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***Hear No Evil* trial uses music to help curb hallucinations**

A trial using wireless music therapy is helping acute mental health consumers at Liverpool Hospital and has led to a decrease in the amount of medication prescribed.

The *Hear No Evil* project was inspired by a young woman who was re-experiencing a traumatic event through auditory hallucinations, and found listening to soothing music on wireless headphones helped.

Helen Driscoll, Occupational Therapist (Therapy and Recovery Service) said as part of the trial, consumers used wireless headphones to help decrease the duration and severity of their hallucinations.

“Music therapy is not new, however music played over a general PA system doesn’t cancel out background noise, so it’s not as effective as listening to music through headphones,” Helen said.

“Headphones with audio wires are not allowed on acute mental health units, but the use of wireless headphone technology has enabled our consumers to have centrally controlled, relaxing music played directly to their headphones.

“During the trial, five pairs of headphones were introduced to the acute mental health ward, and they were given to consumers to use when they were distressed,” she said.

Helen said for some consumers with persistent psychotic symptoms, hallucinations were directly responsible for profound dysfunction in all aspects of daily life.

“The traditional medical approach for controlling hallucinations is the administration of antipsychotic drugs. This process however can take some time to take effect and some consumers will continue to experience persistent hallucinations.

“Consumers reported that the music helps to drown out the voices, takes them to a different mindset, improves their mood and stops them stressing.

“The amount of PRN (short term as required) medication prescribed was monitored 131 days before and after the *Hear No Evil* project was implemented.

“Results showed an overall decrease in the amount of PRN medication prescribed in the ward after the introduction of the headphones,” Helen said.

However, the most valuable results were from the interviews and feedback from individuals who used the headphones during their stay on the ward.

Feedback included:

“They are great, they help with vices and help me forget.”

“Helps with psychosis for me, drowns out the voices.”

“Takes me to a different mindset, improves my mood and stops me stressing.”

“It’s my coping strategy, it’s a distraction but some people they will use it for recreation but it helps me cope with everyday.”

The results of the study led to more wireless headphones on different mental health wards at Liverpool hospital and the benefits of having this technology are being studied further by the Therapy and Recovery Service at Liverpool Mental Health.