

SPECIALIZED GROUPS: CHRONIC PAIN & SUBSTANCE ABUSE MANAGEMENT GROUP

TARGET POPULATION

- Patients with a chronic pain disorder complicated by pain medication abuse or dependence issues.
- Patients who have already become abstinent from their pain medication or who are willing to actively taper their pain medication use while participating in the group.
- Patients who are interested in learning alternate, non-medicinal techniques for managing chronic pain.

GOALS

- To explore the effect of chronic pain and substance abuse/dependence on psychological, social, physical and functional well-being.
- To be exposed to and practice a range of alternative pain management techniques.
- To make behavioural and lifestyle changes in order to improve pain management abilities.
- To decrease or stop the use of addictive pain medications.
- To develop relapse prevention techniques.

ACTIVITIES

- Group format allows for education from facilitators, and discussion and support amongst group members.
- Monitoring of patient's abstinence or progress with medication taper.
- Exposure to a range of relaxation techniques.
- Education on various techniques and concepts to enhance pain management skills and prevent relapse: the relationship between medication misuse and pain management, sleep enhancement techniques, exercise/stretching, pacing, work simplification, stress management, communication skills, and styles of thinking.
- Emphasis on completing homework between sessions and daily practice of new coping techniques.
- Group members are expected to attend all ten sessions of this closed group.

OUTCOME

- Patients may or may not become pain-free.
- Patients will have more choices available for management of chronic pain and for preventing relapse.
- Patients will experience improved sense of control over their chronic pain and more satisfying functional abilities despite some level of pain.