

**Clinical Practice Guideline:** **Chronic Pain Management: Resilience as a Clinical Tool**

**Date of Implementation:** **February 20, 2014**

**Product:** **Specialty**

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**GUIDELINES**

The purpose of this American Specialty Health – Specialty (ASH) Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) is to assist the practitioner with implementing plans to help patients manage chronic pain through resilience. Any chronic pain conditions and treatments outside of the scope of the practitioner should be referred to an appropriate health care professional.

**INTRODUCTION**

Chronic pain is a complex physiological phenomenon which has profound physical, emotional, and cognitive effects. Pain’s severity, duration, response to treatment, and disabling consequences vary from person to person. Other health conditions that often occur as a consequence of chronic pain include depression, stress, pain catastrophizing, generalized anxiety, and disordered eating - all of which contribute to the complexity and severity of chronic pain management.

The American Pain Society reports that pain is often undertreated, which has the long-term effects of poorer health outcomes and increased costs for medical care. In order to improve health outcomes, the health care practitioner can incorporate appropriate measures into the patient assessment and management plan to more effectively prevent pain conditions from becoming chronic and manage chronic pain conditions when they do occur. Currently, focus is shifting from pain assessment to functional assessment and improvement. Functional abilities can be measured more objectively and often are more directly related to a patient’s quality of life and satisfaction. Comprehensive treatment of chronic pain must address multiple aspects affecting a person experiencing pain, such as physical, psychological, spiritual and socioeconomic factors. Inter-disciplinary approaches to pain management which can more effectively address these issues include therapeutics from Western medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, chiropractic treatment including manual manipulative therapy, acupuncture, massage therapy, biofeedback, vocational and recreational therapy, and psychological counseling, among others. Collaboration amongst patients, caregivers, health professionals and other supportive resources is vital to effective pain management with functional improvements.

When helping patients manage their chronic pain, the practitioner can utilize psychological concepts which focus on building resilience in addition to physical and medicinal pain

1 management methods. Resilience is the process of positive adaptation when encountering  
2 adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. Individuals with chronic  
3 pain, who develop resiliency, recognize the value of remaining positive, accepting help,  
4 and learning to cope with their pain. It is important to note that being resilient does not  
5 mean that a person doesn't experience difficulty or distress. In fact, the path to resilience is  
6 likely to involve considerable emotional distress because substantial emotional and  
7 physical disparities need to be addressed in this process. Being resilient means that a person  
8 doesn't allow difficulty or distress to keep them from moving forward. Everyone possesses  
9 the ability to be resilient - it involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned  
10 and developed in anyone.

## 11 **OVERVIEW**

12 Chronic pain affects more individuals than does cancer, heart disease, and diabetes  
13 combined. Yet, treatment options remain remarkably limited. Often, highly effective  
14 psychotherapeutic approaches are limited by many barriers such as access, reimbursement,  
15 and acceptability; however, according to Hassett and Finan (2016), resilience-based  
16 positive activity interventions could offer a promising alternative. These interventions are  
17 engaging, non-stigmatizing, and do not require a mental health professional for their  
18 provision. Pain care should be tailored to each patient's experience (e.g., patient history,  
19 current pain levels, functionality, psychosocial factors, etc.). When addressing pain in its  
20 early stages, practitioners can carefully craft pain management strategies that help prevent  
21 acute pain from becoming a chronic illness. For the patient with chronic pain, health care  
22 providers must foster care that is patient centered, comprehensive, and interdisciplinary.  
23 The practitioner can apply the concepts of neuroplasticity (the ability of the nervous system  
24 to reorganize and restructure its functions) by focusing on resilience as a positive  
25 adaptation for the patient in chronic pain management.  
26

