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Hearing the voices of people who hear voices others cannot hear

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In this paper the author aim to contribute to the understanding of how some people experience recurrently hearing voices and sounds others cannot hear and dealing with them in daily life. Nurses and other health care providers commonly term these experiences as auditory (verbal) hallucinations, unreal perceptions and symptoms of serious mental illness. Many people who hear voices do not need health care. Others have experienced health care as unhelpful and even burdening. They have claimed that lack of understanding has resulted in insufficient and inapt approaches. The lived experience of hearing voices and sounds has only recently received attention from nurses and nurse researchers. This paper is based on two studies, in which 19 people participated in 1-3 in-depth interviews. All but one of the participants had been diagnosed with a psychotic disorder. The transcribed interviews were analyzed using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach inspired by Gadamer's philosophy. According to my overall understanding the following themes were central to understanding the participants' experiences: Sensing the presence of someone else and me, and recurrently having to deal with the intrusive presence of others. The author will reflect on the implications of these findings and accentuate the need for nurses to attempt to understand and engage in collaborative explorations of people's experiences of hearing voices and sounds and ways of dealing with them.

Biography

Anne Martha Kalhovde is currently pursuing her PhD at The Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø, Norway. She is the Head of the Research and Education Unit at Jaeren District Psychiatric Center in Bryne, Norway. Along with other researchers she has published 4 articles regarding experiences on hearing voices and sounds.

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