



Ontario
Chronic Pain
Network

Chronic Pain Self-Management

Adult Resource Booklet

2020

The coordination, development, and design of these resources was led by Dr. Rachael Bosma, Toronto Academic Pain Medicine Institute.

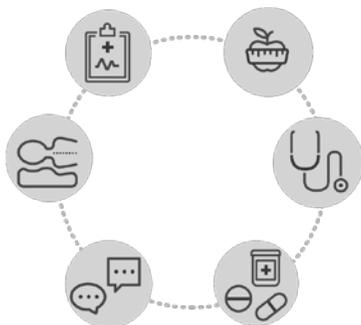
INTRO

This resource booklet was developed alongside a webinar series.

Each topic has a 1) one-hour FREE recorded webinar and 2) information & resources about chronic pain management.

WHO?: This booklet & webinars were developed by members of the Ontario Chronic Pain Network. The webinars were hosted by Self-Management Ontario.

Ontario Chronic Pain Network



- Includes interdisciplinary chronic pain management clinics in 5 pediatric hospitals, 13 adult hospitals, and 1 community chronic pain clinic
- Funded by the Ministry of Health, these clinics are equipped to treat each of the physical, emotional and social factors that contribute to chronic pain.



- Funded by the Champlain Local Health Integration Network, the Online Self-Management Program is made available Province-wide to help improve patient self-management of chronic conditions.
- <https://www.selfmanagementontario.ca/>

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PAIN EXPLAINED

**WATCH THE
WEBINAR VIDEO**

<http://tapmipain.ca/patient/managing-my-pain/>

PAIN EXPLAINED

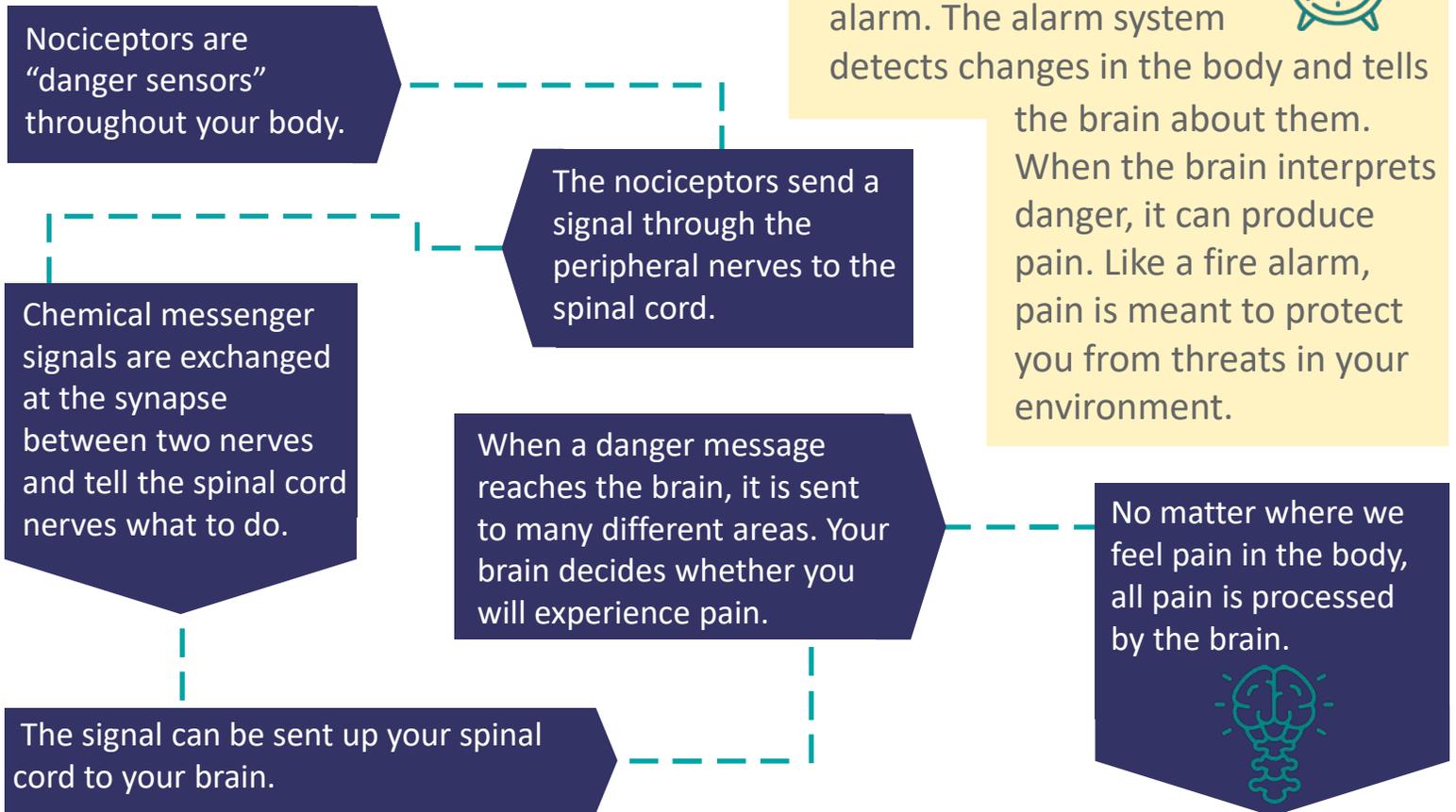
KNOWLEDGE IS Power!