## 27 **BACKGROUND**

28 The acute pain process usually initiates with an injury to body tissues. Nociception refers  
29 to the process by which information about tissue damage is relayed to the central nervous  
30 system. Tissue injury causes cells to break down and release various byproducts and  
31 mediators of inflammation (e.g., prostaglandins, substance P, bradykinin, histamine, and  
32 cytokines). Some of these mediators activate nociceptors to send nerve impulses to the  
33 central nervous system. Most of these substances can also sensitize nociceptors over time,  
34 increasing their excitability and discharge frequency and contributing to the central  
35 hypersensitivity that characterizes the chronic pain state. Neuropathic pain of non-  
36 nociception origin can be caused by injury or dysfunction of the peripheral nervous system.  
37 With neuropathic pain, the nerve fibers themselves might be damaged, dysfunctional, or  
38 injured. These damaged nerve fibers send incorrect signals to other pain centers.  
39

40  
41 In some cases, however, chronic pain may exist with no apparent cause. Pain which exists  
42 without an apparent cause is known as idiopathic pain. Idiopathic pain, although of

1 unknown origin, is real. It is often more difficult to treat than nociceptive and neuropathic  
2 pain because its pathophysiology is uncertain.

3  
4 Chronic pain is recognized as pain that extends beyond the period of healing, enduring for  
5 at least three months, with levels of identifiable tissue pathology that are often insufficient  
6 to explain the presence and/or extent of the pain. The pain disrupts sleep, social  
7 interactions, work, school and/or other usual activities of living. The pain ceases to serve a  
8 protective or adaptive function, but instead degrades health and functional capability.  
9 Although injury may often lead to chronic pain, factors other than the original cause may  
10 perpetuate pain. For instance, environmental and affective factors can exacerbate and  
11 perpetuate chronic pain, leading to disability and maladaptive behavior. The chronic pain  
12 state may originate from nociceptive pathways, neuropathic pathways, or both and can be  
13 caused by injury, malignant conditions, or a variety of chronic conditions such as back  
14 pain, migraine headaches, diabetic neuropathy, dental and orofacial pain, arthritic pain,  
15 musculoskeletal disorders, and fibromyalgia. Alternatively, it may be idiopathic with an  
16 unknown pathology.

17  
18 As a part of pain management interventions, the practitioner can use the potential for  
19 neuroplasticity to serve as a positive adaptation process by building coping ability and  
20 improved functions through resilience, Clinical evidence has shown that neuronal function  
21 may be altered over time (Melzack, 2001). Neuroplasticity can be broadly defined as the  
22 ability of the nervous system to respond to intrinsic and extrinsic stimuli (i.e., injuries or  
23 other pathological events) by reorganizing its structure, function and connections. This  
24 reorganization of nervous system function influences perceptual experiences.  
25 Neuroplasticity which results in central or peripheral sensitization leads to chronic pain.  
26 However, if central reorganization and neuroplastic changes of the pain transmitting  
27 pathways and pain modulation centers impart a positive adaptation; this would be  
28 considered a positive neuroplasticity process. The recognition that such positive and  
29 negative neuroplastic adaptive changes can occur is essential to understanding the chronic  
30 pain syndromes that persist and often cause severe dysfunction. Evidence suggests that, as  
31 individuals learn to modify their cognitive representations and behavioral responses to  
32 distressing stimuli, widespread changes occur in frontal cognitive control systems and in  
33 limbic system activation (Cramer et al., 2011).

34  
35 Cortical plasticity related to chronic pain can be modified by behavioral interventions that  
36 provide feedback to the regions of the brain which were altered by somatosensory pain  
37 memories to prevent or reverse maladaptive memory formation. Jensen et al. (2007)  
38 conducted a study on patients ( $n=18$ ) with complex regional pain syndrome type I (CPRS-  
39 I) utilizing neurofeedback (EEG biofeedback) training as a mediator. The patients were  
40 administered numerical rating scale measures of pain intensity at their primary pain site, as  
41 well as pain at other sites and other symptoms, before and after a thirty (30) minute  
42 neurofeedback training session. There was a substantial and statistically significant pre- to

1 post-session decrease in pain intensity at the primary pain site on average, with 50% of the  
2 study participants reporting changes in pain intensity that were clinically meaningful. The  
3 findings suggest that many patients who receive neurofeedback training report significant  
4 and substantial short-term reductions in their experience of pain, as well as improvements  
5 in a number of other pain- and non-pain-specific symptoms. Additional research to further  
6 examine the long-term effects and mechanisms of neurofeedback training for patients with  
7 chronic pain is necessary to gain further insight into this process.

