

Challenges

For Clients With Chronic Pain

Not Feeling Believed

Clients dealing with chronic pain may not feel like professionals truly believe how debilitating their pain is. It may be especially important for the clinician to validate client pain, and to investigate together what better functioning might look or feel like, even if pain remains.



Struggle with Daily Activities

This includes movement, sleep, chores, and having a job. This struggle may lead to feelings of grief for activities that clients can no longer do, low self-worth, and a desire to avoid pain with substances, especially if nothing else works.



Sensitization to Pain

When hyper-attuned to pain cues, a feedback loop in the nervous system may begin which heightens feelings of anxiety, panic, and helplessness. "Previous life experiences serve as a template for how we experience pain in the present." *



Persistent Anxiety

It can be difficult NOT to become overwhelmed with prolonged distress when facing pain on top of struggling with daily activities and managing medical needs.



Isolation

Chronic pain can lead to a desire to disconnect from the present and withdraw from others. There may be feelings of guilt for being a burden, feeling like no one understands, or simply not feeling well enough to be social.



*Brothers, G. (2023). Addressing chronic pain and health conditions. *Go With That Magazine*, 28(1), 34-42.