

PAIN ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND

S U P P O R T E D S E L F -
M A N A G E M E N T F O R
T H O E S E L I V I N G
W I T H C H R O N I C P A I N



Who Are We

Pain Association Scotland provides professionally-led supported Self-Management education and training in the community providing key coping strategies and helping people explore new way forward leading to an improved quality of life. These groups have enabled Chronic Pain sufferers to make changes to their everyday lives in a positive and practical way, resulting in improved levels of coping and well-being.

We have developed expertise in an effective interactive person-centred approach which helps to engage people in the principles of self-management and motivates them to adopt new ways of thinking based on a better understanding of their health and themselves.

Chronic pain is a major personal, social, economic issue. For the majority of those suffering from chronic pain, it is not about the length of time they have the pain. It's about the loss of function, loss of identity, loss of mental health and indeed for many, a loss of hope.



WHY SELF-MANAGEMENT?

Self-management is an important approach to health that explores the things that you can do to improve the quality of your life, despite living with a painful condition.

It is not a replacement for medication and it does not necessarily provide direct pain relief. What it does do for many people, however, is to help them cope better with their pain.

HOW DO GROUPS HELP?

The groups do not provide a cure for your pain, but they offer a positive way forward for people who are ready and willing to engage with the monthly topics. The 'open door' style means that you only attend the groups when it is convenient or where the topic of the month appears relevant to you. You are free to attend as many or as few groups across the year as you wish.

Most people find participating in the groups on a regular basis a great source of support.



GROUPS

WHO ARE THE GROUPS FOR?

The groups are designed for anyone who has chronic pain, whether or not they have a diagnosis. They are particularly helpful for those who want to take an active part in improving their quality of life.

We understand that people living with pain find it difficult to sit for long periods. Participants are encouraged to get up and move about when they need to. There is a break halfway through each session.

WHAT BENEFIT WILL I GET BY ATTENDING?

Self-management is not a cure. However, it can make a big difference. Benefits vary from person to person. They also vary according to the extent to which people engage with the group. Over the years the benefits people have told us about include:

Improved relationship with medication

Being able to cope better Less isolated

Feel supported

Improved sleep

Fewer flare-ups that pass quicker

Better able to adjust the pace of their work and activities to avoid over doing things (having flare-ups).

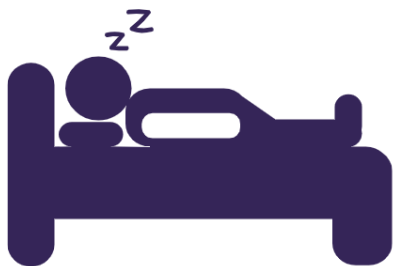
Reducing stress levels and better able to relax.

Getting back to work / staying at work.

Improved relationships with friends and family.

Improved self-esteem and confidence

A growing sense of being in control rather than having pain influencing what they can and can't do.



Stress

GROUPS - WHAT PEOPLE SAY

I'm back working now, which I'm really pleased about, so I won't be able to attend the meetings. Thanks for all your help, it was much appreciated

At first I was apprehensive about attending the meetings as all other avenues that were available or that I had tried proved to have little or no benefit to my pain management. Since attending the meetings I am yet to come away from them without taken something of benefit to myself.

Excellent group and very helpful. I use the tools from the sessions on a daily basis. Just wish I'd known about the groups sooner.

I was very negative to begin with but with the topics covered I feel a big difference in how I feel and manage my pain.

Wish I had known of this group sooner. Very helpful some basic things re pain explained well. Changed some of my ideas on coping. Trainer explains well with empathy and with right amount of humour but never feel he is condescending.

SMALL STEPS TO GREAT REWARDS

Understanding Your Condition

You can play a key role in managing your health and wellbeing. It is important to get the facts about your condition and know what your pain means. Unhelpful beliefs about health can trap people.



Emotions

People with chronic pain experience a wide range of emotions. Try to be aware of your emotional responses and to understand where they come from and how you might respond differently.



Relaxation

The deliberate use of breathing and positive focus acts as a fire extinguisher for stress. It builds a skill that calms the nervous system and helps people to see through the fog of stress.



Improving Sleep

This gives your mind and body a chance to rest, repair and reboot; which then feeds in to more energy and better coping for the next day.



Nutrition

A good quality balanced diet is key to everyone's health



Pacing

This means working within your limits and not using pain as your only guide. Understanding the boom-bust cycle and the idea of having choice are vital. 'Pacing' gets the most 'yes buts'; but it's one of the most important concepts in pain management.



