

PAIN ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND

DEVELOP SKILLS TO SELF-MANAGE
YOUR CONDITION

PROFESSIONALLY-
LED GROUPS
FOCUSING ON
HELPING YOU TO
IMPROVE THE
QUALITY OF YOUR
LIFE.



Pain Association Scotland help people living with chronic pain



Service User Evaluation 2019/20

WHY SELF- MANAGEMENT?

Self-management is an important approach to health that explores the things that you can do to improve the quality of your life, despite living with a painful condition.

It is not a replacement for medication and it does not necessarily provide direct pain relief. What it does do for many people, however, is to help them cope better with their pain.

HOW DO GROUPS HELP?

The groups do not provide a cure for your pain, but they offer a positive way forward for people who are ready and willing to engage with the monthly topics.

The 'open door' style means that you only attend the groups when it is convenient or where the topic of the month appears relevant to you. You are free to attend as many or as few groups across the year as you wish.

Most people find participating in the groups on a regular basis a great source of support.

GROUPS

WHO ARE THE GROUPS FOR?

The groups are designed for anyone who has chronic pain, whether or not they have a diagnosis. They are particularly helpful for those who want to take an active part in improving their quality of life.

We understand that people living with pain find it difficult to sit for long periods. Participants are encouraged to get up and move about when they need to. There is a break halfway through each session.



WHAT BENEFIT WILL I GET BY ATTENDING?

Self-management is not a cure. However, it can make a big difference. Benefits vary from person to person. They also vary according to the extent to which people engage with the group. Over the years the benefits people have told us about include:

- Improved sleep
- Feel supported
- Less isolated
- Improved relationship with medication
- Being able to cope better.
- A growing sense of being in control rather than having pain influencing what they can and can't do.
- Better able to adjust the pace of their work and activities to avoid over doing things (having flare-ups).
- Reducing stress levels and better able to relax.
- Getting back to work / staying at work.
- Improved relationships with friends and family.
- Improved self-esteem and confidence.
- Fewer flare-ups that pass quicker.



IMPORTANT IDEAS IN PAIN MANAGEMENT

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONDITION

You can play a key role in managing your health and wellbeing. It is important to get the facts about your condition and know what your pain means. Unhelpful beliefs about health can trap people.

EMOTIONS

People with chronic pain experience a wide range of emotions. Try to be aware of your emotional responses and to understand where they come from and how you might respond differently.

RELAXATION

The deliberate use of breathing and positive focus acts as a fire extinguisher for stress. It builds a skill that calms the nervous system and helps people to see through the fog of stress.

IMPROVING SLEEP

This gives your mind and body a chance to rest, repair and reboot; which then feeds in to more energy and better coping for the next day.

NUTRITION

A good quality balanced diet is key to everyone's health.

PACING

This means working within your limits and not using pain as your only guide. Understanding the boom- bust cycle and the idea of having choice are vital. 'Pacing' gets the most 'yes buts'; but it's one of the most important concepts in pain management.

BASELINES

Use objective measures like time/distance/amount, for key activities like standing, sitting, walking and housework. The aim is to create consistency, reduce fear, and improve function by reliably working within limits. It can be summarised as 'do less more often'.

