

The facts about long-term pain

In its simplest terms, long-term pain is defined as pain which has persisted beyond the expected time for healing, usually for more than three months.

In the UK, it is estimated that around 7.8 million people live with long-term pain (Faculty of Pain Medicine 2013). Long-term pain is complex and impacts on each person in a different way. It is a condition that is poorly understood and this can leave people with long-term pain with many unanswered questions. Sometimes it develops after an injury or illness; sometimes there is no obvious cause.

Pain can be helpful as it is the body's alarm and protective system usually signaling harm or possible injury. For example, when you put your hand on something hot the pain you experience in your hand makes you move your hand away very quickly to protect yourself.

Long-term pain continues when there is no danger, injury or damage being done to the body. In this way, long-term pain has been likened to a 'faulty alarm system' that continues sending pain signals in the absence of danger.

'Hurt doesn't always mean harm'

Living with long-term pain

If you are reading this leaflet then you are probably well aware of the impact of long-term pain. Not only does it cause you physical pain, but it is likely that it has wide ranging implications on a number of different aspects of your life. Below are some of the things that people with long-term pain tell us that it impacts on:

- *Their sense of identity and who they are*
- *Their mood and how they feel*
- *Their social and working life*
- *Their relationships*
- *Their values and goals for the future*

You may look at this list and agree with some of the things above or perhaps you can even add to this list with your own experiences.

Understandably, people living with pain want their pain to be cured and may spend lots of their time, money and effort searching for a cure. However there is not always a cure for long-term pain which can be very difficult to understand or accept.

However The British Pain Society (2013) has shown that pain management programs can help people struggling with long-term pain and improve quality of life and well being.

South Warwickshire Pain Management Programme

What is a Pain Management Programme?

A Pain management programme is designed to help you cope with your pain through education, activity and support. Research shows that people with long-term pain can lead fulfilling lives. The programme aims to help people understand their pain better and to achieve their goals.

The South Warwickshire Pain Management Programme is held once a week over eight weeks. You are expected to commit to all sessions.

Group information

- Held at Leamington Spa Rehabilitation Hospital
- Fridays 10am-12.30pm
- 8 consecutive weekly sessions
- There will be 8-12 others who also suffer with long term pain in the group.
- Sessions last around 2 ½ hours and will be broken up with breaks.

Who runs the programme?

The program is run by Physiotherapists and Clinical Psychologists who specialise in pain management.

Is this approach for me?

The course is recommended for people with long term pain who need help to self-manage. The course is not suitable for people looking for a medical 'cure'. The course will improve fitness levels and help you understand how your thoughts, feelings and behaviors impact upon your pain.

What to expect from the programme?

The course includes education sessions on:

- *Understanding the causes of pain*
- *Performing exercise and activity when in pain*
- *Stress management*
- *Achieving future goals when in pain*
- *Sleep*

Each session begins with expert led discussions and activities. There will be gentle exercise tailored to your ability and sessions on how to relax the mind and body.

If you require any further information please contact:

**Therapy Call Centre:
01926 608068**

South Warwickshire 
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient Information Leaflet: South Warwickshire Pain Management Programme

EQUALITY STATEMENT

At South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust we are fully committed to equality and diversity, both as an employer and as a service provider. We have a policy statement in our Equality Strategy that clearly outlines our commitment to equality for service users, patients and staff:

- You and your family have the right to be treated fairly and be routinely involved in decisions about your treatment and care. You can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. You will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- You have a responsibility to treat other service users, patients and our staff with dignity and respect

Our information for patients can also be made available in other languages, Braille, audio tape, disc or in large print.

PALS

We offer a Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS). This is a confidential service for families to help with any questions or concerns about local health services.

You can contact the service by the direct telephone line on 01926 600 054 by email: Pals@swft.nhs.uk or by calling in person to the PALS Office which is located in the Lakin Road Entrance to the hospital.

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