8  
9 Moreover, appropriate early treatment of acute pain conditions can help to prevent the  
10 perpetuation of the condition to a chronic state. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) studies  
11 at Northwestern University (Apkarian, 2013) revealed abnormalities in the structure of the  
12 brain which predispose people to develop chronic pain after a lower back surgery. The  
13 research group determined that chronic pain does not necessarily stem from the origin of  
14 the injury; it may also be triggered following an injury by pre-existing central nervous  
15 system axon abnormalities. Based on this outcome, the research team recommends that  
16 patients receive all necessary treatment within the early stages of pain onset to help prevent  
17 the development of chronic pain syndromes.

### 18 19 **Resiliency Evidence and Research**

20 Resilience is governed by perceived self-efficacy: people's beliefs about their capabilities  
21 to produce effects. According to Bandura (2004), perceived self-efficacy acts as a central  
22 mediator of post-traumatic recovery. Bandura et al. (1997) carried out a randomized  
23 controlled trial to research opioid and non-opioid mechanisms in perceived self-efficacy  
24 and pain control. Subjects ( $n=72$ ) were taught cognitive methods of pain control, were  
25 administered a placebo, or received no intervention. Their pain tolerance was then  
26 measured at periodic intervals after they were administered a saline solution or naloxone,  
27 an opioid antagonist that blocks the effects of endogenous opioids. Training in cognitive  
28 control strengthened perceived self-efficacy both to withstand and to reduce pain; whereas  
29 placebo medication enhanced perceived efficacy to withstand pain without reducing the  
30 level of pain. Perceived self-efficacy did not change in the absence of an intervention.  
31 Regardless of condition, the stronger the perceived self-efficacy to withstand pain, the  
32 longer subjects endured mounting pain stimulation. The findings provide evidence that  
33 attenuation of the impact of pain stimulation through cognitive control is mediated by both  
34 opioid and non-opioid mechanisms. Intervention subjects administered naloxone were less  
35 able to tolerate pain stimulation than were their saline counterparts. The stronger the  
36 perceived self-efficacy to reduce pain, the greater was the opioid activation. Intervention  
37 subjects were also able to achieve some increase in pain tolerance even when opioid  
38 mechanisms were blocked by naloxone, which is indicative of a non-opioid component in  
39 cognitive pain control.

40  
41 Examination of the impact of interpersonal variables on pain catastrophizing has shown  
42 that psychological resilience has a positive impact on pain catastrophizing and pain

1 willingness (a measure of the degree to which one focuses on the pain – either avoiding or  
2 attempting to control it). Richardson, et al. (2010) carried out an observational study to  
3 investigate the effects of both catastrophizing and the pain willingness component of  
4 acceptance on interference for patients ( $n=67$ ) experiencing chronic low back pain in daily  
5 activities while completing a Stroop-like task during experimentally induced ischemic  
6 pain. The Stroop-like task, which is essentially the Stroop procedure (an established  
7 measure of concentration and attention), required the test subjects to state the ink color of  
8 printed words that spell a dissonant color. The Pain Catastrophizing Scale was used to  
9 assess the degree of pain catastrophizing, and acceptance was measured using the 20-item  
10 Chronic Pain Acceptance Questionnaire. This study concluded that pain willingness factor  
11 of acceptance and catastrophizing both appear to be strong predictors for self-reported pain  
12 interference; however, pain willingness shows a stronger effect and attenuates the negative  
13 impact of catastrophizing on task functioning. This study demonstrated that the positive  
14 adaptation process associated with psychological resilience has a direct effect on  
15 improvement of self-reported pain levels.

16  
17 Ramirez-Maestre (2012) carried out a cross-sectional study to analyze the relationship  
18 between resilience, acceptance, coping, and adjustment to spinal chronic pain. The sample  
19 was composed of 299 patients (138 men and 161 women) suffering from chronic spinal  
20 pain. The findings indicated that higher levels of resilience were associated with higher  
21 levels of pain acceptance and active coping strategies. Additionally, active coping and  
22 acceptance were found to be associated with higher levels of adjustment to pain. It was  
23 concluded that positive personality characteristics could play a crucial role in patient  
24 adjustment. Therefore, health care practitioners should take into account the positive path  
25 to improved capacity in order to better understand the chronic pain experience.

26  
27 A literature review to describe the evidence regarding the roles of beliefs, expectations,  
28 pain coping, and depression in Whiplash-Associated Disorders (WAD) was conducted by  
29 Carroll et al. (2011). There was good support from two large ( $n = 6,015$  and  $1,032$ )  
30 population-based longitudinal cohorts that expectation to recover is an independent  
31 predictor of actual WAD recovery. Virtually all studies (with several being large cohort  
32 studies) that examined depression and subsequent WAD recovery provided support for this  
33 relationship. One large population-based study ( $n = 2,320$ ) showed that frequent use of  
34 “passive” pain coping strategies (utilized within the first 6 weeks post-injury) has an  
35 independent association (after controlling for relevant confounders) with slowed recovery,  
36 especially when the injured individuals also had depressed mood. In another study ( $n = 130$   
37 presentations to emergency departments), those endorsing “adaptive coping” strategies to  
38 deal with their pain within one (1) month of their injury (e.g., high levels of activity,  
39 receiving support from significant others) had a better WAD prognosis. It should be noted,  
40 however, that only 14 of the participants reported no pain at follow-up; given that the two  
41 multivariable regression analyses included six and nine (respectively) variables in the

1 models, using the minimum of 10 outcome events per variable rule, those estimates of  
2 effect may be unstable and should be viewed with caution.

3  
4 There is also evidence from one large population-based study ( $n = 2,280$ , with appropriate  
5 multivariable analysis) and one smaller study ( $n = 82$ , with only 27 outcome “events”) of  
6 patients presenting to emergency departments that feelings of helplessness, which suggests  
7 passive coping, predict slowed WAD recovery. The sample size of the latter study did not  
8 permit thorough assessment of aggregate confounding and findings should be interpreted  
9 cautiously. Given the limited number of large studies, one cannot draw conclusions with a  
10 high degree of certainty. However, this systematic review concluded that the current best  
11 evidence suggests that coping appears to be important in Whiplash-Associated Disorders  
12 prognosis.

### 13 14 **Assessment of Chronic Pain**

15 The pain a patient feels is a subjective experience and is difficult to quantify objectively in  
16 clinical practice. When assessing a patient with chronic pain, appropriate screening  
17 questionnaires may be used to evaluate pain levels and other patient parameters such as  
18 depression, catastrophizing, functional capacities and quality of life. It is important to  
19 screen for and identify comorbid medical or psychosocial conditions (e.g., depression,  
20 substance use disorder, alcohol use disorder) that may affect the pain or its management.  
21 Comprehensive pain assessment includes (but is not limited to) pain location and quality,  
22 aggravating and alleviating factors, and previous treatments and their effectiveness. This  
23 is necessary to establish a diagnosis, determine the impact of pain on physical and  
24 emotional function, and to formulate an appropriate treatment plan. Examples of pain  
25 assessment, functional assessment, and psychological assessment tools include, but are not  
26 limited to (ICSI, 2011):

- 27 • Brief Pain Inventory (BPI)
- 28 • McGill Pain Questionnaire
- 29 • Physical Functional Ability Questionnaire (FAQ5)
- 30 • Oswestry Low Back Disability Index
- 31 • PHQ-9
- 32 • The Pain Catastrophizing Scale (PCS)

33  
34 After the chronic pain assessment, the healthcare practitioner will establish a pain  
35 management plan that can include strategies for treating the patient and any needed  
36 referrals to other practitioners or resources.

### 37 38 **Recognition of Chronic Illness Behaviors**

39 All chronic illnesses have the potential to limit the functional status, productivity, and  
40 quality of life of people who live with these conditions. The chronic illness may be more  
41 effectively treated by taking an integrated approach to treatment: addressing the physical,  
42 social, and psychological toll of the illness. Thus, the practitioner should examine the

1 behaviors which the patient is exhibiting in conjunction with the primary physical  
 2 symptoms. A chronic illness behavior may be identified as helpful if it contributes to (and  
 3 does not worsen, delay, or impede progress toward) improvement or maintenance of a  
 4 patient’s physical, mental, or social well-being. Conversely, a behavior can be construed  
 5 as unhealthy if it worsens or delays/impedes progress toward improvement or maintenance  
 6 of a person’s physical, mental, or social well-being. Based on the evidence,  
 7 healthy/unhealthy chronic illness behaviors include, but are not limited to the behaviors  
 8 outlined in Table 1 and Table 2.  
 9

<b>TABLE 1: HEALTHY CHRONIC ILLNESS BEHAVIORS</b>
Healthy ways of dealing with grief, sadness and sense of loss, such as seeking support from friends, family members, or a support group.
Resilience
Self-efficacy competency
Healthy use of life skills
Healthy self-image
Healthy resource acquisition
Medication and treatment adherence
Sense of well-being
Optimal quality of life
Social support seeking (practical or emotional)
Empowerment
Healthy adaptation to a change in health status
Transformative change
Healthy adaptation to end of life

10

<b>TABLE 2: UNHEALTHY CHRONIC ILLNESS BEHAVIORS</b>
Sadness, low mood
Denial and lack of ability to adapt
Resistance

<b>TABLE 2: UNHEALTHY CHRONIC ILLNESS BEHAVIORS</b>
Poor demonstration of life skills
Self-efficacy incompetency
Powerlessness
Stigma of diagnosis
Social isolation
Poor self-image
Poor body image
Guilt/self-blame
Self-destructive behavior
Deficits in adherence and transformation
Unhealthy adaptation
Poor sense of well-being
Sub-optimal quality of life
Secondary gain (special rights and privileges achieved from the perpetuation of the chronic condition. The patient willingly accepts this role, although is not entirely conscious of his/her actions.)
Sub-optimal work/occupation performance
Maladaptive family and other interpersonal relationships
Suboptimal adaptation to end of life

1  
 2 The severity of a health condition from a medical perspective does not solely determine  
 3 whether or not a patient will display unhelpful chronic illness behaviors. Upon receiving a  
 4 diagnosis of a chronic illness, one patient may fall into maladaptive behaviors, such as  
 5 social isolation, and low self-image, while another patient, diagnosed with the same  
 6 condition may exhibit positive coping behaviors. The circumstances are unique to each  
 7 patient and the pain management plan should be based upon the individual patient scenario.

8  
 9 **Chronic Pain Treatments**

10 **Pharmacologic**

11 Pharmacologic administration is the most frequently prescribed treatment for pain. Almost  
 12 half of the patients suffering from pain choose non-prescription analgesics for their initial



1 pain relief. Pharmacologic pain treatments typically include non-opioid analgesics (e.g.,  
 2 acetaminophen, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications like diclofenac or  
 3 celecoxib), opioid analgesics (e.g., morphine, hydromorphone, fentanyl, tramadol), and  
 4 adjuvant medications including corticosteroids, beta-blockers, muscle relaxers, anti-  
 5 convulsants, alpha-lipoic acids, NMDA (N-methyl-D-aspartate) antagonists and  
 6 antidepressants.

