

## Pain Rehabilitation Executive Program



The Mayo Clinic Pain Rehabilitation Executive Program (PREP) is an intensive 2-day rehabilitation program for patients with chronic pain. The PREP provides an overview of pain management skills, essentially focusing on helping people learn aspects of their pain and life they can control when a cure for the pain is not possible. Ideal candidates are patients who struggle with chronic pain that adversely impacts their functioning and mood, or are experiencing a decline in life, personal, and work responsibilities.

The PREP is part of the Mayo Comprehensive Pain Rehabilitation Center (PRC), which was founded in 1974 to provide rehabilitation services to patients with chronic non-cancer pain. A cognitive-behavioral model serves as the basis for treatment and incorporates relaxation training and stress management, chemical health education, and lifestyle management concepts. The concepts taught at the PREP include learning to differentiate acute and chronic pain, elimination of pain behaviors, minimizing the use of analgesic pharmacotherapies, daily exercise, moderation, relaxation and coping with the emotional aspects of chronic pain. The PREP is provided under the direction of a physician, utilizing members of a multidisciplinary team, which includes clinical nurse specialists, nurses, and therapists with expertise in pain management.

## Goals

The primary goal of the PREP is to improve the quality of life and improve daily functioning for patients who experience chronic pain. Other goals include:

- Learn stress management and relaxation techniques
- Return to work, leisure or social activities
- Learn appropriate use of pain medications
- Minimize pain behaviors
- Create exercise goals
- Learn moderation techniques
- Improve communication in interpersonal relationships
- Reduce reliance on health-care professionals
- Improve ability to self-manage pain

## Chronic Pain and Rehabilitation

Chronic pain refers to pain that does not improve with time. At the PREP, patients often have a variety of chronic pain disorders. Chronic back pain, fibromyalgia, chronic headache/migraines, generalized pain or pain in multiple sites, abdominal pain, and neck pain are common diagnoses. Patients may also have pain resulting from a disease, and some patients have no identifiable cause for the pain they are experiencing. No longer is the pain just a symptom of a disease, illness or injury; it becomes an illness unto itself. The staff work with all types of chronic pain problems, individualizing treatment to the specific needs of each patient.

Regardless of the location or cause of chronic pain, many patients develop difficulty functioning in daily activities. All too often, specific forms of pain treatment, such as medications, injections or surgery, do little to relieve the chronic pain itself, or the long-term suffering and disability that can develop. Some people experience occupational disability, depression, conflict in relationships, drug-related complications and diminished quality of life.

Patients, their families and their doctors can become discouraged and frustrated. When chronic pain intrudes on life, many find themselves overwhelmed by intense, often negative, emotions including panic, fear, grief and anger. Like the pain that causes them, these emotions affect the body, sapping energy and intensifying pain. As a result more time may be spent alone and less time with friends and family. The PREP offers hope and specific assistance in reversing the downward course of chronic pain.

### **Making the Decision to Participate in the PREP Program**

As you consider admission to the PREP, please ask yourself these questions:

- Is my life focused on pain and what I am not able to do, rather than what I am able to do in spite of the pain?
- Are my doctors telling me there is nothing further they can do to relieve the pain? Do they tell me that I need to learn to get on with my life?
- Is my family's well-being affected because of my chronic pain?
- Is my recovery from injury or illness taking much longer than my doctors or I expected?
- Am I not able to commit to social events with family or friends because my pain may be higher that day?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, PREP may be appropriate.

## Treatment Concepts

The PREP provides many types of therapies in an integrated program to help each patient achieve individualized rehabilitation goals. The following are the core components of the program:

### Group Therapy

The PREP program uses a group therapy format, with a combination of informal discussions about how lives have been affected by chronic pain and formal presentations on how to effectively deal with pain. The type of group therapy offered focuses on “how” to get a normal life back. Sessions are designed to help patients recognize and deal with negative changes and emotions, improve relationships and become more effective at managing their pain. Many people find talking with others whose lives and family have been negatively affected by chronic pain to be helpful – particularly when they also support making positive changes to lead a new life.

Group therapy sessions are structured and will focus on a particular theme, pattern of behavior, or area of learning, such as:

- Perfectionism and Unrealistic Expectations
- Cycle of Chronic Pain
- Planning for a Difficult Day
- Personal Responsibility
- Relationships and Chronic Pain

### Stress Management and Relaxation

Stress and pain have a pronounced effect on each other. When a person is in pain, the typical stress of daily life can become much more difficult, often turning common hassles into major obstacles. Stress can also impact pain. The physical reactions to stress such as increased muscle tension can significantly intensify pain. In short, pain causes stress and stress intensifies pain.

Stress management training provided in the PREP program utilizes coping strategies to break the pain-stress cycle. Taking control of stressful situations can modify the bodies ‘fight or flight’ response to stress. One of the most common coping strategies for managing stress is relaxation. Relaxation reduces muscle tension, reduces anxiety, increases self-control and allows a person to feel refreshed and rejuvenated. The program presents a number of different forms of relaxation and encourages daily practice.

