

Connecting With Your Patient About Pain

Changing the Conversation about Pain: Pain Care is Everyone's Job



A conversation about medications:

"It seems to me that what we're doing just isn't working. We should explore additional treatments."

"I want to work with you to find a safer pain management plan."



Knowledge of pain:

"We now understand some things about pain differently. And we know that when a person understands pain better, it can actually help in several ways. You may already know a great deal, but would you be willing to watch a video for a few minutes so that we can talk about it and build a plan together?"

"Pain does not equal harm"

"You are sore but safe"

"Your pain system has gotten too good at protecting you."



Sleep:

"One of the most important things you can do to decrease pain is to improve your sleep. Would you like to hear more?"

"Going to bed and getting up at the same time each day can reduce stress on your body and decrease pain"

"As little as 10 minutes of aerobic exercise, such as walking or cycling, can significantly improve nighttime sleep quality, mood, and energy level"



Mood:

"Mood and pain can have a big impact on each other. Can I share some information with you?"

"With pain we tend to do less, socialize less and do fewer things we enjoy. This causes stress which affects our ability to manage pain and makes the pain feel worse."

"Learning tools to manage stress, such as relaxation and mindfulness can help reduce pain."

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Activity and Pacing:

“It’s common to feel that you should avoid doing things when you are painful but actually the opposite is true. Would you like to hear more?”

“We’re used to thinking that, if we feel pain, what we are doing isn’t safe. But actually, when you have pain that lasts a long time, it often means that your pain system has become overly protective.”

“In this situation, the things we do in everyday life aren’t making our condition worse, even if what we are doing causes discomfort. As you begin to increase your activity and your body adapts to new challenges, you will probably feel sore and stiff, which is completely normal. Gentle movement will ease the soreness, over time.”



Nutrition:

“What you eat matters for your pain and should be a key part of our plan together. This is something you can do for yourself every single day. Would you like to hear more?”

“If you think of pain like a fire, a poor diet pours gasoline on the fire, and a good diet pours water on that fire. There are foods we often eat that actually increase our pain through inflammation, like processed foods. And, there are also foods that decrease inflammation and pain such as fresh vegetables. “

“Are there some things you know are not that helpful about your diet? Could you replace a couple of them with better choices?”

“Are there some times that you remember eating a healthier diet? What made that possible?”