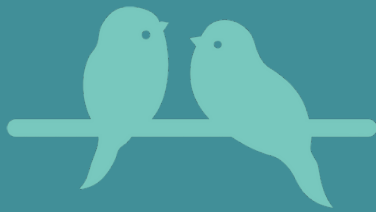




*Developed by*  
**Humane Clinic**



# *Just Listening*

A revolutionary response to distress and connection.



# THE JUST LISTENING APPROACH

**Just Listening** supports people experiencing psychosis, suicide or any other form of distress by offering deep listening. It is a psychotherapeutically informed approach based in established theoretical frameworks.

The practice philosophy of **Just Listening** is guided by the psychotherapy approach of **Humane Clinic**.

The intention of **Just Listening** is to offer justice to a person by listening to their experiences (story). This is considered the sole purpose of the approach. Unlike many other models there is no formulation, plan or intervention. This process has been demonstrated as an effective response to distress and as a means of creating connection across diverse practice settings.

## PRINCIPLES OF JUST LISTENING

**Just Listening** is informed by the following principles and skills:

- Listen with the intention to offer **justice** to a person's story
- Focus responses **on the story of the person** you are listening to
- **Resist the urge to fix** - Continue listening
- **Slow down**: be aware of your thoughts and **intentions**

## CORE THEORIES OF JUST LISTENING

### 1 Compassion Informed Approach:

The lens through which we hear another person's story in human-to-human connection without deferring to *models of mending* that obscure the person, the context of their distress and our ability to offer mutuality. This approach has been developed by Matt Ball, Rory Ritchie, Bec Wheatley and Berny Maywald (Ball, 2021).

### 2 Dissociachotic:

Provides a framework of understanding the way a person presents their experience of distress, inviting the listener to recognise their role in the process of another person's distress (Ball & Picot, 2021; Humane Clinic 2022).

### 3 Suicide Narratives:

Demonstrates that suicide is an understandable response to human distress that can provide healing for both the individual and the community. Suicide Narratives provides an alternative to risk assessment-led approaches towards suicide (Ball & Ritchie, 2020).

### 4 Power Threat Meaning Framework:

Summarises and integrates a great deal of evidence about the role of various kinds of power in people's lives, the kinds of threat that misuse of power pose to us and the ways we have learnt to respond to those threats. (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018)

The evidence base supporting the **Just Listening** model is further informed by the work of: Gans and Redler (2001); Laing (1960); Mosher, Hendrix & Fort (2004); Schwing (1954); Travelbee (1972); Guerin, Ball & Ritchie (2021); and the principle of right understanding in the context stated by Ahjan Sumedo (1992).



# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

**Just Listening** has been delivered to professionals and community members across Australia and internationally.

The approach has been utilised by health and medical professionals within primary healthcare systems, in alternative mental health settings, within mainstream mental health services and hospitals, and as an approach to suicidal distress.

## Idea

2016

- Idea conceived following screening of 'Healing Voices' movie at Christies Beach
- Healing Voices festival

## ReAwaken

2019

- April 2019 - ReAwaken Event held in Adelaide
- Just Listening approach launched at ReAwaken event
- ReAwaken Manifesto for compassionate change created

## Foundations

2020

- Humane Clinic funds staff to work on development and set up of **Just Listening Community**
- Humane Clinic building purchased and donated to Humane Clinic to open **Just Listening Community**
- Hearing Voices and Alternative Realities group begins, facilitated using the principles of **Just Listening**

## Opening

2021

- March: First cohort of **Just Listening** volunteers complete six-week training
- April: Humane Mental Health Centre officially opened with bipartisan support from the South Australian Parliament
- May: **Just Listening Community** service opens for free in-person walk-ins and appointments, funding received by Fay Fuller Foundation
- Suicide Narratives Group facilitated using the principles of **Just Listening**

## Theory and practice delivery

2022

- Humane Clinic developed and implemented a supervision framework based on learnings from **Just Listening Community** including core theories: Dissociachotic, Suicide Narratives and PTMF
- Suicide Narratives Group begins, delivered online with people attending from four different continents across the world.

## London, UK

2023

- Healthcare Central London (Octopus) and Central and Northwest London NHS Trust, training and **Just Listening** delivery in acute public psychiatric assessment setting and across community teams and NGO' partners. Location: London, UK

## International Visitors

2024

- Leading experts in approaches to psychosis and hearing voices from the Netherlands, France and Denmark visit Humane Clinic and the **Just Listening Community** for a week-long symposium, and to learn about Just Listening

2025

## Future of Just Listening

- First "Train the trainer" cohort – Healthcare Central London (Octopus)
- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Just Listening/Suicide Narratives training. Location: Alice Springs, Northern Territory



# JUST LISTENING REACH 2019-24



## JUST LISTENING COMMUNITY DELIVERY SNAPSHOT (May 2021 to November 2024)

**1900+**

people offered  
listening and human  
connection.

**500+**

people trained in the  
**Just Listening**  
approach.

**48**

community members  
volunteered to listen to  
community members  
in crisis and distress.

**250+**

hearing voices and  
suicide narratives  
groups facilitated free  
of charge (including  
online).

**20+**

conference  
appearances and  
keynote addresses.

**6**

people accessed  
**Just Listening**  
residential stays  
in emergency or  
respite situations.

**zero**

times police or  
ambulance services  
were required.



# KEY LEARNINGS FROM JUST LISTENING

People receiving **Just Listening** experience justice by having their story heard in the context of meaningful human connection – this can reduce distress.

**Just Listening** is a cost-effective model for responding to people in distress, including psychosis, and can deliver savings for health systems and communities.