### 7 8 **Non-pharmacologic**

9 Non-pharmacologic methods are often used in addition to pharmacologic treatment. Non-  
 10 pharmacologic modalities may also be the primary treatments depending on the patient's  
 11 circumstances. Treatment regimens generally involve a multidisciplinary approach,  
 12 utilizing modalities such as education, nutrition, exercise, and physical, occupational and  
 13 behavioral therapy. Physical therapy usually focuses on reconditioning, stretching  
 14 exercises and pain reducing physical modalities (such as heat, ice, transcutaneous electrical  
 15 nerve stimulation [TENS], and oscillatory movements). Occupational therapists work on  
 16 proper body mechanics, and helping the patients improve their levels of activity in  
 17 household chores, work and leisure. Other non-pharmacologic therapies include  
 18 chiropractic treatments, acupuncture, massage therapy, and some treatments in  
 19 naturopathy. Psychological modalities include cognitive/behavioral techniques to help  
 20 patients improve their pain coping abilities, stress management education, and methods to  
 21 reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety that often accompany chronic pain.

### 22 23 **Resilience- Based Treatment Focus**

24 Resilience based cognitive techniques may be applied as a psychological coping strategy.  
 25 Studies have identified a range of psychosocial factors that promote successful adaptations  
 26 to a stressful condition, which include coping strategies, positive emotionality, cognitive  
 27 reappraisal (re-evaluation of adverse experiences in a more positive light), the presence of  
 28 social supports, and a sense of purpose in life, among others (Reich, 2010).

29  
30 Resilience is an important life skill. The practitioner can help the patient to develop the  
 31 ability to think in a healthy manner through developing positive life skills. Life skills can  
 32 make it easier to cope with life's challenges and can help the patient make the most out of  
 33 his/her life and health. More specifically, life skills help make stress manageable, improve  
 34 functioning in important areas of life, and restore confidence and sense of self-efficacy.  
 35 Listed in Table 3 are some life skills that evidence shows are fundamental to a healthy life.

36  
**TABLE 3: LIFE SKILLS**

Skill	Description
Resilience	<b>Resilience is the ability to overcome a challenge.</b> It is an inner strength, a power to overcome obstacles. It allows people to push forward and adapt when things do not go as planned.

<b>TABLE 3: LIFE SKILLS</b>	
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Description</b>
	Resiliency does not lessen the number of challenges people may face, but it can equip them to better cope with challenges as they arise.
<b>Self-efficacy</b>	<b>Self-efficacy is the belief that people are capable of doing something.</b> It helps people to believe they can use their skills and knowledge to perform a task. They are sure that they can do what they need or want to do. Self-efficacy can affect how motivated people are and what they choose to do. When people have strong self-efficacy, they are more likely to take action, work hard, and stay committed - even in the face of a challenge or temporary setback.
<b>Value Identification</b>	<b>Identifying values means identifying what matters most to people.</b> These are the things people care deeply about; the things they would not want to live without. Values are a critical part of an individual’s identity. When people know their core values, core values can drive everything they do.
<b>Goal Setting</b>	<b>Goal setting allows people to choose what they want in life and how they plan to achieve it.</b> It includes creating a step-by-step plan to reach those goals. Goal setting can guide day-to-day actions and help change habits. It can help people control and change their thoughts, actions, and responses. Goal setting can also help to overcome obstacles which impede the patient from reaching goals.
<b>Organizing</b>	<b>Being organized is taking account of all that is going on in a patient’s life and developing a method that helps that patient manage the load.</b> Being organized can make it easier to do what needs to be done. It can help to manage an individual’s time and energy. Organization can help empower people to reach their goals. It can also help to avoid obstacles created by disordered habits or lifestyles.
<b>Problem Solving</b>	<b>Problem solving is a skill that lets people find a way to move forward in areas where they may be stagnating.</b> This could be a decision that needs to be made, a situation that is uncomfortable, or a question without an answer. When people

