

Sussex MSK Partnership

Your Guide to the Pain Management Programme (PMP)

Introduction

Persistent pain (also sometimes called chronic pain) refers to pain that lasts beyond 3-6 months. Often persistent pain does not resolve with physical or medical treatment. Therefore, other approaches such as Pain Management Programmes can be useful in helping people to move towards living the life that they would like WITH pain.

What happens if I have been referred for a Pain Management Programme?

You will be offered an assessment with a Clinical Psychologist and Physiotherapist working in the Persistent Pain Team to understand your current difficulties with pain. They will explain details about the PMP and you will have a chance to ask any questions so that you can decide together if this is the right option for you.

What is the Pain Management Programme?

A PMP is a group treatment for people living with persistent pain. Often we hear that pain can leave people feeling isolated from others. A group approach allows people to connect with others who also experience pain.

A PMP offers the chance to learn self-management strategies that you can apply to your life to live more meaningfully with the pain rather than a “cure”.

There are a mix of education sessions on understanding theories of pain as well as practice sessions to help you to make changes to your life while attending the programme and beyond.

The focus of the group is an opportunity for you to learn how to change your relationship with the pain.

During the programme you will be able to:

- Learn about theories of pain
- Understand the impact of pain on your thoughts, feelings and behaviours

- Learn about pacing of activity and rest
- Develop skills to manage pain flare-ups
- Set manageable goals for yourself
- Understand the role of medication
- Learn about the impact of pain on sleep and how to develop healthy sleep routines
- Understand how movement can help you manage your pain better

What can you expect from us?

The group is facilitated by members of the Persistent Pain team which includes: a clinical psychologist and a specialist physiotherapist.

The programme is not 'therapy' but is seen more as what we call "psychoeducation". However, as was probably mentioned in your assessment, changing habits can be tricky for people. Making changes to how we work with pain can be both physically and emotionally challenging.

The team aim to support you to start gently making these difficult changes at your own pace in a compassionate way.

What am I expected to do?

It seems obvious, but you will need to actually be here to engage with the material and see how to make changes, so we would really encourage you to attend.

The group involves time and commitment for you to get the most of it. The PMP involves being able to practice applying some of the techniques that we discuss in your everyday life. This is what makes the most difference in the long-term and will allow you to see what aspects feel tricky to do.

We want the programme to be as useful as possible for you which is through you being able to attend all the sessions. Unfortunately, if you miss three sessions of the programme, we may ask you to step back from the PMP. Our experience is that people who miss three sessions struggle to put stuff in place or to make changes. It's also hard for other members of the group if you are working at an earlier stage than they are. Other than under exceptional circumstances, we cannot offer people another programme.

As you will know you are not encouraged to attend appointments if you have a systemic illness e.g., tummy bug or flu. We understand that you cannot attend the sessions, however if this leads to you missing three sessions then we will have to discuss this with you.

If you are unable to attend a session, please let us know as soon as possible by contacting the team (contact details will be provided on your letter and once you start the group). Also please contact us if you are going to be late. We will start the course without you, but there are sessions that cannot start until everyone is here.

Confidentiality

We value your confidentiality. In line with NHS guidelines, we sometimes need to share information with other professionals involved in your care. As part of safe practice we will also discuss cases during supervision. It is a legal requirement for the service to record clinical notes and information. These are stored on a secure and protected clinical system.

In the group, we ask that any discussions remain confidential and that this is respected by the members of the group.

We do encourage you to discuss what is being learnt with loved ones, but this doesn't include experiences, comments or difficulties of other group members. Therefore, we would advise that you only share what you feel comfortable in disclosing within the group setting.

You are part of a group, and together (the group and the team) we aim to provide support and create a safe enough space for people attending to explore putting these ideas into practice.

We will be starting by looking at what will create a safe enough space for **ALL** group members. We will be discussing this with the group as a whole and trying to set up what we would call general principles for this. However, these principles may mean different things to different people at times. The team may need to discuss if people do not seem to be being polite, considerate, or sensitive to the needs of others in the room (which includes the team). While this can feel quite restrictive for some people, remembering always that this is not just about you but the group as a whole.