**Just Listening** creates community in a variety of settings and service situations.

Emotional distress is a response to the operation of power at home and in the community, institutions and systems.

Applying Dissociachotic framework leads to safer environments for all.

Removing the threat of disciplinary action, facilitates continued reflection and adherence to the model.

People trained in **Just Listening** experience empowerment in human connection when offering to listen.

Supervision and continued skill development through **Just Listening** groups is crucial.

**Just Listening** can be applied effectively to manage teams, improve communication and increase efficiency in professional settings.

**"Noticing how most interactions between people do not involve really listening, and how this damages connection, has been utterly fascinating and convinces me that everybody needs to do this training."**

GP

**"I visited **Just Listening** after work when I was pretty distressed by workplace issues. I was greeted by a wonderful human who listened with such intention that I could have talked forever. I was so grateful that the listener could hear me and I could speak without threat of being judged or having to explain myself for the way I was feeling."**

COMMUNITY MEMBER

**"I just wanted to thank you for giving me the ability to think without fear, to speak without being misunderstood"**

COMMUNITY MEMBER



# OUTCOMES

**Just Listening** has demonstrated the possibility of providing a unique option for people in distress and as a means of creating connection across diverse practice settings. There is evident value in the justice experienced when a person's story is heard.

Community members in distress who have regular access to **Just Listening** can more readily return to their families, workplaces and communities once they have been heard. Professionals trained in **Just Listening** experience greater job satisfaction through more effective practice and increased connection with clients, patients and colleagues.

**Just Listening** continues to evidence that people in our community have common human experiences and understandable responses to these experiences.

The approach has provided greater choice for community members seeking to access assistance. It provides a platform for the development and delivery of the **Just Listening** Dissociachotic community as a permanent alternative to current mental health services and the expansion of **Just Listening** in Australia and the UK.

"Having experienced the **Just Listening** training and used its practices in my work with clients and in my team (as an enhancing complement to Open Dialogue), I know it to be effective. It is the kind of training that allows a corner of the page to be turned towards the kind of wider culture change that is necessary."

PROF OF ANTHROPOLOGY

"The teaching has changed me as a GP to patients, my colleagues, my wife, friends and my children. If this is rolled out with fidelity it will help our staff be happier, nudge their locus of control internally, potentially give them more purpose and help the people they interact with in all walks of life."

GP & ICP MENTAL HEALTH LEAD (UK)

"What set the training apart was the ability to connect theory with experience and real-world insights as well as the ability to deliver it with constant context. This made it less theoretical and very practical."

LEADERSHIP PARTICIPANT NGO

"Yeah! I just offloaded a whole bunch of sh\*t and you just listened, it was great. I feel much better."

COMMUNITY MEMBER

"I had good experiences there (mainstream mental health services), until the last time I went there and they said, 'Why do you keep coming here? You have to stop coming, there's nothing we can do for you'. So I decided to come to **Just Listening** instead."

COMMUNITY MEMBER

"It was beautiful to see people in the workplace cracking open and accepting to be vulnerable with someone they might cross paths with one day. The trainers managed to remove the shame attached with such vulnerability, creating a space safe enough."

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT





# HUMANE CLINIC TEAM



**MATTHEW BALL**

Founder & Director

Mental health nurse & Psychotherapist



**RORY RITCHIE**

Social Worker & Psychotherapist



**BERNY MAYWALD**

Psychotherapist

**Humane Clinic** offers a unique relational approach to psychotherapy in Australia. Psychotherapists at Humane Clinic have training grounded in psychodynamic and existential concepts. Therapy at Humane clinic utilises the psychotherapy relationship to explore what is a good life in the context of a person's social environment.

Humane Clinic therapists value the dynamic of human-to-human relationship to support exploration of the difficulties that exist in a person's world. The therapist and client can make use of the therapy relationship to consider alternative or new opportunities to influence their life. This allows the development of a sense of meaning and purpose; towards an experience that increases responsibility and freedom in living.

Humane Clinic provides both education and training. Humane Clinic Education has a focus on the dissemination of information to develop interest in new areas or topics. Humane Clinic Training offers participants advanced professional teaching and experiential learnings in the implementation of practice approaches, led by Humane Clinic therapists. Education and training is provided in the following areas:

**Dissociachotic Framework**

**Just Listening**

**Suicide Narratives**

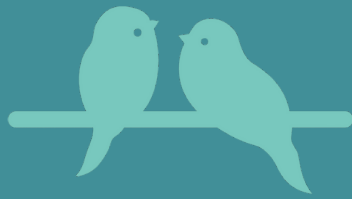
**Hearing Voices**

**Power threat meaning framework**

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# Just Listening



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**Humane Clinic**

**Humane Clinic, Just Listening** Wamangka Tarntanyaku yuwanthi. Humane Clinicrlu, Just Listeningrlu. Kurna Miyurna yaitya yarta-mathanya, kauwi-mathanya tampinhi. Ngadlurlu Purkarna pukiana, yalarra tampinhi. Ngadlurlu Kurna Miyurnaku yailtya, parnuku tapa purruna puru purruna, kuma parnuku tuwila yartangka tampinhi. Ngadlurlu tampinhi kumartarna Yaitya Miyurna warrunanguku iyangka pudnima.

**Humane Clinic** would like to acknowledge the Kurna people as the traditional owners of the lands and waters of the Adelaide region on which the **Humane Clinic** and **Just Listening** operates. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge and respect the Kurna people's cultural, spiritual, physical and emotional connection with their land, waters and community. We also acknowledge and respect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Indigenous peoples that may visit or be represented at the centre.