Baselines

Use objective measures like time/distance/amount, for key activities like standing, sitting, walking and housework. The aim is to create consistency, reduce fear, and improve function by reliably working within limits. It can be summarised as 'do less more often'.



Activity

Finding suitable ways to be more active is very important. Try walking, swimming or whatever else works for you; use baselines as a starting point and build up gently.



Communication

It's good to be clear and talk about how you think and feel. Try to be more open and give yourself permission to say: "No thanks" and "Yes Please". Being over focused on health causes problems.



Kindness

It is important to change the habit of always putting your needs last. Give yourself permission to do what you want, or need to do, rather than seeking approval or justifying yourself.



Dealing with Others

Be aware of how you react to apparent criticism, sometimes your reaction can be more to do with what you think about yourself. 'You look well' and 'How are you?' often simply mean, 'Hello!'

hello

Help

Sometimes accepting even a small amount of help can make a huge difference; both to you and the person who wants to do something to improve things for you.

ASKING
for
HELP
is OK

The balance of life

Fillers like rest and relaxation give energy; whilst drainers, such as worry and lack of sleep take energy.

Most people have too much draining and not enough filling. If we are out of balance, we suffer.



Know what makes you tick

Engaging with your interests takes focus away from your troubles. It reduces boredom, boosts confidence and improves a sense of wellbeing



Realistic and practical

It is helpful to focus on what you can do, rather than what you can't. Adapting in this way, helps you to feel positive and more in control of your life. This is a helpful route towards a better relationship with both yourself and your situation.



Ripple Effect

If you act on just one of these ideas, it can create a positive effect through the rest of your life.



PAIN FEEDERS

Stress winds up pain and vice versa. It can creep up, so knowing your signs (grumpy, withdrawn, more pain, tense) is important. Mastering relaxation can improve your perception of the world and weaken the link between external events and physical reaction.

Core sensitivity amplifies pain. Regular relaxation and stress management and pacing will help the system to calm down and become less 'jumpy'

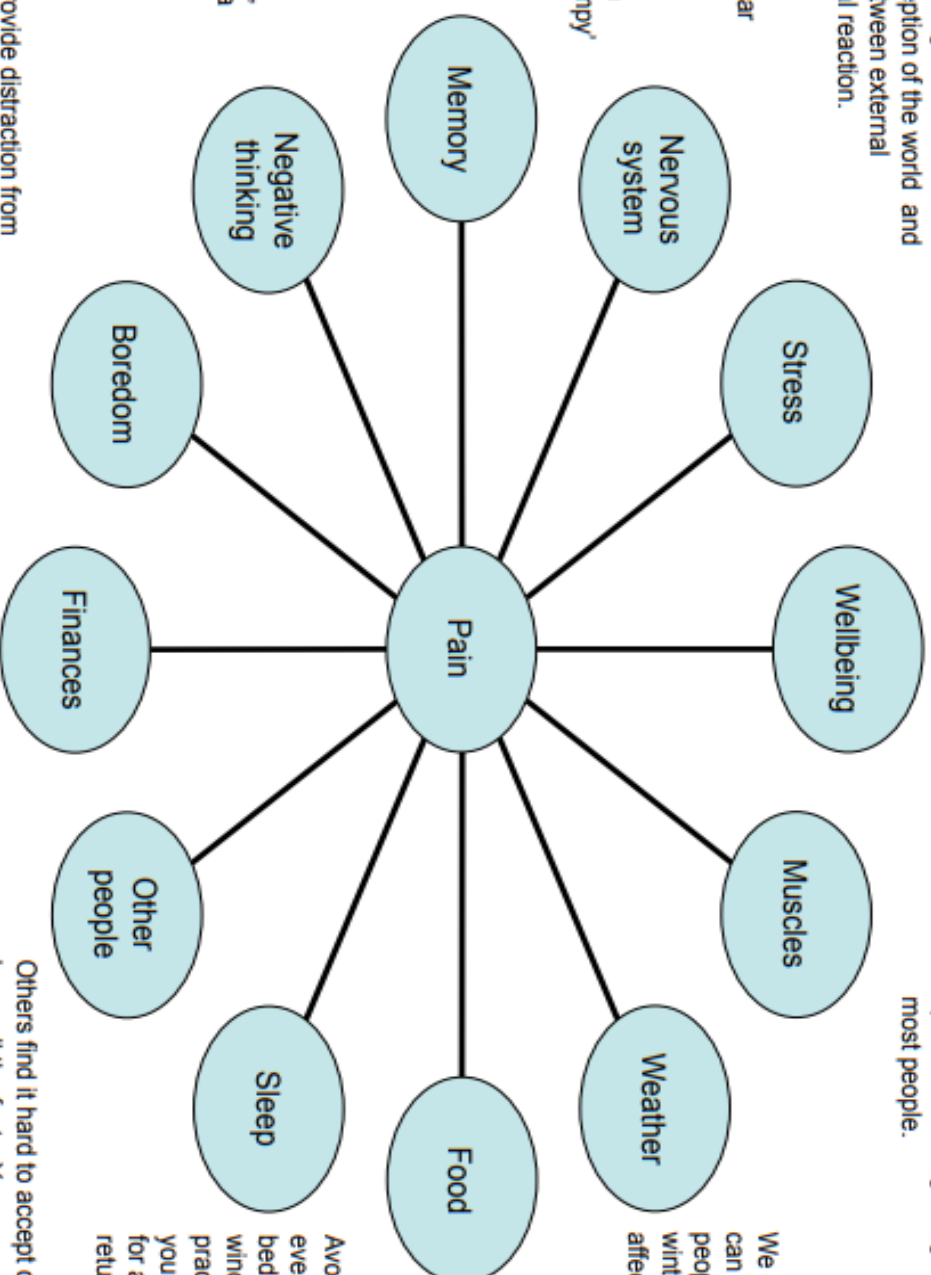
Pain and fatigue often affect memory and concentration- it's normal