<b>TABLE 3: LIFE SKILLS</b>	
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Description</b>
	work to solve problems, they take a critical look at what can be done and then devise a plan to do it. Problem solving can help people assess a situation, identify what can be changed and empower them to take control. It can help people create plans, overcome barriers, and reach their goals.
<b>Time Management</b>	<b>Time management is the ability to prioritize, plan, and act on what needs to be done.</b> People can choose to spend their time in a way that helps them get the most out of each day. Time management can help the patient take control of his/her time. It can help to balance the tasks that need to be done with the tasks that the patient would like to do.
<b>Resource Acquisition</b>	<b>Resource acquisition is knowing how and where to find the tools, information, and support to meet peoples’ needs.</b> This helps people to assess what they have relative to what is lacking and enables them to take action to acquire what they need. Finding the right resources can help them solve problems, make informed decisions, and work toward accomplishing their goals. It helps to free up time and energy to work on what needs to be done.
<b>Transformative Change</b>	<b>Transformative change is a shift which aligns ones thoughts and actions with what matters most.</b> It is a new way of thinking that happens once people become aware of and are guided by their core values and beliefs. Over time, people can start to see the results of this shift in their daily life. Transformative change can help people get the most out of their lives, relationships, and experiences.

1  
 2 The American Psychological Association (see *Additional Resources*) recommends several  
 3 tips for coping with chronic pain. The practitioner may use the following patient  
 4 information as a guideline for discussion, education, and home use in the clinical scenario  
 5 in order to help the patient attain a resilient outlook:

6  
 7 **Stress Management:** Emotional and physical pains are closely related, and persistent  
 8 pain can lead to increased levels of stress. Educate the patient that learning to deal with  
 9 stress in healthy ways can position him/her to cope more effectively with their chronic

1 pain. Eating well, getting plenty of sleep and engaging in approved physical activity  
2 are all positive ways for the patient to handle stress and pain.

3  
4 **Constructive Thoughts:** Positive thinking is a powerful tool. Educate the patient that  
5 by focusing on the improvements that he/she is making (i.e., the pain is less today than  
6 yesterday or feeling better than he/she did a week ago) can make a difference in  
7 perceived comfort level. For example, have the patient imagining a scenario in which  
8 he/she reminds oneself that he/she is comfortable instead of considering him/herself  
9 powerless and thinking that he/she absolutely cannot deal with the pain, so that the  
10 patient may work toward finding a healthy way to deal with it and living a productive  
11 and fulfilling life.

12  
13 **Becoming Active and Engaged:** Encourage the patient to distract him/herself from the  
14 pain by engaging in enjoyable activities which highlight the positive aspects of life.  
15 Educate the patient that self-isolation fosters a negative attitude and may increase the  
16 perception of pain. Recommend that the patient consider finding a hobby or a pastime  
17 that makes him/her feel good and to connect with family, friends or other people via  
18 his/her local community groups or the internet.

