

# Leeds Community Pain Service

# **The Pain Management Programme Handbook**

## **Week 5**

## Mood Management



**This handbook can be used on the  
Pain Management Programme or  
in one to one sessions**

# Mood management



In this booklet we will look at:

- How feelings can affect pain.
- Tips for managing mood
- Fun goals to add to your Pain Management Plan.

You may have noticed that when you are feeling stressed, angry, depressed or anxious, smaller bumps tend to hurt more. And when you're feeling relaxed and happy, you're able to shrug off similar injuries more easily. The volume of your pain can be turned up or down dependent on how you're feeling. This is why it is important to address your mood in relation to managing your pain.

Negative thoughts can lead to a change in how you feel about your pain. You may experience:

- Worry
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Feelings of hopelessness.

This can lead to changes in how you behave, which might include:

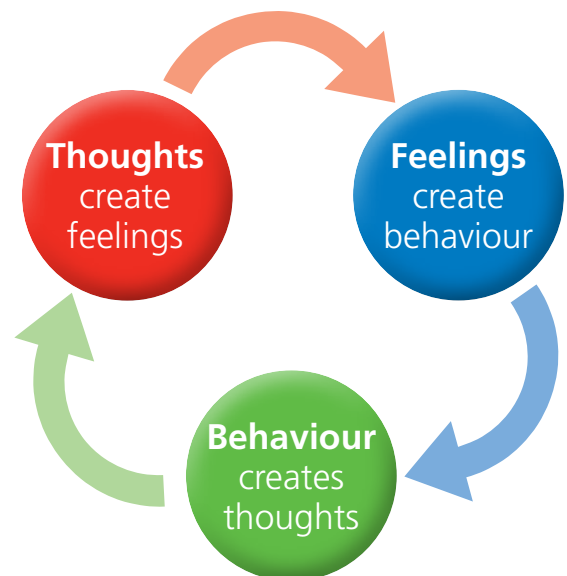
- Reduced movement
- Reduced motivation to change
- Isolation
- Reduced social activities
- Sleep problems
- Relationship problems
- Increased sensitivity of the nervous system.

For example:

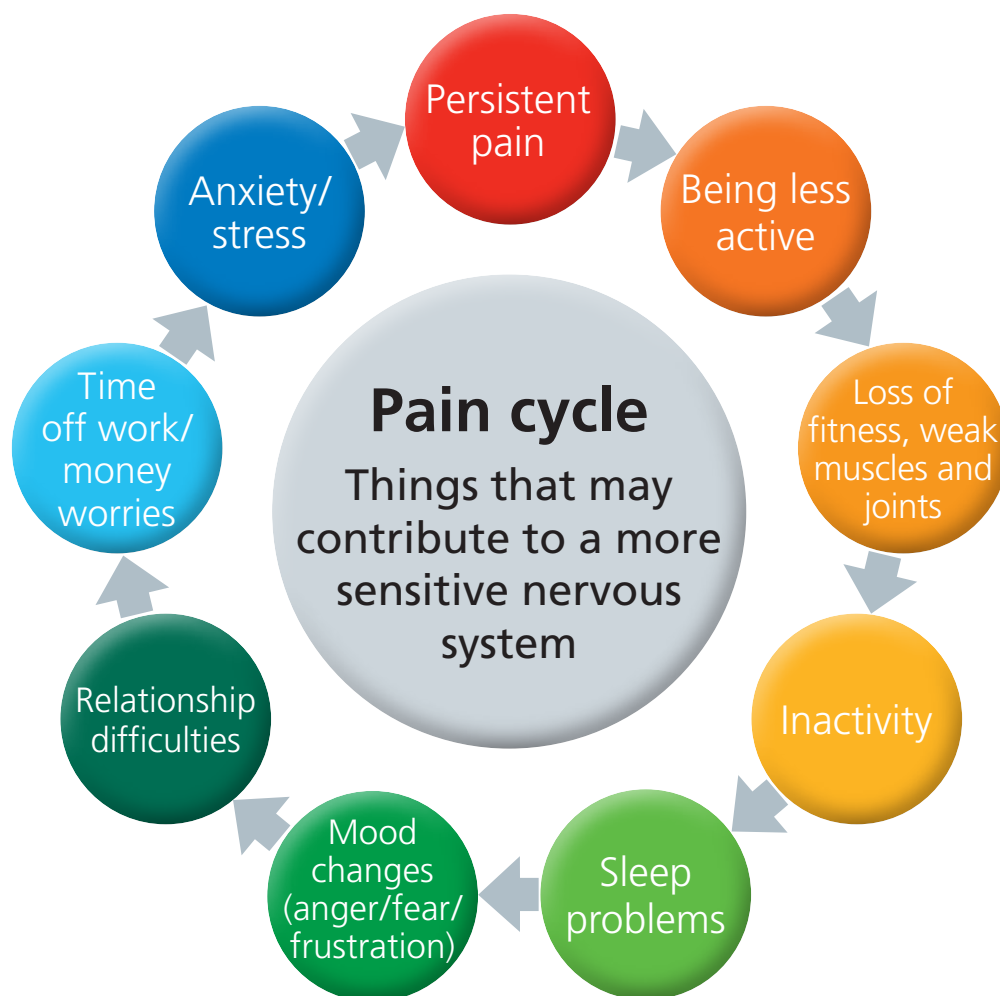
**Thought:** I have a slipped disc in my spine, this is serious, I will have to quit my job, how am I going to pay my bills?!

