

# Information for treating clinicians:

## Pain education sessions



WorkSafe Victoria has recently introduced a targeted pilot program for injured workers who may be developing a persistent pain condition. Workers with, or at risk of developing, persistent pain may benefit from the addition of pain education sessions with an APA titled pain physiotherapist in combination with your treatment. Your patient can continue to receive treatment from you whilst also engaging in up to 6 sessions with an APA titled pain physiotherapist, which can be delivered face to face or via Telehealth. This is an optional service for an injured worker to assist with their recovery, if they choose to be involved.

APA titled pain physiotherapists have been formally recognised by the Australian Physiotherapy Association as having high level skills and experience in identifying and addressing the key barriers to prevention or recovery from persistent pain conditions. They will focus on addressing common barriers to recovery including fear avoidance and/or boom bust behaviours, passive approaches to recovery and low expectations of recovery and return to work. They can provide up to 6 sessions of one hour duration to support, rather than replace, the treatment of your patient. They can provide pain education, clarify results of imaging, provide specific pacing and graded exposure plans, strategies to address feared movements and assistance to navigate the WorkCover system.

The titled pain physiotherapist will value working with you to provide a collaborative approach and would be keen to discuss the management of your patient with you, if they choose to access these sessions. Please complete the clinician input document if there are key factors you would like them to address.

At this stage only selected workers can access these pain education sessions and so, for now, you are unable to refer others into the program. We would value your thoughts on this.

This project aims to add value to the management of injured workers and your feedback is welcome at any time by emailing:

[anne\\_daly@worksafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:anne_daly@worksafe.vic.gov.au)

This document contains four stand alone documents:

### **1. Guidance on the Provision of Pain Education sessions for Workers**

This is the information given to the titled pain physiotherapist as to what can constitute pain education.

### **2. Information on Pain Education sessions for interested workers**

The worker will have this information before agreeing to participate in the pain education sessions.

### **3. Treating clinician input to the worker's Pain Education sessions**

You can complete and forward this to the titled pain physiotherapist if you wish.

### **4. Feedback from the titled pain physiotherapist on the Pain Education sessions**

The titled pain physiotherapist will return this to you at the completion of the sessions.

## 1. Guidance on the provision of: **Pain education sessions**

The education program should be developed following an assessment of the worker that ascertains the major issues they are facing, their coping style and their level of (health) literacy.

### **Core components:**

#### **An assessment (history taking, screening and physical examination)**

#### **Establishing collaborative goal setting, using SMART goals where appropriate for:**

- The education sessions, including acknowledgment that this is a brief intervention, not a full PMP
- The worker's functioning and valued life roles
- The worker's return to work plans (where appropriate) including claim related time points

#### **Explaining pain:**

- An individually appropriate discussion of the neurobiology of pain including differences between acute and persistent pain; nociceptive, neuropathic and nociplastic inputs to the pain experience and how this influences a person's response to treatments for pain
- What influences our experience of pain -> the biopsychosocial context, including why / how psychosocial interventions can influence our experience of pain
- Why scans and tests often don't explain pain
- Why surgery based solely on scans and tests may not reduce pain

#### **Re-engagement in life roles**

- Graded activity
- Pacing
- Boom and bust behaviour
- Avoidance behaviour
- Pleasant activity scheduling
- Forward planning across a week

#### **What now?**

- Flare up planning – creating a written and readily available plan, ready for when a flare occurs
- Riding (and expecting) the highs and lows
- Understanding time points in a Workers compensation claim
- Ongoing management planning with the worker and their healthcare team

### **Flexible components**

- Communication skills
- Understanding and improving sleep
- Mindfulness
- Relaxation
- Formulations

## 2. Information for interested workers on: **Pain education sessions**

We understand it may be taking longer than you had hoped to recover from your injury. WorkSafe can provide you with additional support if you need help to manage the pain related to your injury.

### **What support is available?**

Up to **six one-hour sessions** with a physiotherapist who has expertise in persistent (ongoing) pain.

### **How will these sessions help me?**

The Physiotherapist will work with you to help you understand what is happening with your pain and to provide you with new ideas, strategies and methods to help your recovery. The sessions do not involve 'hands on' treatment, they are about providing you with the opportunity to ask questions and understand how to better manage your recovery.

