

INTERDISCIPLINARY TREATMENT OF CHRONIC PAIN

The Pain Management Program (PMP) is an interdisciplinary three or four-week, daylong (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) treatment program, designed to help individuals with chronic non-malignant pain. Pain services are provided in an interdisciplinary format by a physical therapist, clinical psychologist, nurse, and physician. Because these disciplines are in one department, assessment and treatment services are comprehensive and integrated. Your physician is in a separate location, but is included in the treatment planning.

The primary purpose of the program is to help patients remove or reduce disabilities and cope more effectively with pain-related problems. Specifically, treatment involves three components, which occur simultaneously:

Physical Reactivation/Physical Therapy:

The primary goal of the physical reactivation and physical therapy segment of the PMP is to reduce and/or eliminate physical disabilities. The emphasis is on addressing individual needs and teaching people how to improve physical functions consistent with the person's medical status, age, and coping abilities. Physical therapy evaluations and treatment focus on flexibility, endurance, coordination, and strength; however, strength exercises are minimized initially for practical clinical reasons.

The initial measurements of flexibility, endurance, and activity performance are used as a baseline by which improvement is measured and tracked. All activities and exercises are increased according to the results of the initial and weekly reevaluations. Exercise programs are completed individually and in groups.

Medication Programs/ Nursing:

At the beginning of the PMP, a thorough review of medication usage is conducted by nursing and medical staff. In certain cases the physician and nurse will design a medication program with the intention to gradually reduce and ideally eliminate the medications currently used in relationship to the chronic pain. Medications for pain provide the chemicals your brain would normally make for itself. Reducing some or all of the pain medications encourages your brain and nervous system to make the chemicals it normally would, therefore aiding you in managing pain. Medications taken for medical problems, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, are taken according to the primary physician's prescription.

The nursing staff provide training in nutrition management, as food can be considered medication for the body. Some foods accentuate stress, fat storage, and/or inflammatory responses.

Social Issues/Psychology:

All psychological assessment and treatment services are provided by licensed psychologists or doctoral interns directly under their supervision. Services are provided individually and in groups. Typically, a patient will participate in eight groups and have two individual sessions per week. Psychologists generally address the following areas:

A. Pain and Stress Management:

Many persons with chronic pain find themselves trapped in a vicious cycle. Pain causes increased stress, which causes muscles to tighten, which produces more pain, leading to more stress, causing more tension, and the cycle continues. At the PMP, participants are taught pain and stress management techniques, including healthy thinking and a variety of relaxation skills.

B. Family Involvement:

Often family members feel helpless because they don't know how to respond to loved ones with chronic pain. The primary focus of family involvement is to inform the family how they can support healthy and active behavior on the part of the person with chronic pain. Another aspect of family involvement is assessing how communication and relationship patterns impact and are impacted by pain.

C. Communications Skills:

Faulty communications skills and an inability to express emotions and needs can lead to relationship problems. This can cause stress, tension, and subsequently an increase in pain. Successful communication

can decrease the impact of chronic pain. As a result, PMP patients are provided instruction on communication skills in individual sessions, group lecture, and role-playing situations.

D. Emotional Concerns:

Many individuals with chronic pain are depressed or anxious. Individual counseling sessions are designed to help improve mood. Individual therapy sessions are also available for dealing with behavioral and sexual issues related to pain. If necessary, psychotropic medication management will be coordinated through the patient's psychiatrist or physician.

Entrance Criteria

1. Pain is chronic and non-malignant
2. Willing to complete an opiate medication taper with the goal to remain off opiate pain medication
3. Free of substance abuse (illicit drugs, alcohol, misuse of prescription medications)
4. Able to walk for 5 uninterrupted minutes
5. Able to get up and down from the floor without assistance
6. Willing to involve a family member or significant other for a one-time meeting
7. No psychiatric hospitalizations, suicide attempts, self-harm behaviors, or harm to others in past 3 months
8. Able to take care of him or herself

Pain Management Program Details

1. Attendance:

The potential for significant benefit for positive change in patients' lives is based on a skill development model. Due to the progressive nature of the skill development, **daily attendance is extremely important and expected.**

2. Lodging:

Patients living outside the Omaha area can either stay with family or friends in town or make arrangements through the PMP Admissions Coordinator to stay at an area hotel. The Pain Management Program can cover the cost of lodging if you have no other option to pay for your stay.

3. Meals:

A five dollar (\$5.00) meal allowance is provided for all patients participating in the full program. All other meal costs are the responsibility of the patient.

4. Clothing:

Patients are encouraged to wear loose fitting clothing appropriate for exercising. Athletic shoes or comfortable shoes that tie are required for exercising. Other soft-soled shoes are permitted through the day when not exercising. Patients will also need a swimming suit or other clothing appropriate for aquatic exercise.

5. Smoking:

Nebraska Medicine is a tobacco-free campus. Therefore, patients wanting to smoke must leave the campus. Smoking breaks will be permitted, but are not part of the formal treatment schedule.

6. Financial Arrangements / Insurance Authorization

The pain program Admissions Coordinator is available to assist with insurance authorization / financial arrangements. It is ultimately the responsibility of patients to understand their insurance coverage and verify any authorization requirements prior to beginning treatment at the PMP.

For more information, please contact us:

Address: Pain Management Program
984180 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE
68198-4180

Phone: (402) 559-4364

Fax: (402) 559-9107