

# Introduction to Pain Recovery

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# Outline

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Pain vs Suffering

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Values

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Awareness in the Present Moment

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Self-Management Skills

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Asking for Help

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Finding Meaning and Building Resilience

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Goals / Action Plans



# Pain vs Suffering

- Pain is a signal in the body warning of danger or potential harm. It is for our protection.
- Suffering is usually an evaluation of unpleasantness or aversion to something. It can be both mental and physical.
- Is it possible to have pain without suffering?
- What are some factors that might increase the amount of suffering you feel?
- Over time, with chronic pain and suffering, the brain changes to become more aware of painful sensations.



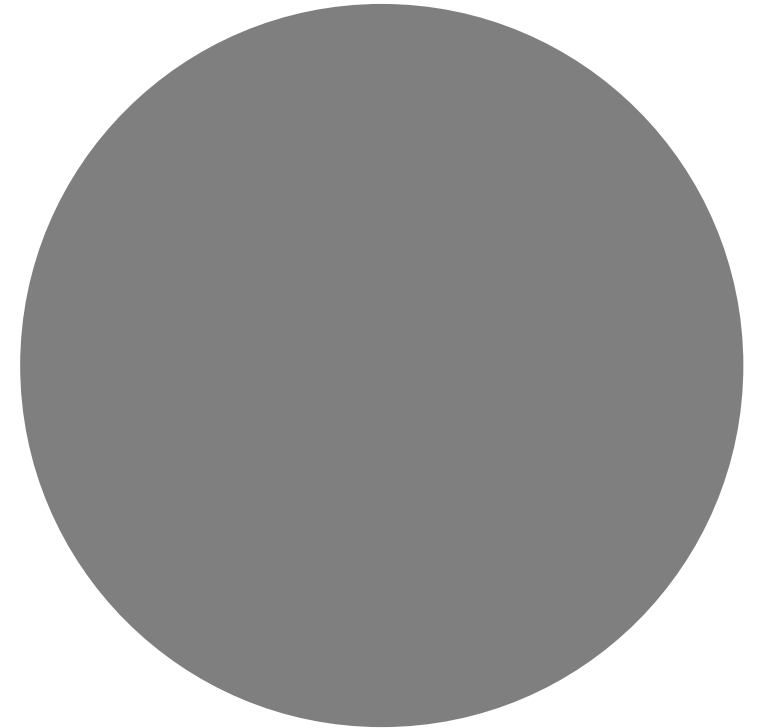
# At Peace with Pain

- “With this meditation, may I find peace of mind with my pain through the love, support and comfort of others”.
- Recall those persons who it feels good to be around,
- Mentally say the following words to yourself:
  - “May I rest in the very compassion, love and support that these individuals hold for me”.
  - “May I rest with an abiding peace with my situation, knowing that I am always supported by my benefactors”.

- Think about and feel a sense of unity with yourself and your benefactors.
  - Feel the warm compassionate gaze and loving support of benefactors from your past, present, and even those who you may encounter later today or tomorrow.
  - Lastly, send these benefactors a blessing that reflects your gratitude and appreciation.
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- Adapted from Altman,D. (2014). “The Mindfulness Toolbox: 50 Practical Tips, Tools & Handouts for Anxiety, Depression, Stress & Pain”. PESI Publishing and Media: Eau Claire, WI. Pg 186-7.

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## At Peace with Pain



# Values

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What matters the most in your life?

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What are your top 3 values? Write them down.

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Do you consider your values when you decide what is important or high priority?

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Your values should guide how you will spend your time and energy.




# My Values



# Awareness in the present moment

- “Palm the present moment” awareness activity


Adapted from Altman, Donald (2014). The Mindfulness Toolbox : 50 Practical Tips, Tools & Handouts for Anxiety, Depression, Stress & Pain”. PESI Publishing and Media: Eau Claire, WI. PESI, p.35.






# Palm the present moment


Sit in a comfortable chair and take a couple of nice, long, calming breaths. Raise your arms with the hands facing one another about one foot apart. Notice the tension in your arms just from holding them up.



