



SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

September 2020

What are distraction techniques?

Distraction techniques are a form of coping skill, taught during cognitive behavioural therapy. These techniques are used to distract and draw attention away from the auditory symptoms of schizophrenia, such as auditory hallucinations (e.g. voice-hearing) and intrusive thoughts. These approaches are not a stand-alone intervention for schizophrenia, but rather a strategy for coping with illness symptoms, used in conjunction with ongoing pharmaceutical and psychological therapies. There are three key 'distraction' approaches: cognitive distraction, behavioural distraction, and physiological distraction, though techniques can overlap. Cognitive distracters can include reading aloud, humming, as well as voice mastery (e.g. replying to the voices, responding only to pleasant voices, or describing hallucinations aloud). Behavioural distracters are largely social, with the person making a conscious effort to interact with other people to change focus and remove attention from the voices. Physiological techniques can include relaxation strategies, doing exercise, using an earplug in the dominant ear, and playing music.

What is the evidence for distraction techniques?

Moderate to low quality evidence suggests no benefit of distraction technique programs over health promotion programs for symptoms or study retention.

For further information see the technical table



NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia.