

Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic, McMaster University Medical Centre  
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## Welcome

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The Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic is at McMaster University Medical Centre. Phone: 905-521-7931

Case Manager \_\_\_\_\_: 905-521-2100, ext. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Conquering pain is simple – it just isn't easy!**

Welcome to: The Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic at McMaster University Medical Centre. The Team at The Intensive Group Program understands your pain problem. An interdisciplinary group offers the expertise of many different health care providers:

- Occupational Therapists
- Pharmacists
- Physicians
- Physiotherapists
- Psychologist
- Psychometrist/Psychotherapist
- Social Workers

Research, as well as our experience, has proven that people can learn to manage their pain and when they do, pain levels decrease.

*"This clinic and the dedicated people that work here never lay claim to make your life pain free. But if you have an open mind and a willingness to learn you can learn just how everyday life can affect your pain levels. With the techniques and knowledge learned here, it just might make your day a little easier; and a little easier is a good thing on a daily basis. My deepest thanks and gratitude to the staff".*

*Mr. Dale J. Hall, Veteran, completed the program in Sept 2013*

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As you begin this program, we want you to know that:

- **It is possible to live a full and productive life with pain.**
- **Pain levels can come down over time, often dramatically.**

We have found that the two biggest barriers to managing pain successfully are:

- 1. Lack of understanding and education**
- 2. Fear**

Once you understand what pain is and come to accept it, you can become less fearful. As your fear decreases, you will be on the road to managing better.

We are honoured to be a part of your journey. We wish to assist you as much as possible and we hope you will tell us how we can help. Together we can make much progress. As the saying goes “This is the first day of the rest of your life!”

Kind regards,

Michael G. DeGroote Pain Clinic Interdisciplinary Team

## About our program

During the program we will be talking about pain and our approach to helping you live with your pain. Coping with chronic pain requires patience, hard work, and time.

There is lots to learn! To get you started, we have answered some common questions that are asked by our patients and their families.

You will also have a case manager for the 4 weeks. This is your contact person. You will meet with your case manager every week to review your goals.

## What are the goals of our program?

Your pain is real. There may be many causes. For a few weeks after an injury, it may be due to inflammation in the part that has been injured. However, sometimes pain lasts longer than it should, even after the original injury has healed. In chronic pain, we know:

- That we are experiencing something unpleasant: both physically and emotionally.
- That chronic pain hurts but usually is not harmful, **not a sign of new injuries.**
- That what we experience is chronic, and is not likely to improve with traditional treatments. We might have to try a different approach to help ourselves.
- At times, the method you use to get rid of the discomfort may provide some relief, but could create further problems. Examples of this include:
  - Using too much medication and stopping physical and social activities. This can make us sick, moody and weak, and not really help the pain.
  - In our program we intend to help you live with pain and get back to a full life. In order to do this, both you and your family will be taught new methods of responding to pain.

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*The goal of the Program will be to increase the amount of activity you can do and to help you maintain activity even when experiencing pain.*

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- Based on the results of the ECG test and physiotherapy assessment, your activity level will be determined. The therapists will start you on an activity that you are able to achieve. From there, the activities are increased to reach your goal.

## **What is the schedule like?**

- Please arrive at **8:30 am** on the first day of your program. Our program typically runs from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm, each day, but may vary. You will be given a schedule of your groups when you arrive.
- The day begins with a group fitness class. Please wear appropriate shoes (no open toes or heels) and clothing.
- You will have a weekly Team Meeting to review your progress and discuss your goals for the week ahead with the entire team and staff.
- You are expected to come every day. You are expected to attend all meetings and activities regardless of how much pain you have, however, your involvement can be modified on days of increased pain.
- Please be on time! Being late means you miss valuable information and it is disruptive to others. If you are late for relaxation, do not enter, as you will disturb the session in progress.
- Please let your case manager know if you are going to be late and cannot attend any session or appointment. We assume that you will not take any time away from the program for any reason other than an emergency or if you have a medical appointment with a specialist.

## **Are my family and friends a part of the program?**

It is necessary for the important people in your life to be involved in some way while you are in the program. They have also been impacted by your experience. You will be expected to share what you are learning with your important people. Discussions with staff and family members can occur that will help provide support, education and strategies which can help to make it easier to follow through with the program at home.

## **Do I have to participate in groups?**

- Groups may be a new experience for you. It can be a rewarding experience as we learn from each other. All information exchanged between staff and group participants throughout the program is confidential. Please be respectful of all group members.
- There are group outings that are a part of your program.
- We ask that all devices are off during groups.
- There is no lying down during groups (except during relaxation training.)
- If you are uncomfortable in a group, please let us know of any concerns you have at any time.
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## **What kind of clothes do I need to wear?**

- Wear comfortable clothing and running shoes as you will be doing fitness activities. In the winter, bring comfortable shoes to be worn inside.
- You will be going to a local pool on Wednesdays. Bring a bathing suit and towel.
- There are lockers and space for coats, boots and personal items. Lockers are not large — bring only what you need such as medications, purse, phone.

## **What kind of activities will I be doing?**

### **Leisure and Activity Sessions**

- We encourage you to bring any leisure items such as hobbies, reading materials, crafts that you enjoy now or have in the past. You will have the opportunity to pursue these in our “Functional/Recreational Activity Program. An occupational therapist can help find ways for you to return to these activities if you have stopped them due to pain.
- We also encourage you to pursue leisure and recreational activities in the evenings and on weekends such as walking, bowling, swimming, movies, and hobbies. Our staff can help you with organizing and achieving these activity goals.
- Although the purpose of the program is not to cure the pain, some methods may be taught or used which are helpful to lessen pain. These methods include relaxation training and fitness classes.

## **Is lunch provided?**

- You will have access to a fully equipped kitchen during your program. This is where the kitchen functional activities will take place. Groceries are ordered each week and patients are expected to prepare their own lunch daily.
- You are welcome to bring and store your lunch in the kitchen.
- Food allergies and sensitivities are discussed with your case manager.
- Please keep the kitchen neat and tidy.

## **Do I take my own medications?**

Yes. You are responsible to take your own current medications. You will meet with our pharmacist, during the first week of the program to discuss your medications. If needed, you may meet with the pharmacist at other times during the program.

***\*\*Please be sure that you make arrangements to have enough medication for the duration of your program\*\****

We can still be helpful about your medications and we will:

- Review your medications and help you understand their role in your condition as well as their side effects.
- Help you decide if you should decrease or stop any medication. If this is the case, we will provide a safe environment to do so. Many people have an improved sense of well-being when they stop some medication.
- Provide a summary with clear directions about our view and the role of medications for your conditions. We will provide this summary to your doctors when you have completed the program. Please feel free to discuss this with our pharmacist.

## **Electronic devices**

Please turn off devices during groups, relaxation times, and meetings with health care providers.

## **Smoking (tobacco or cannabis recreational or prescribed)**

Hamilton Health Sciences and McMaster University Campus is smoke free. Smoking is not allowed anywhere on the grounds, including the parking lots, garages and vehicles. Please ask your case manager about the nearest smoking areas on city property.

## **Fragrance restricted**

Hamilton Health Sciences is a fragrance restricted hospital. Please do not wear or bring perfume, cologne, aftershave, scented hair spray or other scented products.

## **Parking**

There are various parking options available. Please refer to the parking information sheet provided in your package.