

Abstract: Adaptation and Acceptance in the Experience of Chronic Pain

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- D) Title of Abstract: Adaptation and Acceptance in the Experience of Chronic Pain
- E) Body of Abstract:

Chronic pain was once considered a symptom of illness but is gaining attention as a condition on its own. Typical classifications of pain disorders include persistent, intense pain that causes clinically significant distress or impairment in addition to psychosocial problems, such as rumination about pain and avoidance behaviors (Rief et al., 2008). Chronic pain conditions are pervasive and often intractable problems which cause significant suffering, emotional and financial cost, and potential disability. Due to chronicity and poor prognosis for curative treatments, an important goal in chronic pain is adapting to and accepting the condition as part of one's existence. The Fennell Four Phase Treatment Model (Fennell, 2003) provides a framework for the process of adaptation to life-changing circumstances. The Four Phases (Crisis, Stabilization, Resolution, and Integration) allow for a blending of therapeutic techniques aimed at the particular developmental and social context of the individual with chronic pain. Stabilization, in particular, is characterized by growing awareness that the symptoms one faces fail to return to normal, regardless of interventions. Therapeutic interventions in this phase aim to facilitate the development of a "new normal," and may include mindfulness skills to accept the chronicity of suffering and begin to understand the suffering as part of one's identity. The authors speak from the perspective of providers of care and individuals who have faced chronic conditions with the intent of elaborating on treatment as integration and acceptance of chronic pain, rather than cure. This paper will introduce the Fennell Four Phase Model, mindfulness techniques as they apply across the model, and how this process unfolds from the perspective of provider and patient.

- F) Keywords: Chronic Pain, Mindfulness, Fennell Four Phase Model, Chronic Illness, FFPM, FFPT

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