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Pain Self Management for Consumers



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Well, hi everyone, it's Pete here from Pain Tool Kit. And I'd just like to say, massive thank you to Chronic Pain Australia for inviting me along to give a presentation to you. Will be a short one during your National Pain Week. Such an important week. This is a calendar year for people living with persistent pain. Listen, I've got some slides to show you so let's have a look, here. Let's have a look at the first one and you know, it's quite a common statement I hear from people who emailed me who've gone on to become, getting into self-management, as they say. And they say why didn't anyone tell me about pain self-management before being offered copious amounts of medications and treatments. One of the main reasons why this happens, really, and it's not...don't get too angry with the health care professional, there's a couple of reasons going on. And the first one really is a lot of well, many health care professionals, when they are in training, self-management hasn't been in their curriculum. So they've learned about treatments and what they can do to, you know, treat us, what they can give us, etc.. And self-management hasn't actually been in their learning curriculum. So they can't tell us something they haven't actually been told. And the other thing is as well is that there's sometimes there's a lack of time perhaps in their decision makers in their locality and perhaps not forthcoming and building self-management programs that help people remember they're face to face. or online, etc.. So there's quite a few speed bumps there why Self-management isn't spoke to often I guess from the get go really. But for me it's about, you know, us learning we need to get to our get ourselves back in the driver's seat, you're going to hear me talk about this quite a bit today, about getting yourself back in the driver's seat. So let's have a look what we're going to be learning today, let's have a look here. So, to tell you a little bit about me, I'm not going to go into my war story too much. Let's look a little bit at my journey and why we need to keep, you know, that little saying, why don't we get ourselves, why do we need to get ourselves back in the driving seat, you know, if you think about well, I'm getting ahead of myself here so, we'll talk about that. Why, why do we and healthcare professionals get stuck? Okay, very, very common. A little video I want to show you that I think will explain things. So, what does self management mean? A lot of people get stuck with that, thinking that they'll go on their own I'll explain a bit more about that. We'll be looking at the pain cycle. How people get stuck in that as well. Then we're going to be looking at, moving on, is about how we can be more resilient on so many, again I'm getting ahead of myself, I suppose, etc. and then we'll be looking at the five pain self-management skills that people have come up with over the years. Just moving on, this is me. So back in the day I was, you know, I struggled like most people living with long term pain. I was a pretty much a doctor shopper, therapy shopper. "Anybody who had 'ist' or 'ology' after their name, I went and saw." In dollars, I think, going off your current rate, I'd spend about \$16,000 or so back in the early nineties on anybody who had an 'ist' or an 'ology' after their name. I was getting through it big time now,

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I didn't really take any responsibility at all. I was looking for answers from other people, as you know but what got me back on track, I went to a pain management program. I got myself in a pain management program in London, and what that program gave me was the chosen skills. But more importantly, it gave me the confidence to manage my pain myself and I'm pleased to say, since 97, I've not had to take any pain meds, all because of I'm still doing the stuff that they taught me way back then. Do I still live with pain? Yeah, I still do now. In fact, I've got more pain issues now than I did back in the early nineties. So then I just had back pain. Better than becoming an older dude, you know, arthritis, and I'll live with prostate cancer and stuff like that. I get those sort of 'wear' pains, but I'm still using it all back from '96 that keeps the pain levels down so can get on with my life etc. I didn't really have a structured life back back in the early 90s everything was, you know, life really revolved around TV programs like, you know, trying to move, etc., you know. But once we got moving and cracked on and, well, everything seemed to fall into place, those 25 years or so I've been doing what I wrote, the Pain Toolkit which is available by the way, on the Australian Pain Management site. Now, Australian Pain Management Association, I should say, as a download so specialised, dedicated to Australia, and I've written other booklets as well for other health conditions, the painful condition of fibromyalgia, and back pain, and people with mental health issues that are really great pain etc. And the carers. So that's just what I've been up to the last 20, odd, years or so. But in recent years I've been working with Teesside University in the north east, researching how we can develop virtual reality for people with long term pain. So it's getting quite interesting. I was recently in Nijmegen in Holland, a conference there, and I was there three years ago and I can say now, educational self-management of using VR or whatnot is really cracking on. Anyway, enough about that. There's a few memberships I'm a member of, there, on the right hand side. "So, obviously where I live. I live about 90 kilometres north east of London" in a county called Essex, a little village called Mistley, quite a nice little area. Got a bit of the river there. Quite historical. "Okay, this is that phrase I was telling you about." So keeping yourself in the driving seat. And after you think back to when you learn to drive out there, whereabouts did you sit? When you're learning to drive, you're sitting in the driver's seat, of course. But why? Because that was your place of learning. And that is the same for us. We want to get ourselves back on track, get on with our lives in spite of our pain, we need to take more control. We need to take more responsibility, and we need to get back in the driving seat. I'll tell you what, if I can do it, you can do it. Simple as that. "I'm showing a little video now. So it explains, really, why we get stuck." Have a look, who do these guys in the video remind you of? Whoa. That's not good. I don't need this. I'm already late. Somebody will come. Anybody up there? You have a phone? Nope. Sorry. Somebody? Hello? There are two people stuck on an escalator and we need help, now would somebody please do