Learning more about pain is a key ingredient in managing pain and taking control. Understanding pain can help you:



- Understand your own experience with self-compassion
- Develop effective management strategies
- Make the best decisions to drive your care
- Communicate your pain better

HOW DOES Pain Work?



In chronic pain, the nervous system gets more sensitive, like a fire alarm that goes off for no reason or sounds louder. The pain alarm is trying to protect you from future dangers by changing brain pathways that regulate emotions, memory, movement, stress, and so on. Ignoring (or avoiding) the alarm only makes it more sensitive.

KEY POINTS Explaining Pain



In Canada, 1 out of every 5 people have persistent pain

Your brain determines what you experience as pain



All pain is real - even if you cannot see the cause

Pain is not an accurate reflection of tissue damage



Pain is an experience that is a result of many different factors

By managing these factors, we can make a difference to our pain



WHAT FACTORS Influence Your Pain?

» Things you hear, see, smell, taste, touch

» Things you do

» Things you say

» Things you believe

» Places you go

» People in your life

» Things happening in your body

Many factors are part of the information the brain considers when deciding whether to produce a pain response.

Think about these factors in your own life. What contributes to your pain?

LEARN MORE

Tame The Beast — It's time to rethink persistent pain —
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikUzvSph7Z4

Why Things Hurt — www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwd-wLdIHjs

Understanding Pain in less than 5 minutes, and what to do about it! —
www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_3phB93rvI

TAPMI — www.tapmipain.ca/patient

Pain BC — www.painbc.ca

Retrain Pain Foundation — www.retrainpain.org

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**LIVING WITH
CHRONIC PAIN**

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LIVING WITH CHRONIC PAIN

LIVING A MEANINGFUL LIFE

with Chronic Pain and Illness



Pain affects every part of life, and the changes and losses associated with pain can lead to grief and a loss of identity and purpose.

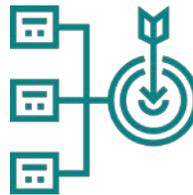
The first thing to do is to acknowledge and normalize the distress we feel and attempt to be a compassionate and encouraging friend to ourselves.

WHAT IS a Value?

Values are not the same thing as goals.



VALUES are principles held personally that can give life direction and meaning. They are your own judgment of what is important in life and act as a compass for how you behave or act.



GOALS are specific things we do in order to live out our values. The goals available to us change due to time, money, health, and other resources.

A values-focused life may result in less struggle and greater fulfillment than a goals-focused life.

KNOWING Your Values



Helps prioritize what activities are important and meaningful.



Helps to choose and do activities that give a sense of purpose.



Helps with decision making.

IDENTIFY your Values

A health crisis can spur us to clarify our values: how we want to act, what we want to stand for, how we want to treat ourselves and others, and who and what is most important.

- » What do you want your life to be about?
- » What sort of person do you want to be?
- » What kind of things would you be doing if you were living that value?

