

YOU KNOW YOU ARE A CHRONIC PAIN SUFFERER WHEN...

HANDOUT INSTRUCTIONS

by Gwenn Herman, LCSW-C, DCSW



This handout is given to each new person who attends the support group. They are asked to check off any of the characteristics that apply to their lives. The data can help plan future sessions. Many chronic pain sufferers ask for a copy to show their family members and medical/health providers to “legitimize” what they are going through.

This handout can be used in many ways: to educate professionals, as an assessment tool for new clients, and as a handout to prompt group discussions.

Notes:

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Your pain has changed your personality and you:

- Are easily stressed out.
- Find it hard to focus on tasks.
- Find it hard to start and finish tasks on time.
- Doubt yourself.
- Are short-tempered.
- Are impatient.
- Plan your day according to level of your pain.
- Are hypersensitive to sounds or movements.
- Have feelings of despair because you see no way out from the pain.
- Are angry when seeing others do normal activities.
- Feel depressed when you remember how you used to be.
- Feel guilty when you cannot do a task.
- Feel like you would rather be dead than to go on living with your pain.

Your pain has affected your family or social relationships because:

- You are no longer sociable and rarely spend time with family/friends.
- You spend more time on your own/feel isolated because it's too hard being with others and pretending that the pain does not exist.
- You feel like no one really understands what it's like to be in chronic pain.
- You are constantly asking for help for tasks you used to do easily.
- You are limited or unable to participate in social functions.
- Your sexual relationship has changed with your partner.
- Many friends no longer contact you.
- Your career has been affected and/or you lost your job.
- You start referring to events as before and after my disease/accident.

Pain also affects you because:

- Medically you feel lost and are asked to make uninformed decisions.
- You are told by medical professionals that maybe you are suffering from psychological problems.
- You begin searching on your own for a diagnosis or an answer.
- You look in newspapers and search the Internet for any cure for pain.
- You go to a support group and find out that your feelings are "normal" for being in pain. You no longer have to suffer alone in pain.

If you have some of these symptoms, you are a normal person with chronic pain. If you are not receiving any emotional support, go seek it now.

Don't Stay Alone In Your Pain!