## **Chemical Health Information**

The role of opioid medications in treating chronic pain is complex and sometimes controversial. Often long-term use of opioid medications do little to relieve chronic pain and may cause debilitating side effects that limit one's functioning and mobility even greater. When used appropriately, some adjuvant medications can provide benefit in some situations. Benefits and risks associated with the various classes of medications used in chronic pain conditions is reviewed. The vulnerability to begin many different medications are a concern for most patients and their families. Information to discriminate between tolerance, physical dependence, withdrawal, and addiction will be presented. Patients are encouraged to make informed decisions on evidence based medication use for both prescription products as well as supplemental and herbal remedies.

## **Overview of Exercise**

The Pain Rehabilitation Center focuses on reconditioning. As a person gets in better overall shape, learning more efficient ways of moving the body, daily tasks will become easier and the person will simply be able to do more despite the pain. While at the program, information regarding stretching, strengthening, and aerobic conditioning will be presented. Patients will also learn range of motion exercises to add to a daily routine. The exercises are designed to help decrease fear of movement that can be more debilitating than the pain itself.

## **Lifestyle Management**

In the PREP program, a goal is to create a balance between work, social, self-care, and leisure activities. For many patients, pain is controlling the choice of activities done during the day. Many have given up things they once enjoyed or changed daily routines due to the intense pain. Some of the concepts reviewed include balance of daily activities, moderation (over-doing vs under-doing), duration and pacing in completion of tasks, time management, and activity modification.

## **Sleep Hygiene**

Chronic pain has a significant impact on sleep. Sometimes managing pain by spending time in bed or on the couch taking naps can lead to insomnia. Becoming stressed about having difficulty falling asleep or doing too much activity before bed can also make insomnia worse. Because sleep plays an important role in how one manages daily activities, chronic pain and overall mood, the PREP emphasizes education on sleep hygiene techniques. This session is designed to promote sleep efficiency, leading to a more restful night and an active day.

## Family Participation

Chronic pain affects the whole family, not just the person who is in pain. Those affected might include a spouse, partner, sibling, parent, children or others involved in a caring relationship. Family and friends often feel very helpless and frustrated when up against chronic pain and are unsure how to respond to their loved one with chronic pain. Activities of daily life may be altered for the person in pain, resulting in additional responsibilities for others. Problems can arise including increased financial strain, miscommunication, resentment, confusion and isolation. Families have an opportunity to look at better ways to respond to chronic pain as well as learning techniques to care for themselves. The benefit of using a neutral response to pain behaviors instead of an overly care-taking or punitive response is discussed. A positive outcome for family or loved ones would be to learn how to support the person with chronic pain and to minimize how pain may have controlled the family.

Family members or friends are welcome and encouraged to attend throughout the two-day program.



## Information for Patients

The PREP program is a 2-day outpatient program, running 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please dress casually, in clothing that may be worn for light exercise or stretching.

### Insurance

After a referral or evaluation at the Pain Rehabilitation Center, a program date will be scheduled at which time a representative from Mayo Clinic's Patient Financial Services will contact your insurance carrier for an insurance predetermination. You will be contacted to review your insurance benefit for the PREP program, and to confirm the dates of participation. If the financial representatives are able to determine that insurance will not cover the PREP program, a pre-service deposit will be required prior to entering the program. If you have further questions regarding insurance, a financial representative is available to speak with you at (507) 284-0390.

### Lodging

Patients make their own arrangements for lodging. A brochure is available at the Pain Rehabilitation Center front desk, or patients can visit the Mayo Clinic lodging website at <http://www.mayoclinic.org/travel-rst/lodging.html> for a list of options in the area. Mayo Clinic staff are available to assist with general questions about accommodations, but arrangements are the responsibility of the patient.

### Parking

Parking is not provided as part of the program. If parking is needed, a parking ramp is located next to the Generose Building.

### Meals

Patients are responsible for bringing or purchasing lunch, and an hour will be provided for lunch each day. The Saint Mary's Hospital patient cafeteria and the Generose Express have many items available for purchase.

### Referrals

Patients who experience chronic pain that adversely affects daily life, mood or functioning are candidates for the PREP program. Referrals can be made by calling (507) 255-1791.

**The Pain Rehabilitation Executive Program is located at Desk 1-B on the First Floor of the Generose Building on the Saint Mary's Hospital campus of the Mayo Clinic.**

Address:

Pain Rehabilitation Center

PREP Program

1216 Second Street Southwest

Rochester, Minnesota 55905

For questions or to inquiry about an appointment, please call (507) 255-5921.

For more information, please visit our website at  
[www.mayoclinic.org/pain-rehabilitation-center-rst/](http://www.mayoclinic.org/pain-rehabilitation-center-rst/)