TRACK your Values



There are many ways to clarify your values. They often involve connection, caring, and contributing.



By tracking your time, you will discover where you are putting your energy. You may notice patterns in your activity and in the values, you put energy toward. This can help you figure out what goals are most important to you so that you can live by your values.

SKILLS that help us as we engage in meaningful action include:

- Pain management skills
- Focusing on small, manageable goals
- Relating differently to stormy thoughts, feelings, situations, and urges that try to jerk us around

If you are in crisis, please visit your family physician, local branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, or nearest hospital emergency room.

LEARN MORE

“The Happiness Trap”, “The Reality Slap”, and “The Confidence Gap”

by Russ Harris

“How to Be Sick” and “How to Live Well with Chronic Pain and Illness”

by Toni Bernhard

“The Pain Survival Guide” by Dennis Turk and Frits Winter

“Living Beyond Pain” by Joanne Dahl and Thomas Lundgren

“Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life” by Steven Hayes

“Man’s Search for Meaning” by Victor Frankl

ACTMindfully.com.au (or other videos by Russ Harris on YouTube)

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MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

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MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

WHAT IS Mindfulness Meditation?



Mindfulness meditation means focusing our attention on our experience, without judgment. Often, the mind wanders to the past or the future, which are fraught with problems (regrets, fears). When we practice mindfulness meditation and notice the mind has wandered, we gently but firmly bring it back to the present moment by giving it something to focus on like the breath or the senses.

HOW DOES Mindfulness Meditation help chronic pain?

The goal of mindfulness is to give you tools to stop or change this cycle.



Our thoughts, feelings, and actions...



...change the brain,...



...change our experience of pain,...



...which then changes our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

WHY USE Mindfulness Meditation for pain?



To reduce suffering and cope more effectively

To reduce the impact of pain on our body and mind



To improve concentration, sleep, and energy levels

To become better able to learn from our experiences



To notice & enjoy pleasant moments in our day-to-day

To see new possibilities & to not let pain control our choices



To reduce reliance on medication

TIPS FOR practicing Mindfulness Meditation at home



Find a space that is ideally quiet and free of distraction.



Try to integrate 'mindful breath' and 'mindfulness moments' throughout the day (e.g., when you are washing your hands, focus 100% of your attention to the feeling of warm water running on your hands).



Start with brief mindfulness meditation exercises (see below!) and increase the length of time your practice gradually.



It may be useful to take some time to remember the foundations of mindfulness: acceptance, patience, letting go, non-judgment, non-reactivity, beginners' mind (approaching each moment with fresh eyes), non-striving, and trust.

KEY POINTS about Mindfulness Meditation practice

Many people find mindfulness meditation reduces their pain, but mindfulness does not always reduce pain. In fact, sometimes, paying attention to our body can lead to increased pain. It is ok to stop; it is ok to focus on the breath or something else!

Some people with a history of trauma may find that mindfulness leads to more intrusive thoughts about their past. This can help heal these difficult experiences, but it can also be distressing. Reach out if you need help.

In Ontario, you can get help 24/7 at www.bigwhitewall.com. If you are an Indigenous Person you can call 1-855-242-3310 or visit www.hopeforwellness.ca.

LEARN MORE about Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness and Chronic Pain - www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqS9qHEWnaA

Guided Mindfulness Meditations - <https://www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations/>

Mindful Magazine - www.mindful.org

9 Attitudes of Mindfulness - www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n7FOBFMvXg

Online Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction - www.palousemindfulness.com

How to- <https://davidvago.bwh.harvard.edu/how-to-meditate-links-for-guided-meditation-practice/>

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MINDFUL MOVEMENT

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MINDFUL MOVEMENT

WHAT IS Mindful Movement?



Mindful movement is the practice of focusing your attention on the movements of your body through physical activity as well as your breath. Through movement we can become aware of our feelings and thoughts, acknowledge them, and gently bring your attention back to the movement.

BENEFITS of Mindful Movement:



Explore the edge of discomfort in a movement.



Understand the difference between feeling the movement and doing the movement.



Turning up the volume of the sensations in the body and down in the mind.



Appreciating the fluctuations in life through movement.



Discovering how to be mindful of your body when in motion during everyday activities.