To assist with your pain management, it's important the Physiotherapist understands what you are living with. During the sessions they may:

- ask you questions and complete a physical examination, with your consent, to help understand your pain and how it impacts you
- discuss with you the current medical understanding of your pain, and what it means when it's persistent and doesn't go away as quickly as you may have expected
- explain how this relates to your symptoms and your experience, and discuss new ways to manage your pain on a daily basis
- work with you to set goals to help you get back to activities that are important to you, and develop strategies for you to do this without making your pain worse
- work with you to develop a plan for when you experience a pain flare up
- be available to answer any questions you may have about your pain and other treatments that may be useful in your situation.

### **Are these sessions compulsory?**

No, the sessions are voluntary and designed to assist you with managing your pain. You can change your mind at any stage.

### **What if I am already having treatment?**

- We encourage you to take advantage of this extra support in addition to the current treatment you are receiving.
- The expert pain physiotherapist can talk with your current treating health practitioners, including your physiotherapist, General Practitioner (GP) and others, if you would like them to, to share relevant information from the sessions.
- At the end of your sessions, they will provide a summary of the treatment to your treating health practitioners and case manager.

### **I've already tried physiotherapy. How is this different?**

- Physiotherapists work in different ways, some work with people who have just started having pain, others work with people with complicated pain that doesn't seem to budge and continues for a long time.
- The expert pain physiotherapists work with people with this second type of pain and they might have some new strategies in mind that you haven't discussed with your other treating health practitioners.
- The pain physiotherapists are recognised by the Australian Physiotherapy Association for having additional approved training and a lot of experience working with people with persistent pain.

### **How can a physiotherapist help me without hands on treatment?**

- For people with persistent pain, hands on treatment may only help for a few hours, or may be painful.
- Talking and problem solving with another person about how you are managing your day to day life can be very helpful.
- These physiotherapists have worked with many people in similar situations to yourself and can share what they have learned over time with you.

### **I'd like to try these sessions, what do I need to do?**

- Let your case manager know that you are interested in trying the pain education sessions.
- Your case manager will then share with you a list of physiotherapists who have expertise in persistent pain, both male and female, and will highlight those located closest to you.
- The list is limited to physiotherapists with an advanced level of experience and education in working with people with persistent pain.
- Choose your preferred physiotherapist and let your case manager know so they can contact the physiotherapist on your behalf.
- The physiotherapist or their clinic receptionist will make contact with you to introduce themselves and confirm if you prefer in person or telehealth sessions with them. This first contact will occur within one to two weeks.
- Telehealth sessions can be done using a confidential video conferencing program on your mobile phone or computer (which the physiotherapist will organise) or simply via phone call.
- In person attendance sessions will occur at the physiotherapist's clinic.

### **Where can I get more information?**

For more information about pain management sessions contact your case manager.

### 3. Treating clinician input to the worker's Pain education sessions

<b>Worker name:</b>		<b>Claim number:</b>	
<b>The worker may likely benefit <u>MOST</u> from education and discussion with an APA Titled Pain Physiotherapist about:</b>			<b>Tick most appropriate</b>
Goal setting – valued activities, including RTW			
An explanation of pain in relation to their situation			
Creating a formulation to aid in understanding the impact of their pain			
Discussion of the results of their scans			
Boom and bust behaviour			
Avoidance behaviour			
Graded activity			
Pacing			
Forward planning across a week			
Pleasant activity scheduling			
Riding (and expecting) the highs and lows of persistent pain			
Flare up planning – creating a written and readily available plan			
Understanding time points in a Workers compensation claim			
Ongoing treatment / management planning			
Communication skills with clinicians, case managers, family etc			
Understanding and improving sleep			
Mindfulness			
Relaxation			
Other:			
<b>Additional comments:</b>			
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date:</b>		<b>As you can expect to be called by the titled pain physiotherapist please provide your best number and time to be contacted:</b>	

#### 4. Feedback from the titled pain physiotherapist following Pain education sessions



<b>Worker name:</b>		<b>Claim number:</b>	
<b>This worker participated in ____ sessions of Pain Education between ____ and ____ which focused on the following:</b>			<b>Tick as appropriate</b>
Goal setting – valued activities, including RTW			
An explanation of pain in relation to their situation			
Creating a formulation to aid in understanding the impact of their pain			
Discussion of the results of their scans			
Boom and bust behaviour			
Avoidance behaviour			
Graded activity			
Pacing			
Forward planning across a week			
Pleasant activity scheduling			
Riding (and expecting) the highs and lows of persistent pain			
Flare up planning – creating a written and readily available plan			
Understanding time points in a Workers compensation claim			
Ongoing treatment / management planning			
Communication skills with clinicians, case managers, family etc			
Understanding and improving sleep			
Mindfulness			
Relaxation			
Other:			
<b>Additional comments:</b>			
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Contact Details:</b>	