

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH PAIN IN A POSITIVE WAY



Some people continue to feel pain, no matter how many treatments they have had or how many methods they have tried to control it. Despite scientific and medical advances of recent years, total pain relief can be a difficult goal to achieve. So what do you do when the pain can't be completely eradicated?

Learning to live with pain does not mean resigning yourself to it, and it certainly doesn't mean giving up. Learning to live with pain involves a kind of acceptance that has nothing to do with resignation. At a certain point, some people simply make the decision to invest their energy in their quality of life and stop searching – at any cost – for the miracle solution that will make their pain disappear. For one person, acceptance may mean doing what it takes to be happy, despite the pain; for someone else, acceptance may mean adapting to the situation by saying, "I don't enjoy having this pain around, but at least we can learn to live together."

Use your own words to define what "accepting pain" means to you.

Coming to terms with the losses associated with living with chronic pain involves a mourning process similar to what you go through when you lose a loved one. The stages of the process are characterized by shock, denial, the quest for solutions, sadness and finally acceptance. These stages are absolutely normal and understandable, and they do not necessarily follow each other in a strict order. Similarly, the duration of each stage can be different from one person to the next.

The term "acceptance" is often misunderstood.

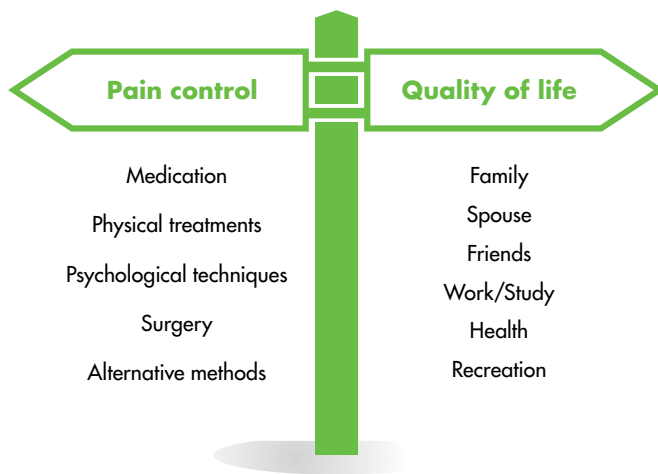
Acceptance is NOT	Acceptance IS
Resigning yourself or giving up	Living an active, engaged life, despite your pain
Relinquishing all hope of getting better	Adopting a realistic attitude about your pain
Abandoning the search for treatments that can improve your situation	Finding a balance between the things you do to relieve your pain and the things you do to improve your quality of life
An end in itself	A process – something that unfolds day after day

Learning to live with pain involves:

- 1) Continuing to do the activities that are important to you.
- 2) Accepting to carry out your activities with a certain amount of pain.

Continuing to do the activities that are important to you

Pain control and quality of life often go hand in hand. Controlling your pain with medication and physical treatments may allow you to be more active and recover as completely as possible.



People who experience persistent pain commonly invest a lot of time and energy in ways to reduce the pain, which is perfectly legitimate. But sometimes, all the efforts that go into relieving the pain can negatively affect quality of life. Continuing to do the activities that are important to you means accepting to do them with a certain amount of pain.

Restoring some direction to your life

Whatever the circumstances, you can give meaning to your life by rediscovering your personal values.

A value is:

- Something personal that is important to you;
- A compass that guides your behaviour;
- A direction, not a destination. Unlike a goal, a value is not something you can ever “achieve.”

What is important to you?

AREA OF LIFE	Importance of this area 0 (not very important) 5 (very important)	Activities that prioritize this area 0 (none) 5 (many)
1. FAMILY AND PARENTING		
2. LOVE LIFE		
3. FRIENDS		
4. WORK/STUDY		
5. HEALTH		
6. RECREATION		