KEY POINTS of Mindful Movement



Visualizing movement of the body can change the way the highways in the brain are organized.

Movement affects both the body and the brain.

Sensitization and habituation are two concepts that help us understand pain and when applied to movement can help to change pain.

Applying pain education through movement.

Changes in the body can enhance or support the changes in our thinking when we practice mindfulness.

TIPS: Explore graded exposure to movement at home

REPEAT!

You may find you are able to poke into the discomfort for a little longer.

Pick a movement that you like but creates some pain. Slowly start initiating the movement to the edge of discomfort.

Back off that movement and ask yourself how you feel. Check in with your body.

Return to the edge of discomfort and hang out here for 5-10 seconds and consider what you are feeling.

You may find that you have fewer flare ups or the intensity has decreased.



Repeat for 1-3 minutes and try do this every hour that you are awake.

Check in with your body and see if the discomfort has decreased.

Bring your attention to your breath, release the breath, relax your muscles, tense your muscles when you are at the edge of discomfort.

LEARN MORE about Mindful Movement

The Mindful Movement Community - www.themindfulmovement.com

Restorative Conversations - www.restorativeconversations.ca/resource/audio-mindful-movement

The Free Mindfulness Project - www.freemindfulness.org/download

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PAIN & SLEEP

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PAIN & INSOMNIA



The link between chronic pain and poor sleep is well established. Lack of sleep can worsen physical ailments, including pain, and in return, pain can make it difficult to sleep. The relationship creates a cycle with one feeding into the other, with over 40% of individuals with chronic pain also experiencing insomnia compared to just 10% of the general population.

WHY The Relationship Between Sleep & Pain?



Chronic pain changes the way the brain works.



Negative emotions, stress, and anxiety can make it hard to shut off your brain to be able to sleep.



Chronic pain can lead people to be less active, which can lead to poorer sleep.



Inconsistent sleep patterns, such as sleeping or napping during the day, can cause a cycle of trouble sleeping at night.



Pain can make it hard to find a comfortable sleeping position or can wake you up during the night.

THE EFFECTS of Poor Sleep

Over time, the impact of chronic pain + poor sleep snowballs, impacting both one's ability to sleep, and increasing the amount of pain experienced. It is common for individuals with chronic pain to experience issues falling and staying asleep. This can increase the experience of pain and symptoms throughout the day. In turn, individuals feel more emotional, irritable, and distressed because of their pain. These factors together negatively affect sleep, leading to further issues with pain and mood, contributing to a vicious cycle.

BREAKING the Vicious Cycle

Behavior/habit changes can be effective for improving sleep



Change can be difficult



Change requires motivation

Strategies to help improve your sleep:

Reduce time in bed and only go to bed when sleepy. Also, only use your bed for sleep. This helps to re-associate the bed with sleep.

Turn off all electronics and unplug from screens at least 30 minutes before bed.

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Our bodies like routine, and this helps to set our biological clock, or our circadian rhythm.

Avoid daytime napping. If you need a nap because of fatigue or pain, nap between 1-3 PM for less than an hour.

Allow your body be tired. Engage in exercise and activities out of the house throughout the day in order to increase tiredness.

Avoid big meals before bed. Also, reduce substances such as alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine. All substances alter your sleep and can lead to less restorative/deep sleep.

Manage your anxieties and stress before you go to bed. In the early evening, try clearing your head by writing down what's on your mind, categorizing your thoughts, and/or finding possible solutions.

If sleep or insomnia is an issue for you, be sure to discuss it with your family physician.

LEARN MORE

No more sleepless nights by Peter Hauri, PhD

Quiet Your Mind and Get to Sleep: Solutions to Insomnia for Those with Depression, Anxiety or Chronic Pain by Dr. Colleen E Carney, PhD

The Insomnia Workbook by Stephanie Silberman, PhD

The Feeling Good Handbook by Dr. David Burns

Sleepio – www.sleepio.com

TAPMI- <http://tapmipain.ca/patient/managing-my-pain/pain-u-online/sleep.html>



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WHY FOOD MATTERS

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WHY FOOD MATTERS

FUELLING THE FIRE:



Diet can be an important part of chronic pain self-management. Healthy eating can benefit people with chronic pain by:

- Reducing fatigue and improve energy levels
- Decreasing inflammation within your body
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Reducing the risk of (or help improve) certain diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, some cancers, and heart disease

5 GENERAL PRINCIPALS of Eating Healthy

1

Avoid refined sugars

Eg. candy, chocolate, pop, baked goods, etc.