**Feeling:** Anxious, stressed, frustrated, depressed and annoyed.

**Behaviour:** Rest in bed for weeks waiting for the pain to go, stop seeing friends, get snappy with the kids.



This behaviour can lead to more pain; this is highlighted in the pain cycle diagram below:



Because the thoughts are often the driving force behind the feelings, it can be helpful to identify negative thought patterns and discuss them with a member of the Leeds Community Pain Service. These thoughts may be contributing to negative moods and unhelpful decisions about how to manage the pain.

For example:

**Thought:** I have a slipped disc in my spine.

- By the age of 50, 60% of people will have a slipped disc.
- Many people with slipped discs don't have any back pain.
- My MRI is considered normal for my age.
- This isn't as serious as I first thought.

**Feelings:** Less anxiety, less stress.

**Behaviour:** Continue to work, continue to move, and continue to meet friends and family.

This is discussed further in the 'OH NO' section of this handbook.

When we talk about mood management this could include:

- Low mood
- Depression
- Bereavement
- Panic attacks
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Stress
- PTSD
- Self harm.

We will focus on stress in this booklet, but please look at the end of this booklet for information, resources and links for each of the above.

## Stress management

Stress in the short term can be useful - it can make you more alert and focused. This might be useful if you were having an interview or doing a presentation.

Stress in the long term is not so good as it puts our bodies in a 'flight, freeze or fight' mode:

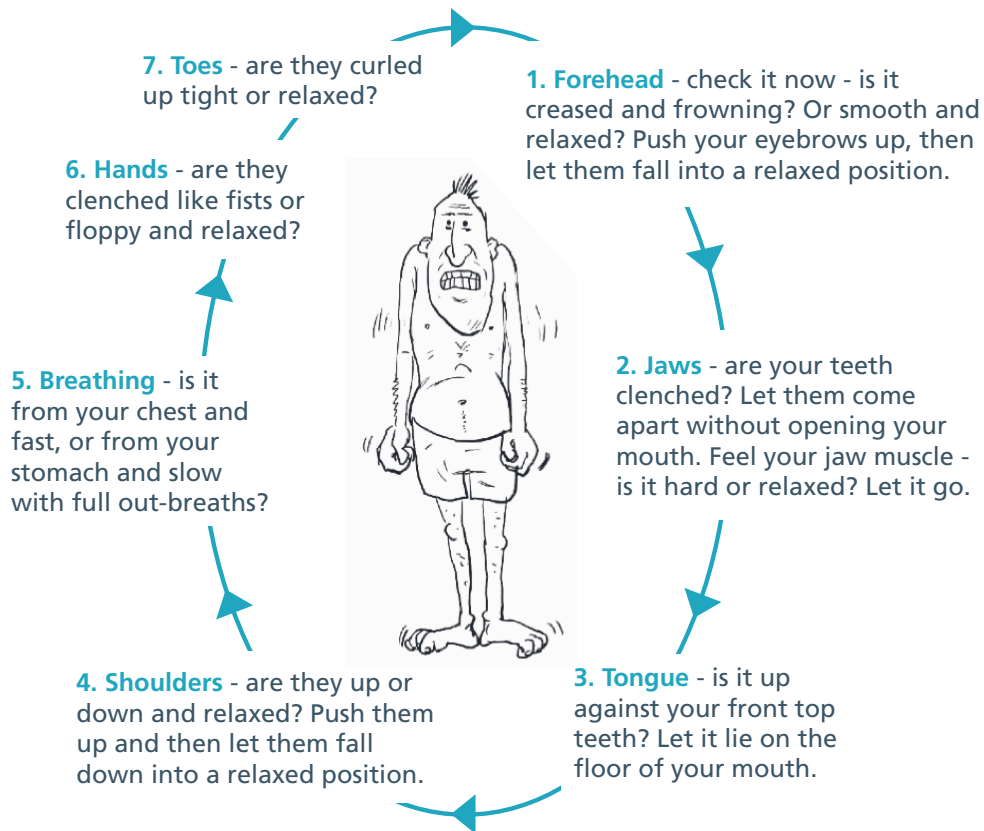
- This causes anxiety and feelings of tension.
- Can make us feel 'wired but tired'.
- It can lead to low mood.
- It can cause tight and painful muscles.
- It can cause headaches.

