

LIVING WITH PAIN!

Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also more hard to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: it is easier to say "My tooth is aching" than to say "My heart is broken"...C.S.Lewis

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Pain has been defined by the International Association for the Study of Pain as "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage or described in terms of such damage"
- ❖ Pain is the most common reason for seeing a doctor as at least 100 million American adults suffer from chronic pain
- ❖ Acute pain occurs suddenly and feels sharp such as broken bones, cuts, or burns and usually ends when the injury is healed
- ❖ Chronic pain lasts longer than three months or continues after the injury is healed and causes muscle tension, lack of energy, depression, and low energy
- ❖ Chronic pain affects more Americans than cancer, diabetes, and heart disease combined
- ❖ The experience of pain includes biochemical as well as emotional factors and it can cause anger, withdrawal, hopelessness, anxiety, addiction, and financial problems
- ❖ The costs, both direct and indirect, of pain have been estimated to be from \$125 billion to \$215 billion annually including treatments and disability claims
- ❖ How we deal with pain is often psychologically affected by attention and mood: paying attention amplifies the sensation of pain and mood can affect people's tolerance for pain
- ❖ Living with chronic pain is quite stressful and stress in turn, can cause high blood pressure, heart disease, anxiety, depression, overeating, and muscle tension
- ❖ Benefits of including psychotherapy in pain management include increased self-management of pain, improved coping resources, reduced disability, increasing realistic expectations, and reduced emotional distress
- ❖ Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) has been found to be effective in reducing pain as it deals with attitudes, feelings, coping skills, and feeling in control over one's pain
- ❖ CBT will change unrealistic beliefs and expectations and also includes learning relaxation exercises and teaching coping skills
- ❖ ACT or acceptance and commitment therapy encourages people to accept pain in a non-judgmental manner rather than try to control it; this holistic approach increases psychological flexibility to decrease suffering
- ❖ Other treatments include biofeedback, hypnosis, acupuncture, meditation-mindfulness, progressive muscle relaxation, and guided imagery
- ❖ Since pain is a mind-body issue, the most effective treatment is multi-modal which includes medications, physical therapy, behavior therapy, and psychotherapy

WHAT TO DO TO IMPROVE PAIN MANAGEMENT!

- ❖ Stay active and do the activities you enjoy
- ❖ Know when enough is enough and do not push yourself to do too much
- ❖ Do not isolate yourself and see friends and family to increase your support
- ❖ Find distractions such as walking or watching a movie to diminish your attention to pain
- ❖ Take prescription medication only as prescribed by your doctor
- ❖ Maintain hope and optimism that you can enjoy life despite your pain
- ❖ Seek professional help to lessen unrealistic expectations, stress, depression, pessimism, and anxiety that accompany pain

WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com

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