
Information from your Patient Aligned Care Team

True or False? Common Pain Beliefs

- **“Pain must be a sign of serious physiological disease or injury.”**

FALSE. Pain is a neurological event that is not highly related to severity of harm. The best intervention for pain is rest and inactivity. For acute injuries, a short period of rest to allow healing to occur is helpful. When pain lasts beyond a normal healing period, it is best to be active to build strength and maintain full use of your body.

- **“Other people must understand how much I hurt.”**

FALSE. Making a point to ensure everyone around you knows how much you hurt and expecting them to really understand is likely to keep you focused on your pain and may lead you to feel disappointed, angry, resentful, and unsupported. It may be better to let a few key individuals know, those who can support you in coping adaptively with your condition, and let the others in your life continue to be unaware.

- **“Having chronic pain means I am broken and a flawed human being.”**

FALSE. Thinking about yourself in unrealistic, negative terms will likely make coping more difficult. It is best to find ways to live life with meaning, grace, and dignity, and to find ways to adapt to the pain.

- **“Pain is ruining my life and will ruin my future.”**

FALSE. Pain is a difficulty you have in your life; however, whether it ruins your life or your future is up to you.

- **“I can’t be happy as long as I have pain.”**

FALSE. Pain can certainly affect your mood but it doesn’t control it. Happiness is a choice and mindset.

- **“If my doctor is recommending nonmedical intervention for my chronic pain, it must mean she does not believe me or thinks I’m exaggerating my pain.”**

FALSE. The state-of-the-art treatment for chronic pain is to use a multidisciplinary approach that combines the expertise of many medical specialties to address multiple factors contributing to pain, such as emotions, thoughts, behaviors, social interactions, learning, and environment. This gives you the best chance of improvement.

- **“The only worthwhile goal is to be pain free.”**

FALSE. Although it is desirable to eliminate the pain, this may be an unrealistic goal. There are other worthwhile goals for improving your quality of life without eliminating the pain.

Reference

Hunter, C. L., Goodie, J. L., Oordt, M. S., & Dobmeyer, A. C. (2009). *Integrated Behavioral Health in Primary Care: Step-by-step Guidance for Assessment and Intervention*, American Psychological Association.