Can be helped by improved awareness, that you might be in a habit or leaping to conclusions

Activities provide distraction from pain, allow you to 'be yourself' and experience a sense of achievement. Having a structure for the day helps to break up work and play.

Anything that reduces stress and improves choice will help to improve quality of life despite pain.

Try a graded return to safe exercise and activity. Use pacing skills to build up activity, switch between activities and warm up/down. Walking is a good exercise for most people.



We can't change this but can understand that often people feel worse in the winter. Weather can affect mood and pain.

Too much will cause strain and pain. Intolerance of wheat and dairy is common. Reduce caffeine.

Avoid caffeine in the evening, establish a bedtime routine, wind down to bed and practice relaxation. If you can't sleep get up for a while and then return to bed

Others find it hard to accept change and may not know all the facts. You may also be sensitive and misread what people say. Finding a comfortable way of saying 'no thanks' and 'yes please' is helpful.

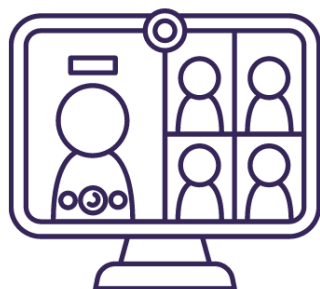
Seek professional agency help (CAB, DIG, Welfare Rights etc) to help de-mystify forms, entitlements and rights.

TOPICS

We deliver a programme based on recognised self management topics. These are continually being refined and reviewed in line with developments in the field and the feedback we receive. The aim is to help people to manage their condition and cope better. Or put simply, the focus is always on improving life. Some of our topics are:

- Understanding pain.
- Pacing skills (planning your activities in relation to your available energy).
- Anxiety, stress management and relaxation.
- The effect of negative thinking on you and how to be more positive.
- Improving sleep.
- Dealing with flare-ups (episodes of intense pain / symptoms).
- Managing changes in your life and to your health.
- Communicating effectively with the people around you.

*GROUPS ARE FACE TO FACE, OR A
BLEND OF FACE TO FACE AND ONLINE*



MEET THE TEAM

Our groups and courses are led by a Trainer with substantial experience in the self management field. They ensure that there is a safe, supportive and friendly environment. Although everyone is encouraged to participate, there is no pressure to say or do anything if you prefer not to. You will not be asked about your medical condition.