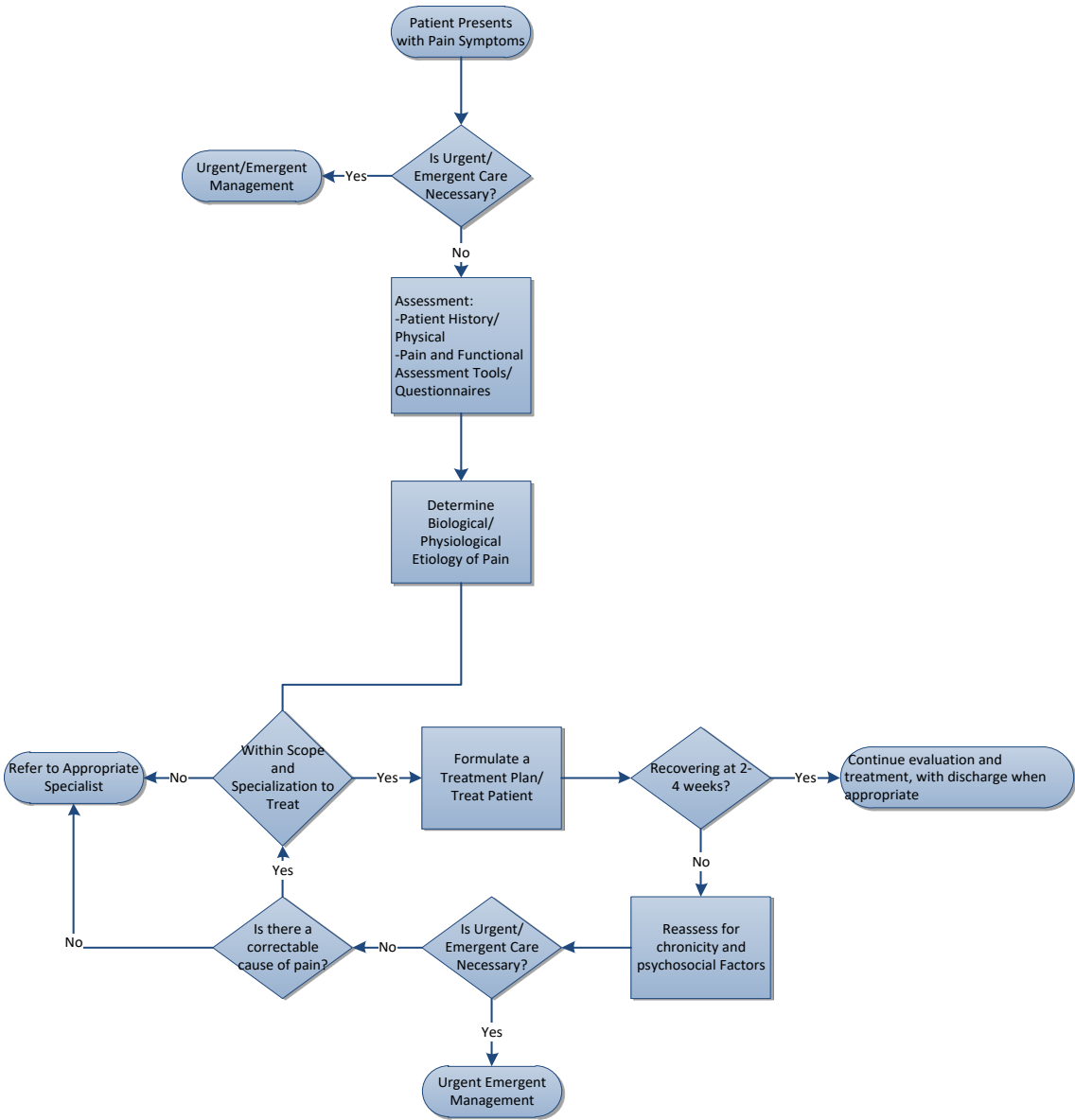
19  
20 **Finding Support:** Encourage the patient to reach out to other people who are in the  
21 same position and who can share and understand the patient's difficulties. Educate the  
22 patient to search the internet or local community for support groups, which can reduce  
23 the burden by helping the patient understand that he/she is not alone.

24  
25 **Consult a Professional:** If the patient continues to feel overwhelmed by chronic pain  
26 at a level that prevents him/her from performing the daily routine, it may be necessary  
27 to talk with a mental health professional, such as a psychologist, who can help the  
28 patient handle the physical and psychological repercussions of his/her condition.

29  
30 The patient should be referred to an appropriate health care professional for the  
31 management of any conditions outside of the scope of specialization and expertise of the  
32 practitioner.

### 33 34 **Pain Management Algorithm**

35 A pain management assessment is outlined in Figure 1. The practitioner may use this as a  
36 guide to determine the appropriate, timely implementation of possible intervention  
37 responses with specific steps and redirects.



1  
2 **Figure 1: Pain Management Algorithm**  
3 (Adapted from ICSI, 2011; Kendall et al., 2004; American Specialty Health CPG 169)

1 **Additional Resources**

2 Educating patients about pain management options and available resources can assist the  
3 patient. Publicly available resources can be found at:

4  
5 American Chronic Pain Association: <http://theacpa.org/>

6  
7 American Psychological Association, Coping with Chronic Pain:  
8 <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/chronic-pain.aspx>

9  
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