

UNDERSTANDING PAIN: WITH KNOWLEDGE COMES POWER

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH PAIN

No one wants to feel pain. Whether you stub your toe or bang your finger with a hammer, that short burst of pain isn't pleasant. Even more troubling is long-term, chronic pain, also known as persistent pain. This is pain that won't go away no matter how hard you try.

Persistent pain can have a profound effect on daily life. It can disrupt your ability to work, exercise, sleep, and enjoy activities and hobbies.



DID YOU KNOW?

- There's a lot you can do to ease your pain.
- When people understand their pain, it decreases.
- All pain comes from your brain. That means that the brain makes sense of the whole situation and creates a pain response to protect you.
- Pain doesn't always equal harm. Your brain may have become so good at producing pain that it doesn't stop — even when you've recovered from an injury or illness. In a situation like this, don't avoid movement. By starting low and going slow, you can gradually get back to moving and doing more, even with some soreness.
- Stress and pain are closely related. Focus on reducing stress, and changing the way you respond to stress. You will likely find that as your stress reduces, so does your pain!
- You can change your pain, but it is a process. Be patient with yourself!

BRAIN SIGNALS CAN CHANGE YOUR PAIN

Scientists now know that our thoughts and actions affect ALL pain. Everyone's pain picture is a little different. Which of the following are important parts of your *pain experience*?

I am not quite sure what role my brain plays in my pain.

I can't do things that I enjoy because of my pain.

I have trouble managing stress in my life.

I'm scared to move around because of my pain.

Getting restful sleep is difficult for me.

I struggle to maintain a healthy diet.



DIAL DOWN YOUR PAIN

Scientists now know that our thoughts and actions affect how well we recover. Here are some key strategies for retraining your brain and body's pain response:

- Get moving again. Start slowly and keep it up.
- Eat healthfully.
- Learn relaxation techniques and practice them daily. Learn how to reduce stress.
- Connect with others, and be around other people.
- Engage in hobbies you enjoy.
- Get enough sleep, but not too much.

Change can be hard, but you can slowly turn down the volume on pain.

Adapted with permission from Providence Health & Services

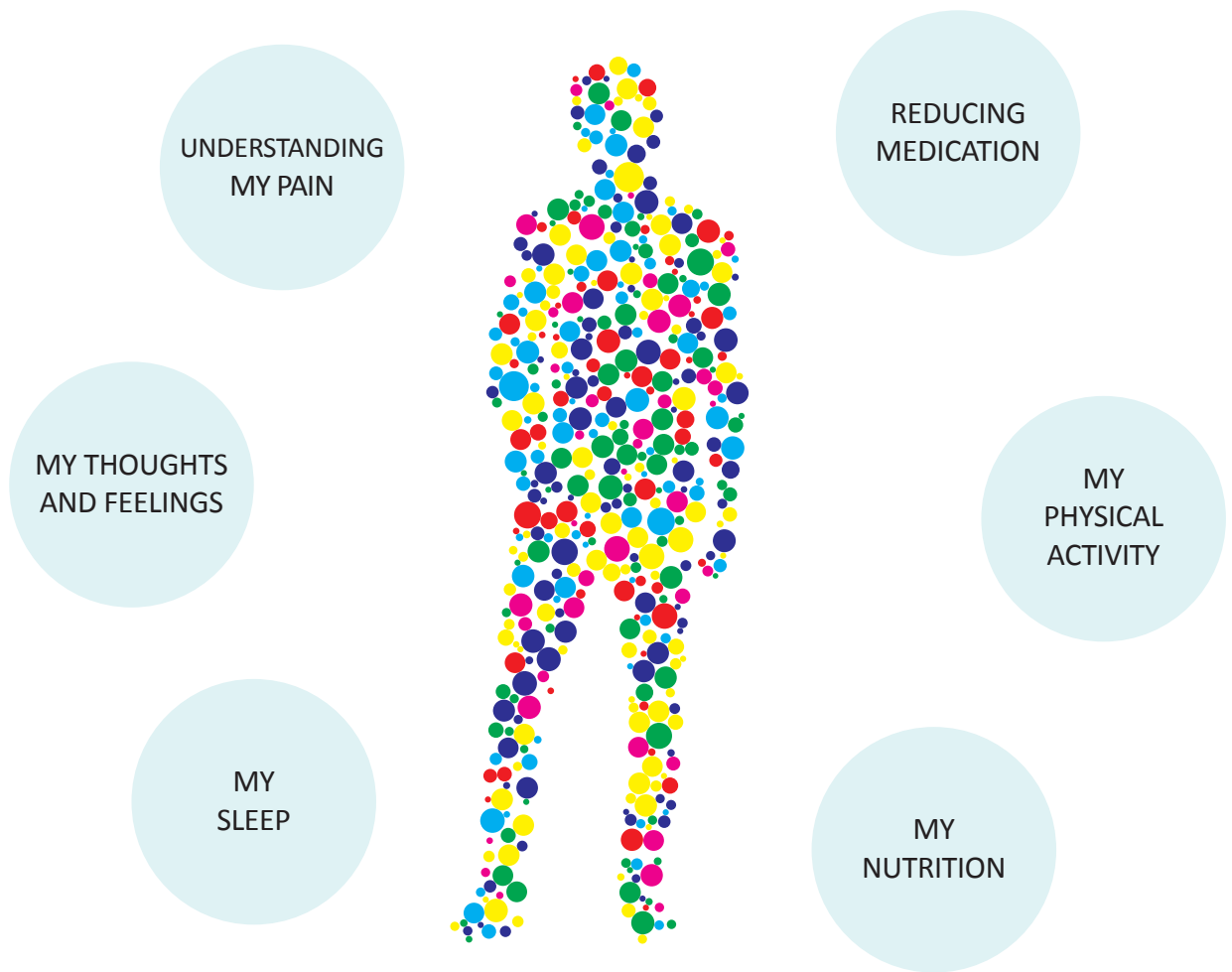
UNDERSTANDING YOUR PAIN STORY



DEVELOPING A PLAN

1. My most important goal around pain is: _____

2. Below, circle the two things that represent some of the biggest part of your pain story:



3. Consider whether you'd like help with these things. If you would, what would you most like help with? _____