### Does this sound familiar?

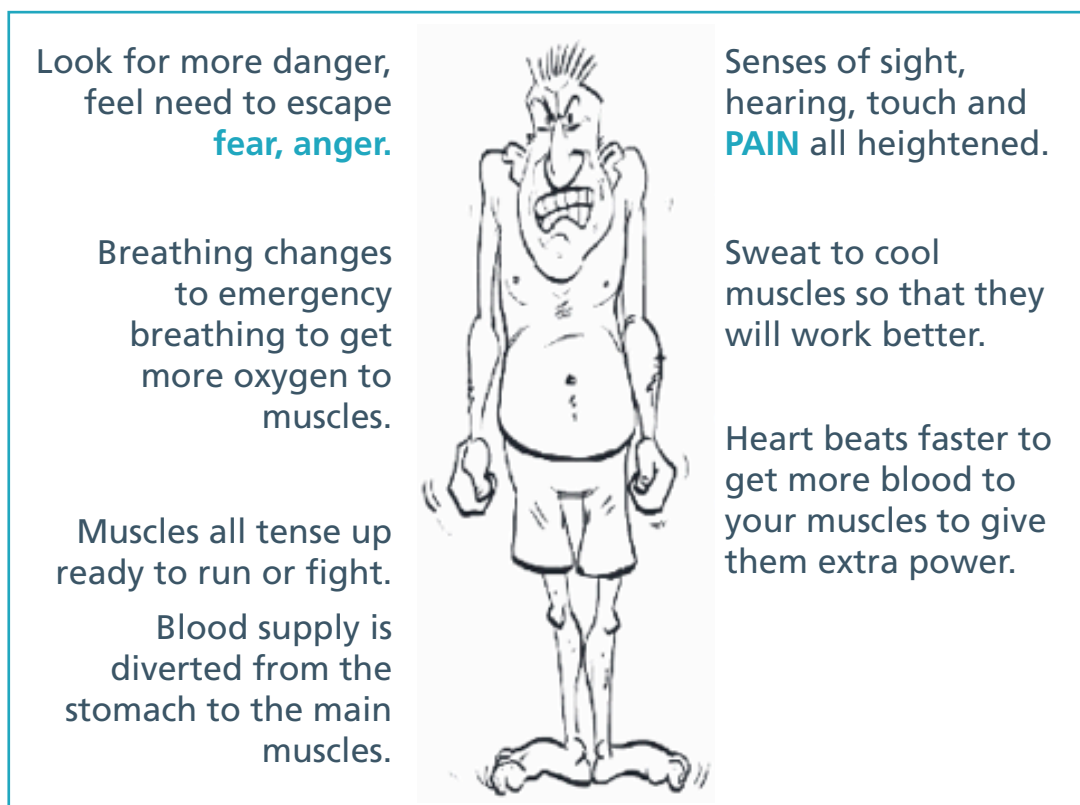


One of the ways our body reacts to stress is by making our muscles tight. We can hold tension in our bodies without realising it. It is only when we look more closely that we might find our shoulders are hunched or our fists are clenched. This is highlighted in the diagram on the next page taken from The Pain Management Plan: How people living with pain found a better life - the things that helped them and the things that set them back (Npowered 2010).

# How to spot tension



When we are stressed and in a fight, freeze or flight response, the body prepares for action. The body's reaction is the same as if you were running away from a tiger. There are many changes that happen within the body as shown in the daigram below (taken from The Pain Management Plan: How people living with pain found a better life - the things that helped them and the things that set them back (Npowered 2010).







## Progressive Muscular Relaxation (PGMR)

[www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk](http://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk)

Set a time for 15 minutes each day when you are free of distractions.

I will practise PGMR at ..... every day.

Progressive Muscular Relaxation (PGMR) is the name of a technique which teaches you how to become more aware of the tension in your body and how to relax the different muscle groups.

During this technique you will tense particular muscles in your body and then release them to help you notice the difference when your muscles are relaxed. This will help you realise when your muscles are starting to tense during the day so that you can manage your tension before it starts to increase.

- Relaxation breathing is a skill you will need to learn - practise at least once a day for relaxation to have a longer term effect.
- Begin by practising this exercise at times when you are feeling more relaxed (and can concentrate better) and then when you feel more confident start to use it at times when you feel more anxious.
- Don't try to relax too hard. Let it happen naturally.

