

**THE INSTITUTE FOR
HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE**

Changing the Conversation from
Distress to Hope in Our Approach to
Chronic Pain
Read G. Pierce, MD

Colorado Hospital Association Opioid Summit
February 11, 2020

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Objectives

- **Explore challenges in our current conversations about chronic pain.**
- **Discuss how to apply more human-centered strategies for pain management.**
- **Practice frameworks and skills to change the conversation around pain and provide coaching that empowers patients, increases hope, fosters wellbeing, and reduces clinician burnout.**

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Chronic Pain - Perspectives

Discuss at your table:

What challenges do patients face in dealing with chronic pain?



3

Chronic Pain - Perspectives

Discuss at your table:

What challenges do clinicians, social workers, advocates, etc. face in dealing with chronic pain?



4

Chronic Pain - Perspectives

Discuss at your table:

When those of us who support and work with people suffering from chronic pain engage in conversations about their pain, what emotions do we feel?

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Chronic Pain - Perspectives

Discuss at your table:

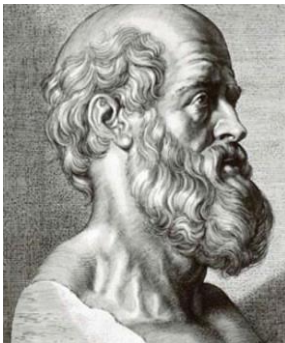
When those suffering from chronic pain engage others in their life in conversations about their pain, what emotions do they feel?

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Solution in Ancient Wisdom

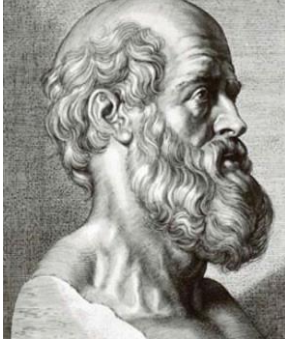


“It is more important to know what kind of person has a disease than to know what kind of disease a person has.”

-Hippocrates
(384 BC to 322 BC)

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How Are We Doing?



How well do we truly understand the whole person suffering from chronic pain, rather than surface issues like symptoms and patterns of behavior?

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Patient-Centered Care: *Importance of Treating the Whole Person*

Pain Conditions: Most patients have multiple pain conditions

Cause of illness: Factors include lifestyles, emotions, and thoughts that interact with social and physical environment

Focus: Understanding the whole person - what brings them **meaning and joy**, risk factors, and protective actions that shift balance between health and illness

Responsibility: Individuals accept responsibility for improving their illness since the causes are within their control

Transformative care: *Patient-centered care* relying mainly on health coaching and self-management – more so than medical care



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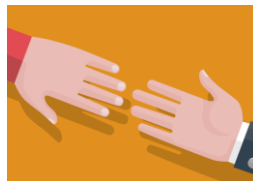
Example of Treating the Whole Person: Dept of Veterans Affairs Whole Health Approach



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Clinician's Primary Responsibility in Pain Management

Guiding, coaching, and assisting patients with day-to-day self-management.



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Pain Management Transformation

Key to Transformative Care: *Skills*

Discuss at your table:

What skills do we need to help people with chronic pain?

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Skills to Close the Gap

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Responding when Emotions Run High

Name & ROL

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How Do We Connect Better When Emotional?

Recognize Emotion
and
Respond with Name & ROL®

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Relationship Building

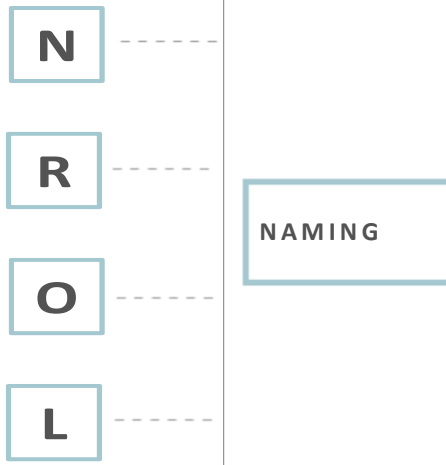
Recognize and Name the Other Person's Emotions:

- Anger
- Fear
- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Uncertainty
- Guilt
- Joy
- Happiness

Respond with "Name & ROL®"

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Recognize emotion and name it.



- Express in words what you are noticing while remaining non judgmental.
- Allow the other person to help you name the current emotion
 - "I am sensing you may be angry/frustrated/ upset/disappointed about..."
 - "Many people in your situation have been anxious / nervous/upset /uncertain about..."