ACTIVITY

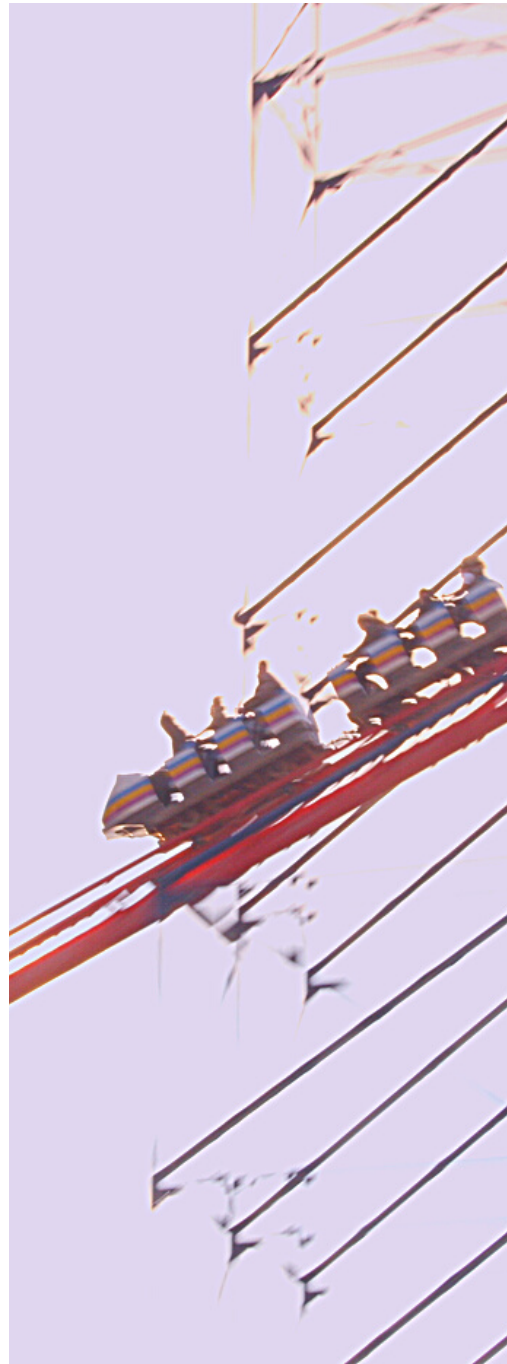
Finding suitable ways to be more active is very important. Try walking, swimming or whatever else works for you; use baselines as a starting point and build up gently.

COMMUNICATION

It's good to be clear and talk about how you think and feel. Try to be more open and give yourself permission to say: "No thanks" and "Yes Please". Being over focused on health causes problems.

KINDNESS

It is important to change the habit of always putting your needs last. Give yourself permission to do what you want, or need to do, rather than seeking approval or justifying yourself.





DEALING WITH OTHERS

Be aware of how you react to apparent criticism, sometimes your reaction can be more to do with what you think about yourself. 'You look well' and 'How are you?' often simply mean, 'Hello!'

HELP

Sometimes accepting even a small amount of help can make a huge difference; both to you and the person who wants to do something to improve things for you.

