

Multifaceted Treatment of Chronic Pain

The Chronic Pain Management Program (CPMP) is an interdisciplinary four-week, daylong (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) program, designed to help individuals with chronic nonmalignant pain. Pain services are provided by a team of providers consisting of a physical therapist, clinical psychologist, nurse and physician. Because these disciplines are in one department, assessment and treatment services are comprehensive and integrated. Your personal physician is also 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 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. Hands-on interventions are provided, but only with the goal of assisting the functional improvements and self-care processes.

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 individual's initial and weekly reevaluation results. Exercise programs are completed individually and in groups.

Medication Programs/Nursing

At the beginning of the CPMP, a thorough review of medication usage is conducted by nursing and medical staff. In some instances, the physician and nurse will design a medication program to gradually reduce and ideally eliminate narcotic medications currently used in relation to 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 they normally would, aiding you in managing pain. Medications for medical problems, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, are taken according to the primary physician's prescription.

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:

People 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. With the Pain Management Program, 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 communication skills and an inability to express emotions and needs can lead to relationship problems. This can cause stress, tension, and subsequently, increased pain. Successful communication can decrease the impact of chronic pain. As a result, CPMP patients are provided instruction on communication skills in individual sessions and group lectures.

D. Emotional Concerns:

Many individuals with chronic pain are depressed or anxious. Individual counseling sessions are designed to help improve mood and behavioral concerns related to pain. Any psychotropic medications will continue to be managed by the patient's outside psychiatric or primary care provider.

Entrance Criteria

1. Pain is chronic and nonmalignant.
2. Willing to complete an opiate medication taper to remain off opiate pain medication.
3. Free of substance use (illicit drugs, alcohol, misuse of prescription medications).
4. Able to walk for five uninterrupted minutes.
5. Able to get up and down from the floor without assistance of another person.
6. Willing to involve a family member or significant other for a one-time meeting.
7. Able to go up and down one flight of stairs without the assistance of another person.

Significant mental health concerns (including psychiatric hospitalizations, suicide attempts, self-harm, or harm to others) or other psychosocial concerns should be sufficiently stabilized to allow patients to focus on the program without disruption. Patients should be able to independently understand and participate in classroom-style instruction and complete daily activities independently.

Pain Management Program Details

1. Attendance:

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

2. Lodging:

Patients living outside the Omaha area can stay with family or friends in town or make arrangements through the CPMP admissions coordinator to stay at an area hotel. The Chronic Pain Management Program can cover the cost of lodging if patients have no other option to pay for their stay.

3. Meals:

A daily \$5 meal allowance is provided for all patients participating in the full program. All other meal costs are the patient's responsibility.

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 when not exercising.

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 nursing care coordinator can assist with insurance authorization and financial arrangements. It is ultimately the responsibility of patients to understand their insurance coverage and verify any authorization requirements before beginning treatment.

For more information, please contact us:

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