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something. Help! I don't believe it. You've got to be kidding me. I'm going to cry. Well, there's nothing else left to do, is there? Hello? Hey, don't worry about it. I'll fix it in a second. He said he can fix it. All right, all right. That's more like it. He says he can fix it. So can you see the problem there? You know, it's that we get stuck "because the health care professionals get stuck as well." Yeah listen, we've got to remember, they've only got a certain amount of resources and that's okay. You know, they just run out, going out like us, like, you know, we get stuck. They get stuck. And this is where self-management comes in. So what does self-management mean? Self-management really is about teamwork. We need each other really, if not for us to move on. We need some help that is on your team really, can be a healthcare professional, can be a friend or family. A family member could be a, you know, work colleague, really. The good thing about self-management is that we can be creative if you're looking around for people who we think we need that can help us move on. It's a collaborative thing, okay? So it doesn't mean you're doing it alone. It's about teamwork and I mean, back in the day, I mean, I've had several people in my team could be a nurse from surgery or a buddy of mine or I learn from other help self-managers as well. So you know, to me I'm still learning myself like and it's a lifelong thing because as I've become an older person as I've said, other things come along, so I need to perhaps tweak the strategies that I've got, so I can go on and still maintain quite a good life. So, get people, build a support team around you, don't forget the message there, pacing break. Have you had your pacing break today? A lot of us, you know we use our pain as a guide, etc. And that's that's not good pain self-management. Pacing our daily activities allows us to do more throughout the day, but without increasing our pain. It's the Pain Cycle in the Pain toolkit if you, say, download that from the Australian Pain Management Association, you will see it with me now. And when people see this pain cycle, right, they say, my god, it's like looking in the mirror. And for a lot of people it is because they can see themselves because of the common problems that pain causes. It's a cycle that we've got to get out of and this is a way to get help and support from a health care professional or someone else in your team can help you do that. Now, if you notice in a pain cycle, a lot of them are negative and I think one of the tools in the toolkit is about tracking our progress. Look, managing pain, it doesn't happen overnight. Well, it didn't for me anyway and it doesn't for other people as well. So that progress can be very slow, sometimes we can get a bit frustrated. What's happening? Am I really improving? But, how much a day a lot of people use this now, is a good guide for you to see how you're progressing, but it's also a fantastic guide for a member of your team to see, track your progress and so you can keep on track. You know, it's about, perhaps we need to tweak things when things, perhaps, aren't going right. It's about also being resilient. You know, I learned this only a few years ago from a good buddy of mine, he would become a good buddy, a buddy of mine called Keith Meldrum.

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And he I met him at the World Pain Congress over there in Boston in the US in 2018. And he talked about resilience in his presentation, but that term, I've heard of the term I know the term, you know, resilience, but he's sort of, it was like a little idea that germinated. I suppose, it took me a bit of time to get my head around it, you know, and I really agree with him that we need to be a lot more resilient on how we manage it. I think we are. I think the fact that we wake up, people wake up and start thinking, oh, my God, how much pain am I going to be in today, you know, but we keep going. So I think we've got that we've got that resilience, but perhaps we need to channel it in different areas and it's just, you know, some ideas that have come out with, by being more optimistic, having that self-belief, having a bit more control over what we do ourselves and willingness to adapt, the willingness to be flexible. You know, like a willow tree, you know, and it's flexible, in the wind, etc.. Solving problems, you know, we get problems in life and everybody gets problems, but for people with pain we're not very good at it, you know, and also, that problem seems to amplify as we get stressed out. That increases our pain levels. So how can we solve little problems that come along, or big problems? Having that emotional awareness, you know, we all know that pain has an emotional toll on us as well. Having that social support. You know, they talk about a bio psychosocial model. A lot of them talk about bio side of pain management and in psychology side of it. But do they talk about the social side of it, you know? Social can mean, perhaps if you're living in housing conditions that are not good, and all that, all that can actually cause us extra pain as well, being in an unhappy job, etc., That last one there, having a sense of humour. I don't know if you noticed. They call me a mushroom man. Why do they call me the mushroom man? Of course, I'm a fun guy to be with. And I think, you know, we need to have a you know, when we get back on track, when we get back in our driving seat, etc., you know, it's about having fun in life as well. You know, I always ask people, 'When's the last time you bought yourself an ice cream?' What I mean by that is, when was the last time you did something nice for yourself, had a bit of fun, etc. So resilience is one of the key things we need to learn as well. So I also spoke at the beginning about the five key pain self-management skills. Now believe it or not, these didn't come from a healthcare professional. Over the years, I have been asking people that were self managers, what is it, what were the key things that you learned to keep you upright, and go on with your life? And I've been collating them, and these are the five things, I've come up with this about five years ago. And there are five things they want, they said that keep them upright, and help them get on with their life was about setting goals. It's about setting goals, need to set ourselves little short term goals, medium goals, long term goals, but also how are we going to action plan them? How are we going to achieve those goals? It's about, again, it's about pacing our daily activities as a lot of us use our pain as a guide when to stand, stop, do things and whatnot. That's the pain-manager in us, we need to learn pain