- Find somewhere quiet where you won't be disturbed. Lie or sit somewhere comfortable. This could be on your bed, in a reclining chair or on the floor.
- Wear loose comfortable clothes. Take off your shoes if possible.
- Close your eyes.
- Start by focusing on your breathing. Breathe through your nose rather than your mouth. Breathe smoothly and steadily. Breathe in and say the word 'calm' quietly to yourself. Breathe out and say the word 'calm'. Repeat for a few minutes.
- If distracting thoughts jump into your mind. Try not to follow them – concentrate on your breathing.
- Become aware of the tension in your body.
- Work through the following muscle groups. Each time tensing the muscles for a few seconds and then releasing the tension. Feel the difference between relaxation and tension.

- **Shoulders:** Pull them down towards the floor. Think about the tension this creates and then let go. Feel the difference. Circle your shoulders once backwards, once forwards.
- **Arms and elbows:** Tense your arms and then bend your elbows. Think about the tension this creates and then let go.
- **Hands:** Pull your hands back at the wrist, stretching all your fingers as much as you can. Think about the tension this creates and then let go (let your hands fall back on your thighs).
- **Hips:** Pull your hips open, so your legs roll apart. Stop pulling and feel the difference.
- **Knees:** Pull the angle of your knees open, tightening your thigh muscles and slightly lifting your heel as you do this. Stop pulling and feel the difference.
- **Legs/ankles:** Pull your toes upwards towards your face and then point your toes to the floor. Stop pulling and feel the difference.
- **Lower back:** Pull the curve of your back into the chair and then relax and let go.

Take a breath in through your nose and out through your mouth (your tummy should rise while your chest should stay still). Count in for two and out for four twice (your tummy should fall as you breathe out) before returning to the exercise.

- **Neck:** Pull your chin downwards towards your chest. Don't tense your shoulders. Stop pulling and feel the difference.
- **Eyebrows:** Pull your eyebrows up towards your hair line and then relax. Feel the difference.
- **Mouth/jaw:** With your lips together, pull your jaw down towards the floor. Think about the tension this creates and then relax. Pull your tongue down in to the bottom of your mouth, behind your teeth. Stop pulling and feel the difference.
- **Wriggle your fingers and toes.** Breathe out.
- **Slowly open your eyes and take a moment to come back to the present after you carry out any relaxation exercise, and resume your next task slowly.**

Remember! Don't worry - you may not feel much effect at first – it will still be working and it may take time before you feel in a more relaxed state. Keep practising!

# 'OH NO!' thoughts

'OH NO' thoughts are when you pre-empt something will happen before it does happen. Examples include:

- **"I know I won't sleep"** - this often leads to more anxiety about sleep, which can cause worry, an active mind and no sleep.
- **"This is going to hurt"** - this can lead to more tension, tight muscles, fear of movement, which can lead to inactivity and more muscle pain.



## What are your 'OH NO!' thoughts?

Please list your 'OH NO' thoughts below:

Situation	Thought	Feeling	Physical changes in your body	Behaviour	Answer back thought
Realising it's nearly bedtime	I know I won't sleep	Frustrated Annoyed	Increased heart rate. Stress.	Stay up extra late. Take a nap the next day.	I sometimes sleep better. Things have improved slightly since having a daily walk and reducing caffeine.



Escape from the 'Oh No' trap:

- Recognise them! How do they make you feel?
- Think of an anti-stress thought.
- Get control of the 'Oh No' thought.
- What advice would you give a friend or can you give each other about 'Oh No' thoughts?

Avoidance:

- Might work in the short term.
- Avoiding things can often make the problem worse in the long term.

## Stress busters

1. Relaxation
2. Do things that make you happy
3. Mindfulness
4. Learn about your pain
5. Manage stress where possible
6. Correct breathing
7. Regular exercise
8. Distraction
9. Daily fun goals
10. Say no to 'Oh No' thoughts
11. Tackle avoidance
12. Get the right support
13. Talking to someone
14. Counselling.

## Fun goals

What do you want to change?	What is your current behaviour (baseline)?	What are the barriers to change?	Goals

Examples of fun goals are:

- Meeting or calling a friend
- Visiting your favourite restaurant
- Buying yourself a bunch of flowers or a new outfit
- Getting your hair done
- Watching your favourite film
- Singing to your favourite song
- Watching sport
- Tinkering with the car
- Model making.



## Homework

1. Practice 'Progressive Muscular Relaxation'.
2. Look out for signs of tension.
3. Make an action plan for your 'OH NO' thoughts and put them in your pain management plan.
4. Set a fun goal and put this in your pain management plan.

## Resources

There are several self help leaflets available from Northumburland, Tyne and Wear - only a few are shown here. They are available at the following website:

<https://web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/>



# Links to further information

- <https://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/leeds-mental-wellbeing-service/home/>

They can support you to manage problems such as feeling low, anxious or stressed, through our wide range of psychological support options, including phone support, instant-access online resources (Omnitherapy), group classes, and one-to-one 'talking therapies'.

You can refer yourself directly by the website.

- <https://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk>
- <https://livewellleeds.org.uk>