THE BALANCE OF LIFE

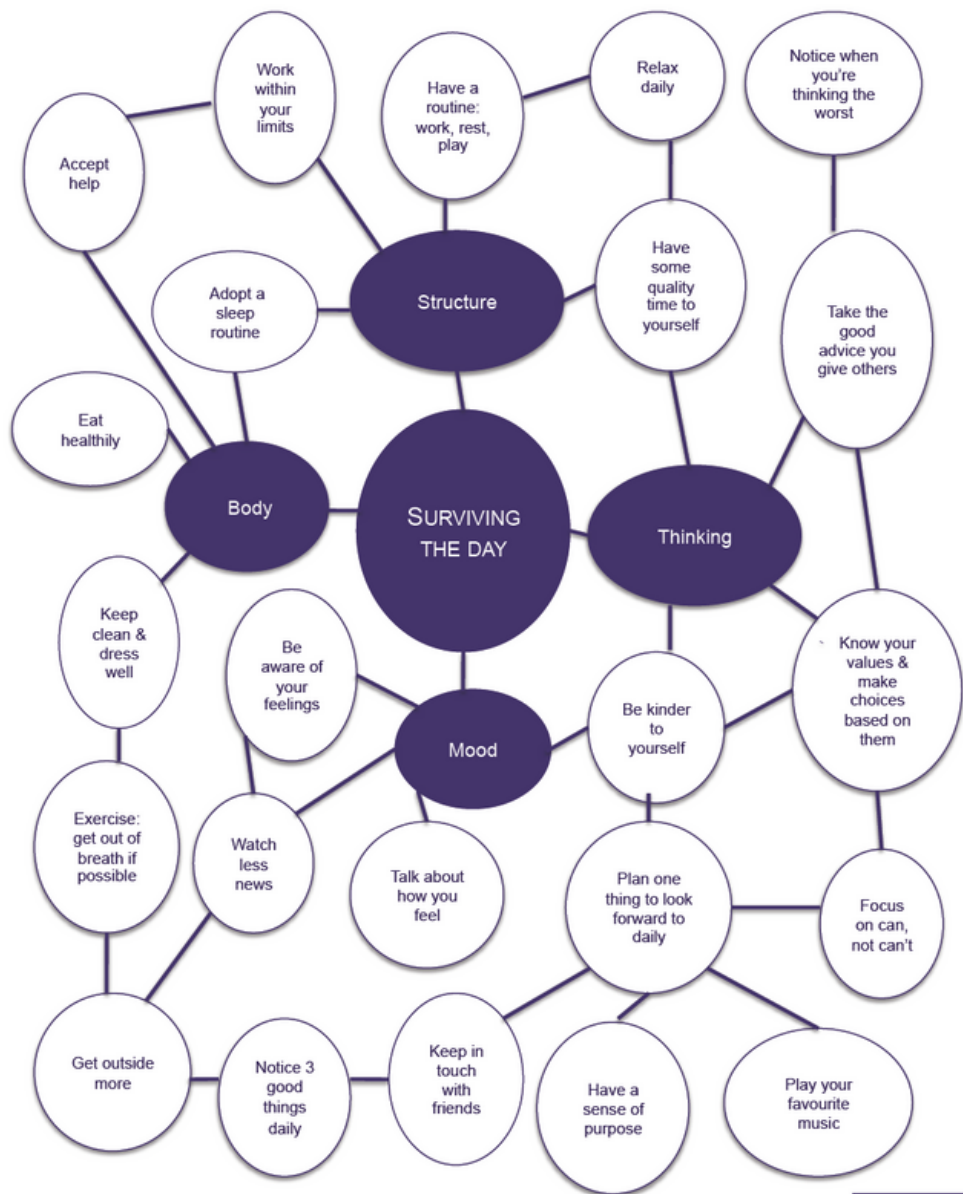
Fillers like rest and relaxation give energy; whilst drainers, such as worry and lack of sleep take energy. Most people have too much draining and not enough filling. If we are out of balance, we suffer.

KNOW WHAT MAKES YOU TICK

Engaging with your interests takes focus away from your troubles. It reduces boredom, boosts confidence and improves a sense of wellbeing.

REALISTIC AND PRACTICAL

It is helpful to focus on what you can do, rather than what you can't. Adapting in this way, helps you to feel positive and more in control of your life. This is a helpful route towards a better relationship with both yourself and your situation.



TOPICS

We deliver a programme based on recognised self management topics. These are continually being refined and reviewed in line with developments in the field and the feedback we receive. The aim is to help people to manage their condition and cope better. Or put simply, the focus is always on improving life. Some of our topics are:

- Understanding pain.
- Pacing skills (planning your activities in relation to your available energy).

- Anxiety, stress management and relaxation.
- The effect of negative thinking on you and how to be more positive.
- Improving sleep.
- Dealing with flare-ups (episodes of intense pain / symptoms).
- Managing changes in your life and to your health.
- Communicating effectively with the people around you.

GROUPS ARE FACE TO FACE, OR A BLEND OF FACE TO FACE AND ONLINE

THE TEAM

Our groups and courses are led by a Trainer with substantial experience in the self management field. They ensure that there is a safe, supportive and friendly environment. Although everyone is encouraged to participate, there is no pressure to say or do anything if you prefer not to. You will not be asked about your medical condition.



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