

Persistent (or chronic) pain is a leading cause of disability in the western world. While biological factors (injury and physical illness) play a role, it is now recognised that psychological and social factors impact just as much on the perception, intensity of, and ability to cope with persistent pain. Persistent pain significantly changes the central nervous system, resulting in increased hypersensitivity to pain signals and the experience of referred pain, which leads to escalating levels of pain, frequent flare ups despite seemingly minor triggers, and cognitive difficulties including problems with concentration, memory recall and emotion regulation. All areas of an individual's life are detrimentally effected, including mood, ability to engage in meaningful activities and interpersonal relationships.

The CWRS Occupational Therapy Pain Program assists clients to develop a range of self-management strategies aimed at increasing day to day occupational functioning and quality of life, improving capacity to manage pain and enhancing resilience. An OT's holistic approach to the treatment of pain makes this program suitable for people with persistent pain and/or with secondary psychological impact (depression, anxiety, stress).

Depending on the individual needs and complexity of the client, the OT Pain Management Program averages around 8 sessions. Program content includes:

1. Education and support

Psychoeducation regarding acute versus persistent/chronic pain and the neurobiology of pain, including exploring the impact of biological, psychological and social factors on pain levels and resilience, for example:

- Biological factors – previous injury, physical illness
- Psychological factors – depression, anxiety, stress levels, grief and adjustment
- Social factors – support networks, financial or housing stress, relationship conflict

2. Neuroplastic interventions

Strengthening competing neural pathways aimed at reducing neural hypersensitivity and improve functioning, using techniques such as sensory input, visual imagery and mindfulness.

3. Sensory modulation techniques

Tailored sensory input (including touch, movement, smell and sound) to compete with the pain neural pathways and help change how a person feels by improving mood, stress levels and functioning.

4. Stress management techniques

Strategies including assisted problem solving, breathing exercises, relaxation and gentle, paced movement to assist a person to better manage day to day stress levels and improve resilience.

5. Movement/graded exercise and activity engagement

- Education regarding the importance of steady, graded and paced movement
- Strategies to support and promote regular movement in daily routines

How to refer

Email your referral to admin@cwrs.com.au
or call **0411 360 811**