2

Ensure adequate hydration

Amount depends on activity level, size, and existing health conditions, but most people need at least 2 liters daily.

3

Increase non-starchy vegetable intake

Aim for half of your plate at each meal to consist of non-starchy vegetables. Eg. Leafy greens (spinach, kale, etc.), broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, brussel sprouts, bok choy, etc.

4

Include a range of healthy fats

Eg. Fatty fish (ie. salmon, mackerel, etc.), olive oil, nuts and seeds (ie. almonds, walnuts, pumpkin seeds).

5

Avoid foods that make you feel bad

Eg. Things that you know trigger pain flare ups, bloating, constipation or loose stools, etc. Common food sensitivities include refined sugars, breads/wheat-based products, dairy.

KEY POINTS



There is no “chronic pain diet”.



Consider nutrition as a lifestyle change rather than a temporary regimen.



There is no “one size fits all” approach.

TIPS FOR healthy eating on a budget



Buy fresh fruits and vegetables when in season.



Cook at home when possible.



Make extra meals and buy frozen vegetables to store in the freezer.



Use meat alternatives like dried beans, peas, lentils for some meals.



Plan ahead and make a list. Stick to your shopping list!



Plan your meals based on the sales, look at flyers or phone apps like FLIPP.



Purchase no name brands or store brands.



Eat before you shop. This prevents impulse buying and unhealthy food choices.

LEARN MORE about healthy diets

Harvard Healthy Eating Plate: www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-eatingplate

EAT-Lancet Commission Summary Report:

www.eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/eat-lancetcommission-summary-report

Canada's Food Guide: www.food-guide.canada.ca/en

RESOURCES for recipes

The Anti-Inflammatory Diet & Action Plans by Dorothy Calimeris & Sonni Bruner

The Oh She Glows Cookbook by Angela Liddon (plant-based recipes)

www.AllRecipes.com (database of thousands of different recipes)

www.ChocolateCoveredKatie.com (healthy dessert recipes)

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BACK PAIN & MEDICATION

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BACK PAIN & MEDICATION

CHRONIC BACK PAIN and Tips for Managing Medication



The goal in chronic non-cancer pain management is to improve function, reduce pain, and enhance quality of life. Drug therapy may be helpful in achieving this goal for some people.

Medications are not meant to be stand-alone therapy to manage chronic pain. Significant pain relief from medication is defined as a 30% reduction in pain intensity - not zero pain! It is important to engage in other pain-relieving strategies!

KEY POINTS About Medications



There is no magic pill to cure pain.



When treating chronic pain, the choice of medication depends on the cause of the pain and the type of pain.



Clinicians also factor in your medical history and your other medications



It is important to try out a medication for a sufficient amount of time.



To reduce side effects- we often start low and go slow in terms of increasing the dosage.



Sometimes, it takes a few tries to figure out the best medication(s) and dosage.

HARMS REDUCTION

Everyone responds to medication differently. We aim to find a pain medication that provides more benefit than harm.

We must always balance the benefit obtained from a medication with the associated risks and make sure that harms do not outweigh benefit.

It is important to know what to expect in terms of medication side effects.

It is important to understand what pain medication to take, when to take it and why medications should be taken as prescribed.

CHRONIC PAIN and Opioids

Although opioids can be effective in managing moderate to severe acute pain (e.g., pain following surgery or an injury), there is ***no strong evidence or good quality studies demonstrating opioids are better than other medications or non-drug therapies when used on a long-term basis for chronic non-cancer pain management, including low-back pain.***

If you take opioids, you can obtain a **naloxone kit** as part of an opioid overdose prevention strategy **FREE** of charge from your community pharmacist.

Safe storage and disposal of medications is critical to not only your safety, but also that of any other individuals (including teenagers and children) or pets living in the home.

Studies have shown that many patients receiving long term opioid therapy experience worse overall body pain, function, and mood than patients with similar pain conditions who are not taking opioids.

