

## PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Living with pain may have become a way of life for you. Living a full and active life might seem impossible. But you *can* improve how you live and function, and also lessen your sense of suffering. The key, like most things in life, is to have the right skills, support, and direction.

Pain Management Programs (PMPs) give you a chance to work together with a pain care team (a group of healthcare providers [HCPs]). If you take an active role in your pain management, this type of pain care program can help you go from being a patient to becoming an active person.

*The road is not an easy one, but the rewards make it worth it!*

HCPs still find chronic pain hard to understand. The good news is that HCPs now know more than ever about helping people **manage** their pain.

### WHAT IS A PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM?

In a PMP, people with pain become part of the pain care team and take an active role in regaining control of their lives, in spite of the pain. PMPs are focused on the total person, not just the pain.

### WAYS THE PAIN CARE TEAM CAN HELP

In a PMP, your pain care team will work with you in many ways to lessen your pain and help you self-manage it.

For example, the team will teach you how to keep track of your pain and find what works for you. The team will offer a complete pain care plan that includes assessment/evaluation, treatment, communication, education, and follow-up.

### THE PAIN CARE TEAM

*Pain care team members may vary from one program to the next, but the program goal remains the same—to help you live a full life.*

*The team can include:*

- "The patient" (person with pain)
- Family, friends, neighbors, caregivers
- Physicians
- Physician assistants and nurse practitioners
- Nurses
- Psychologists
- Physical therapists
- Occupational therapists
- Recreational therapists
- Vocational counselors
- Pharmacists
- Nutritionists/dieticians
- Social workers
- Support staff
- Volunteers
- Others

You may have noticed that "the patient" is at the top of the list. If you, the patient, do not take an active role in the program, the program will not be as successful. *Your efforts are the key!*

Your pain care team provides you with a well-balanced approach. Each team member (including you) has their own role, but the team works together to provide better care overall. Working directly with you, as a team, is what makes these programs work so well.

### BENEFITS OF A WELL-FUNCTIONING TEAM

In a PMP, the pain care team meets on a regular basis to review your care and discuss it with you. The team looks at the goals that have been set, what you have achieved, and where you are facing challenges. Based on those

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Adapted from: *Interdisciplinary Pain Management*: Dennis Turk, et al. Task Force Report developed for American Pain Society. 2009; American Chronic Pain Association. *Pain Management Programs*. Available at - <http://www.theacpa.org/Pain-Management-Programs>

things, the team will decide the next best steps for you.

For example, the team may decide that one or more team members need(s) to change their approach, that something needs to be added to the plan, or that a part of the plan needs to be stopped. The team will speak directly with you and include you in these decisions.

The team is most successful when its members work together with mutual respect and freedom to share new ideas and insights.

The bottom line is that your care plan should focus on your whole person (not just a body part or symptom) and empower you (and your family/caregivers) to take some control over your pain.

#### FINDING A GOOD PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

All pain clinics are not the same. Some may address specific pain problems, but not offer the complete program you need to help regain control of your life.

*A good PMP should give you the physical, emotional, and psychological support you need.*

When looking for a PMP, the most important first step is to meet the pain care team and make sure that you feel at ease with them. Feeling at ease with the pain care team is important to your progress.

#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The PMP you choose should:

- Share the same beliefs and goals as you
  - Work with you toward common, agreed-upon goals
  - Share goals for ongoing progress
- Be patient- and family-centered
- Develop care plans based on your needs
- Value mutual respect and open communication as a team
- Communicate often with your primary HCP and other team members
- Expect all team members to work toward reaching your goals
- Follow progress toward reaching goals, and adjust pain care plan, as needed
- Provide feedback on your progress
- Schedule formal follow-up visits

*When you become a part of a PMP, you empower yourself to live a more active, fulfilled life!*