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self-management skills where we take a break before we think we need to. Okay, I can go into it, there's lots of videos on the website about a bit more than that, that goes into a little bit more. Look, it's all free on the website. Pacing our daily activities. A really, really big key for us in managing our pain. Keeping active, moving, stretching, exercise. They call it meaningful movement a day. If you find an exercise or something like yoga, tai chi a walking, an activity where you always moving. If you choose one for yourself, you're more likely to keep that up. I know a lot of people say, 'Oh, I don't want to go, I'm not a gym person.' Well, I wasn't back in the day, but I only go down every so, I like going down there, keeps my pain levels down. If you're not a gym person, then you know there's no point in, you know, joining the gym. But it's about finding an activity. There might be like an online class that you could join, a yoga class where you can keep active and stuff like that. Believe you me, keeping an active as well, for me it keeps all my pain levels down, so I can go on with my life. Last one there, knowing what to do if something goes wrong. Listen, you know, things do go wrong in life and and when they do go, it can stress us out, and our pain levels go up and everything. "So, knowing what to do if something goes wrong. Have a setback plan." Okay. Like, well, I think modern day cars now, they don't have spare wheels. You know, me, I've got a van, with a spare wheel. So, if I'm in a punch, I can spot the wheel and get on with of my life, etc.. And get on with my journey and having a setback plan is exactly like that. This is one, I would like you to put this one up, this is one for the fridge. Like, you know, it's about setting a goal, making a plan, get to work, stick to it, reach your goal. Okay, print that one off and take a screenshot of it. And so, you know, stick on your fridge as a reminder, we've got to keep moving forward, we can learn from the past, but we've got to keep moving forward, get on with our lives. This is quite a nice, quite a newish one I've put together recently. It's about motivation and habits. As you can see there. We've got some motivation, it's the orange line there. Motivation like, you know, we get a bit enthused and we take off and stuff like that. Well, motivation is great, you know, we need that motivation to get us going, but it's the habits, it's the daily habits of self managing our pain, that will get us back on track. Okay. I get up in the morning and I've too much of a hot lemon, you know, sliced lemon, put hot water in it. Everyday I'll do that. Then I'll go on and start watching, put the TV on and do exercises and stuff like that. Stretching, get that done, then I'll nip down the gym and do some more down there. That's become a habit for me. Now, I don't go to the gym seven days a week. I just go Monday through Friday. Might have a break during the week as well. Yeah. It's about changing your record as well. You know, I say habits are great, but sometimes you got to make them a bit more interesting as well, you know. So, learning new habits, that'll keep you on track. Coming towards the end. Now, this is one of my favourite sayings, especially from an Australian lady, Sara Henderson. And I think she passed away now. I think she was a sheep farmer. But I love it, you know, and I saw this, back 20 odd

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years ago and it's always in my presentations. "Don't wait for a light to appear at the end of the tunnel, stride down there and light the bloody thing yourself." Now, that's about it. You know, a lot of people say, oh yeah, there's a light at the end of the tunnel where, you know, is it an express train car? No, it's not. You know, it's about, we got to take action, getting traction. And as I said, earlier on, if I can do it, you can do it. So there you go, we've come to the end, now. So, I hope you've found the presentation useful, don't forget, on the right hand side there, you'll see the Australian Pain Management, the Australian version of the Pain Toolkits available to download on painmanagement.org.au If you want to get in contact, you can get in contact via the website, I'm on social media @paintoolkit2, also on Facebook and Instagram. Anyway, hope you found it useful, and keep in contact, Let me know what you thought of the presentation If you need some ideas or whatever, I'm just an email away. Take care. Be cool and groovy. And remember, if I can do it, you can do it. Take care, chao.