

## **PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

### **AN OVERVIEW**

A pain management programme (PMP) helps people to live with chronic or persistent pain by teaching ways of dealing with the effects and distress it causes.

The PMP is delivered in a group setting by a team of experienced healthcare professionals and people with different types of persistent pain and of all ages can benefit.

Through simple physical, cognitive and psychological self-management techniques, participants learn a better understanding of chronic pain and how it affects the body.

These methods are taught to help improve physical function, reduce anxiety and enhance quality of life by introducing new ways to cope with symptoms - for example stretching and relaxing.

Many people with chronic pain become depressed, inactive, lack confidence and feel lonely - this can lead to a downward spiral of worsening pain and increased distress and disability.

The aim of the PMP is to reverse this trend by teaching patients to cope more effectively and be more independent when it comes to managing their pain.

While pain relief is not the main aim, research has found that some PMP participants who manage their own symptoms and reduce their reliance on medication can achieve some relief.

PMPs help make day-to-day life less of a struggle and allow people to realise a better quality of life despite chronic pain.

### **PMP - WHAT TO EXPECT**

The programme encourages people to establish a daily routine and teaches them how to build up activity levels and increase fitness using the right balance of rest and activity.

During practical sessions, participants learn about pain and ways to control or limit it, as well as how to exercise safely and build up activity levels by pacing to avoid increasing pain.

### **REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS**

The PMP is designed to help participants gain a better understanding of the links between their pain and how they think, the way they feel, how they behave, with the aim of improving mood and confidence.

Patients start to control their pain - and their life - with the result that they no longer see it as a problem their doctor should be able to 'solve'.

At the end of the PMP, many realise that, while their pain has not gone away, they are able to control it rather than the pain controlling them and their daily life.

## BENEFITS

People who have taken part in PMPs have experienced a range of benefits including:

- Increased fitness and activity levels
- Improved capability tackling everyday activities
- Less fears of moving and exercise
- Stronger resilience to flare-ups
- Less distress and increased confidence
- Learning new skills
- Improved sleep patterns
- Return to some form of work
- Reduced use of analgesic medication
- Meeting new people
- Improved ability to cope
- Better quality of life