Next, slowly bring the hands closer until you feel a slight sensation of energy, pressure, heat or warmth. Stop and just notice this for a few moments.



Now gently move the palms closer until the fingertips come together. Next continue to bring your palms together until they lightly touch. Notice the fingers straightening and feel the heat between the palms.



Pause to appreciate your body.

## Palm the present moment (continued)

- Keeping your palms touching, raise your elbows up to the side. Press your palms gently together (stop if you feel any pain). Notice the tension in your arms. Where else do you feel it? Hold for 5 seconds, then gently release.
- Notice how nice it feels to let go of the tension in your body.
- Slowly open your palms and sense the coolness. Let the weight of gravity assist as you lower your arms to rest on your lap or legs.
- Inhale, and then as you exhale, imagine the remaining stress and tension draining out as you exhale, flowing down, and out the bottoms of your feet, into the earth. Sit for a few moments in appreciation for this body you inhabit.

# Self-management

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We use active self-management strategies to cope with pain on a daily basis: present moment awareness, movement, pacing activities, stress management, relaxation strategies, and others.

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Identify 2-3 things that you do everyday, that help you to cope better? An example might be “getting up from my chair to move when I feel stiff”.

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Be willing to try some new ideas. You can manage your condition so that you have fewer flare ups of pain. This is much easier to cope with on a day-to-day basis.

# Asking for help

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Think of someone you know who is good at asking for help and expressing gratitude to others?

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How and when should you ask for help?

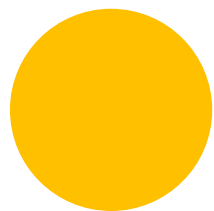
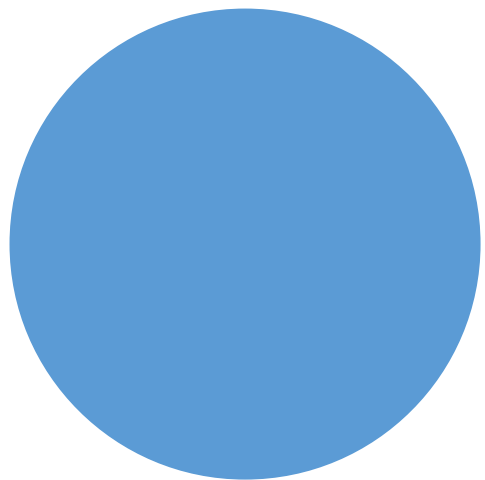
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When you receive help that you have asked for, how do you feel? Is it difficult for you to accept it or are you able to feel grateful?



# Countering the negativity bias

- Feeling grateful instead of ashamed is a more positive response to being helped or supported.
- By focusing on feelings of gratitude, you are countering your natural tendency towards negative feelings over positive ones.
- At the same time, you are making the person who helped you feel truly appreciated, which is good for them too.



Finding meaning and  
building resilience

# Making a shift in your experience

Focus	Focus your energy on the relationships in your life that matter.
Use	Use your strengths and abilities to engage in activities that make your life meaningful, even if you can't do everything you would like.
Have	Have patience with yourself.
Notice	Notice how strong you are and what you have overcome so far.
Seek	Seek opportunities to feel and express gratitude and be thankful.



# Goals / Action Plans

- Write down **1-2 goals** to improve your self-management in a specific way over the next couple of months. Then create an action plan to guide you towards achieving your goals.

## Suggestions:

- Action plan to act on and notice one of your **values** frequently in the next week.
- Action plan to increase (or decrease) your **physical activity** in a specific way in the next week.
- Action plan to increase your **present moment awareness** for 5 minutes or more daily.





My goals...

## Action Plans

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Values / Strengths:

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Physical activity:

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Present moment awareness:

# Reflection

- How did these activities modify your thoughts and feelings?
- These activities were intended to help you notice and reduce suffering.
- Do you expect barriers to your recovery from pain and suffering? How can these be dealt with?
- Was there something new you experienced that could help you to cope better?