DID YOU KNOW?



Your local pharmacist knows a lot about medications; you can go to them anytime to discuss a medication's effectiveness, side effects, to learn more about drug therapy or to address any medication specific questions you may have.



Due to our biology and genetics, everyone responds to medication differently. What works for someone else might not work in the same way for you.

LEARN MORE About Managing Medications

Low Back Pain – www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOjTegn9RuY

Pharmacy in Canada – www.pharmacists.ca/pharmacy-in-canada

Opioid Pain Medicines, Information for Patients and Families - www.ismp-canada.org/download/OpioidStewardship/opioid-handout-bw.pdf

Opioids - www.rxfiles.ca/rxfiles/uploads/documents/Patient%20Opioid%20Booklet-Taper-BW.pdf

For more information about safe medication use, visit:

www.ismp-canada.org

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GRIEF AND LOSS

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WEBINAR VIDEO**

<http://tapmipain.ca/patient/managing-my-pain/>



WHAT IS Acceptance?

Acceptance is a shift in thinking. It is recognizing that because of your situation, you must change the way that you approach things to minimize your own frustrations and pain experiences. It also means recognizing that you are not “the pain” but rather someone who has pain among many other things (good and bad), it is not the defining feature of who you are.

“Nothing changes if nothing changes.”

Think about how you typically approach tasks, situations and even social interactions. Are you happy with the outcome? If not, you must change your approach, or the outcomes will remain the same.

STAGES of Grief

These are common feelings that someone experiencing a loss may have. You may not experience them all or experience them in order.

1

Denial: “I’m fine.” “This isn’t happening to me.” You may just feel numb, not quite realizing the extent the impact your injury might have on your life. Or you may be in denial of your condition – continuously seeking a cure, seeking out more specialists regardless of the fact they are all telling you the same thing.

2

Anger (or frustration): You may find yourself easily agitated, more irritable. You are frustrated with constantly being in pain. You may be focused on blaming others, pointing fingers.

3

Bargaining: “I promise to _____ if _____”. You may bargain with your higher power, yourself, your employers, your doctors WSIB/insurance, etc. You may rationalize behaviours you know will hurt you in the long run. “I’ll just finish this task, so it’s done and I’ll ignore the pain”.

4

Depression: You may feel completely overwhelmed, experiencing feelings of hopelessness or helplessness. You may not feel like doing anything, have problems concentrating, changes in sleeping, change in your appetite. You may just feel like isolating from others or just giving up. It is important to discuss these feelings with your doctor.

5

Acceptance: You come to accept that you have a chronic pain condition, and you find ways to manage and even thrive regardless of the pain. You accept the things you cannot change, focusing on what you can do, and how you can manage better. You transition from “I can’t do anything” to “How can I manage my pain while doing that?”

MYTHS of Acceptance

“If I accept my pain, I’m giving up”.

Acceptance is not giving up trying. It is giving up thinking that things are not different now, or that you don’t have to deal with this in a new way.

“Acceptance means that I’m okay with having pain forever”.

It is about accepting that right now you have pain and recognizing that you have to do things differently than before you had any pain. It’s about living with it.

“Acceptance does not mean you like it”.

You don’t have to like something to accept it. You have to be willing to recognize it for what it is and be willing to act accordingly.

Acceptance can give you more control over your life and your pain, leaving more energy for other things, including becoming a more positive advocate for yourself.

What does acceptance look like to you? What is holding you back?

TIPS FOR Managing Grief and Loss

- ✓ Talk to people who understand.
- ✓ Recognize that these losses are significant, and it will take time to adjust.
- ✓ If you are concerned about your feelings of anger or depression, speak to your doctors!
- ✓ Take care of yourself physically.
- ✓ Plan ahead. Remember to modify, pace and take breaks. Build on small successes.
- ✓ Positive self-talk.
- ✓ Be open to change. Remember that moving towards acceptance does not mean you are “giving up”.

LEARN MORE about Acceptance and Grief

Coping with Grief and Loss –

www.helpguide.org/articles/grief/coping-with-grief-and-loss.htm

The Ways We Grieve – www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-truisms-wellness/201702/the-ways-we-grieve

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