Sonia Cottom
Director



Phil Sizer
Lead Trainer

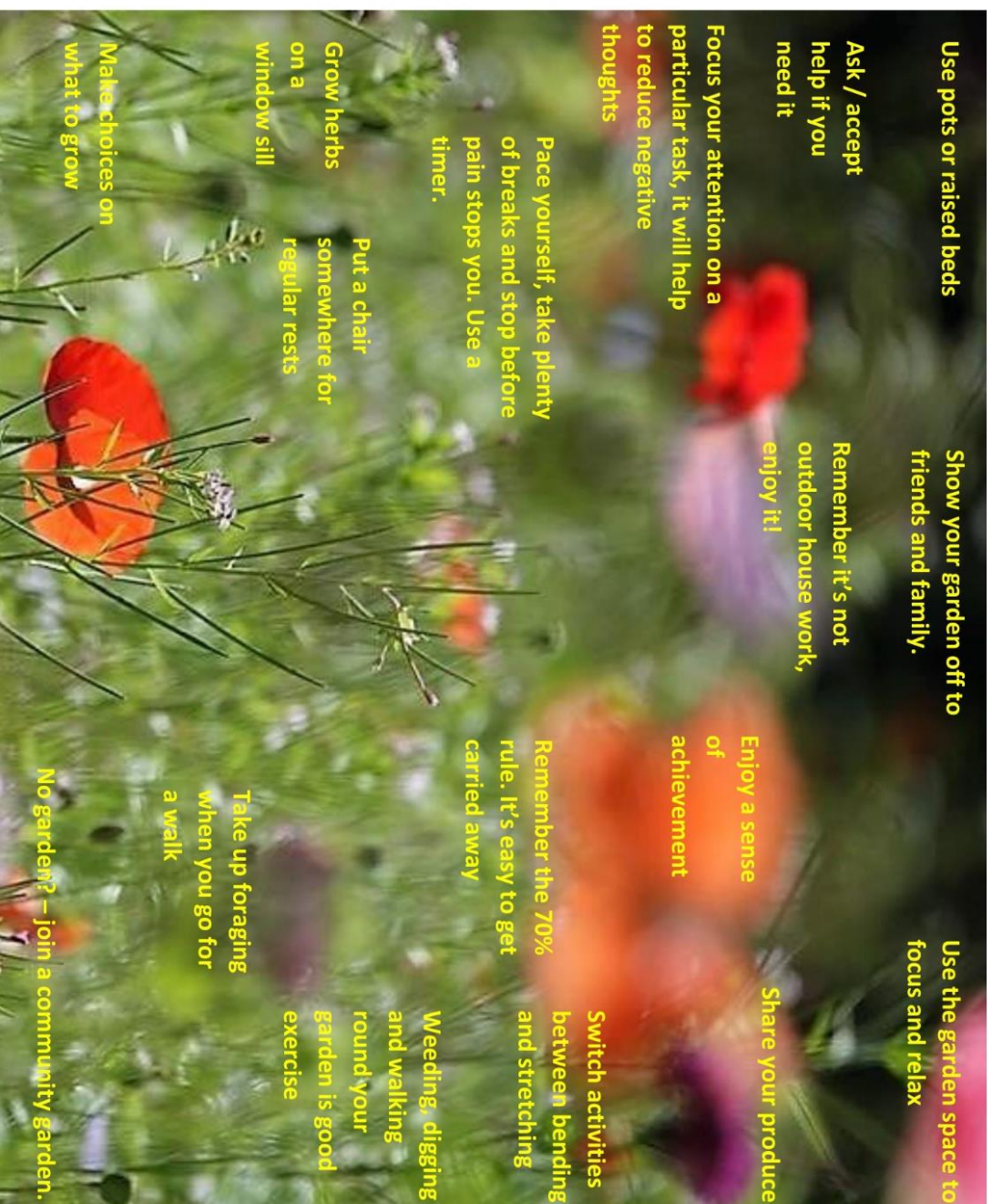


Louise Hall
Trainer



Amanda Waugh
Administrative
Services Manager

Self-managing in the garden



Use pots or raised beds

Ask / accept help if you need it

Focus your attention on a particular task, it will help to reduce negative thoughts

Pace yourself, take plenty of breaks and stop before pain stops you. Use a timer.

Grow herbs on a window sill
Put a chair somewhere for regular rests

Make choices on what to grow

Show your garden off to friends and family.

Remember it's not outdoor house work, enjoy it!

Enjoy a sense of achievement

Remember the 70% rule. It's easy to get carried away

Take up foraging when you go for a walk

No garden? – join a community garden.

Use the garden space to focus and relax

Share your produce

Switch activities between bending and stretching

Weeding, digging and walking round your garden is good exercise

What to expect

Focus on modifying the experience of pain - activities of daily living

Regardless of condition, people with chronic pain often share these common experiences:



managing-stress confidence
persistent-pain friendly believed
relaxation goal setting
restorative flare-ups depression intensive-courses
positively medication staying biopsychosocial
self-esteem hope peer-support
problem-solving understood thoughts indoor
self-management
supportive groups breathing accepted
anxiety negative thinking chronic-pa
interactive mobility sharing managing-change
re-engaging not-judged
pacing contributing
coping improving sleep

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SCOTLAND

Key Outcomes from those who accessed our service

95% advised that attending the group helped them maintain their self-management skills.

82% felt more in control.

90% felt more able to cope on a daily basis

60% had fewer visits to their GP as result of attending the groups

43% have been living with chronic pain for over 10years

The top 3 topics include: Pacing, Stress and Flare-ups

CONTACT US

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