youth mental health system that families must often navigate without any assistance from schools. Family advocates say that even sending a child to an emergency room for an evaluation can become a days-long ordeal.”

## **My Lived Experience Helps Others Heal: Working with Families on the Path to Recovery**

mental health recovery specialist Elly Litvak weaves her own powerful, personal story into the founding story of the Family Navigation and Support Program in Toronto—and discusses its impact in a hospital setting. “One thing I know as both a person with lived experience and a professional working with families: navigating the hospital can be confusing, overwhelming, and traumatizing for relatives and friends. Families appreciate the support, having someone with lived experience answer their questions.”

## **‘It Was a Joint Effort’: Deborah Kasdan on Bringing Her Late Sister’s Story to**

**Life** In this conversation, the author describes her vivid, creative, talented sister Rachel, talking about her poetry, her long ordeal with psychiatric treatment, and the community she found that ultimately helped: “If she had not been hospitalized, and given all those medications, and had a treatment that was non-judgmental and was supportive: I think she might have continued her poetry...She was so, so damaged by all her hospitalizations and medications and whatever, that the people in the hospital had a hard time believing her educational level and her past.”





## Hearing voices groups

### Tuesday meetings

BAHVN offers an online a family and friends and adult support groups Tuesday evenings at 6 pm led by trained facilitators with lived experience in the mental health system.

[Join Monday meeting](#)

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### Wednesday meetings

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### Thursday meetings

The HVN-USA Family and Friends Group (friends, lovers, and caretakers)are welcome) meets online for 90 minutes Thursdays 2:30-4:00 pm PST,5:50-7:00 pm (EST). To join contact [cindy@westernmassrlc.org.ngs](mailto:cindy@westernmassrlc.org.ngs)

### Friday Nights BAHVN Game Night

An online weekly night of fun and games. Game play is free of charge to BAHVN adults, TAY, and family members, All attendees are required to open an account at [boardgamearena.com](http://boardgamearena.com), where the game night will be held online.

[More info](#)

### Sunday meetings

We have two Sunday Zoom Group Meetings! Come between 6 and 7 pm PST for an Adult Support

adult support group Wednesday evenings at 6pm.

[Join Wednesday meeting](#)

Group with Kyle, a recently added BAHVN Facilitator. Between 7 and 8 pm PST is not a support group but is for anyone who is interested in how the voice world works. Attendees will explore the voice world in its entirety and how the physics of the physical world applies to the voice world.

[Join Sunday meeting](#)



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