



PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (PATIENT EDUCATION- PART 1- PATIENT HANDOUT)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PAIN- WHERE DO WE START?

What's happening to me because of my pain?

- Because you are in pain, you are possibly moving poorly or NOT moving much at all?
- You are holding your breath when you do simple things.
- You are stiff, with all your movement and any movement makes your pain worse.
- You have a fear to move or do some activities, as your pain may get worse.

If you agree with these comments, YOUR PAIN IS TRYING TO PROTECT YOU from injury.

- Unfortunately, it is now 'Overprotecting you' and the fear of moving is making you move less and be "so protected" that all movement will hurt.
- Pain is your alarm system and is designed to protect you and this is **Normal** (see Chronic pain ebook).
- If you stop moving, because of pain or the fear of pain (anticipating it), you are being overprotected by your pain and this is **Not Normal**.
- Fear of Pain is normal, fear of movement because you are anticipating pain, (and not moving) is not normal. This is called Fear Avoidance Behaviour and can be a driver of your pain.

SELF REFLECTION PLEASE

Do you agree that pain has stopped you from moving?
Do you agree that movement is needed to be healthy?
imagine if you were confined to bed for 6 months and how detrained and weak you would become)
So, if you have stopped moving because of your pain, we need to find a way to get you moving again without aggravating your pain- Do you agree?

HOW DO I DO THIS?

- WE NEED TO GET 'UNDER THE RADAR' OF YOUR PAIN AND PROTECTION
- Let's explain some Brain Science.....
- Unfortunately, you have become 'Over Sensitive' or Hypersensitive to signals from your body to your brain, so the brain creates pain to protect you as it believes it is '**under THREAT**'
- This is overprotection, but to you it is just the same pain you have had for months or years.
- Unfortunately, when you have become oversensitive your brain has changed (Neuroplasticity) and it is creating this overprotection- Not just protection which is **normal** but over protection which is **NOT normal**.
- You also become fearful of pain becoming worse (this is normal as we all fear pain) But when this goes on for a while (over 3 months) part of our brain called the **Amygdala** kicks in and changes how your body responds.
- The **Amygdala** is the fear section of your brain which creates the Flight/ Fight reaction which is normal with acute fear.
- This change to your brain chemicals and hormones reduces oxygen in the brain and stops you thinking clearly and logically, and it is trying to tell you to 'Run away from danger'.
- The **Prefrontal Cortex** is the logical thinking part of your brain that you need to start utilizing more effectively and this will help you to 'turn down' the fear section of your brain, as you start understanding pain and use some cognitive processing and positive thinking about your pain.

How do I 'Get under the Radar of Pain?'

- We need to show your brain that gentle movement is OK and use movement that doesn't create an overprotection reaction of fear, spasm and increase pain.
 - We do this with the Chillout Zone (see handout).
 - The Chillout Zone is using breathing, visual imagery, relaxation and gentle movement to show the brain that it's OK to move in a way that can DO NO HARM.
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- This is called 'Getting under the Radar of Pain and Protection'.
 - We are also using Neuroplasticity to 'change your brain' from using the overprotection/fear section (Amygdala) to using the logical part (Prefrontal Cortex), because its logical and normal to move.

This leads to 3 very important FACTS OF PERSISTENT OR CHRONIC PAIN which we must accept:

- 1) Pain is NOT a true reflection of tissue damage- This means you can have pain without damage to body tissue. (Your brain will produce pain if it thinks it is in danger or injured)
- 2) You can 'Turn Down' your overprotection system with knowledge, breathing and movement.
- 3) You can change your Nervous System and reduce the Hypersensitivity- This means you can let it calm down and allow yourself to move without increasing pain.

Summary of what's happening with your PAIN and HOW we can help:

- 1) Your brain and body has 'changed' to protect you and your alarm system has become more sensitive and this is NOT **normal**.
- 2) You can reset this system back to **normal**.
- 3) Understanding and accepting a different way of thinking about your pain will help you manage your pain.
- 4) Accepting that you and your brain can change- This is called Neuroplasticity (remember this has possibly made your pain worse and can make your pain better).
- 5) Fear of pain and predicting, catastrophising and worrying about the pain getting worse- WILL MAKE YOUR PAIN WORSE.
- 6) Nerves conveying messages to your brain, have become more sensitive and areas now hurt that didn't hurt before, and often these areas are NOT injured.
- 7) You can learn to be less protective and learn to move, think and behave differently and have less PAIN.

**If you practice this –
You will get better at having less pain!**