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Demonstrate appreciation for the other person's choices, behaviors, and special qualities.

N

R

O

L

RESPECT

- *You have worked hard to manage this situation."*
- *"I respect your willingness to explore options for treatment, even when you are skeptical about many of them."*

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Remain open to understanding the complete story when communicating.

N

R

O

L

OPENNESS

- **Be curious and approach conversation without judgement**
- **Be present . . . still in mind and body**
- **Seek to understand**
 - *"Tell me more."*
 - *"What else can you tell me about . . . ?"*

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Concur that the other person's *feelings* are a normal human reaction – her/his truth.

N

R

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LEGITIMIZATION

- “Anyone would be confused/ sad/ disappointed by this situation . . .”
- “I can see how someone in your shoes would feel angry/ let down by . . .”

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Skills Workshop:

Connecting with Emotion and Responding with Name & ROL®

Scenario: You are about to have a conversation with an important person in your life, who has been struggling with chronic pain and over-reliance on opioids. S/he has been unreliable in attending work and social functions over the past few months. This is the first time you are addressing your concerns with this person.

Take 2-3 minutes to reflect and jot some notes:

- 1) Name the emotions you expect this person to express when you bring up her/his reliance on opioids, recent behaviors, and their impact.
- 2) Write down several sentences, using Name & ROL phrases to recognize and respond to that person as s/he speaks to you.

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RECOGNIZE EMOTION AND RESPOND WITH NAME AND ROL®

N

N = NAMING

*"I am sensing you may be angry/frustrated/
upset/disappointed about . . ."*
*"Many people in your situation have been anxious/
nervous/upset/uncertain about . . ."*

R

R = RESPECT

*"You have worked hard to manage this situation."
"I respect your willingness to explore options for treatment,
even when you are skeptical about many of them."*

O

O = OPENNESS

*Be curious and approach conversation without judgment.
Be present . . . still in mind and body.
Seek to understand.
"Tell me more."
"What else can you tell me about . . . ?"*

L

L = LEGITIMIZATION

*"Anyone would be confused/sad/disappointed by this situation
. . ."*
*"I can see how someone in your shoes would feel angry/let
down by . . ."*

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CUE for Pain Management Transformation

C

U

E

CUE

C = CONNECT

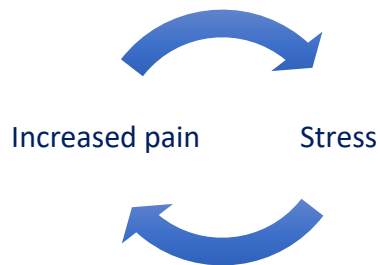
U = UNDERSTAND

E = ENGAGE

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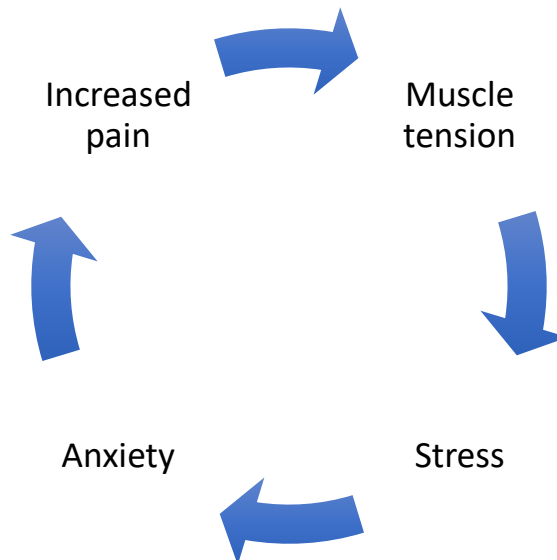
Key Concept: The Pain Cycle

- Increased pain leads to increased stress
- Increased stress makes us more tense, more strained—which turns up the volume on our pain
- *Breaking out of this cycle comes down to 20% how healthcare professionals can help and 80% what the patient does on a daily basis in areas of self care—areas that can be coached*



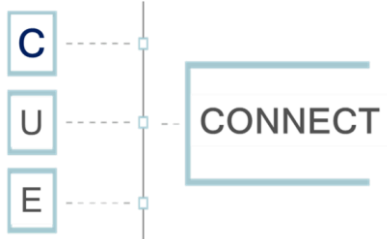
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Pain Cycle Illustration



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Set Up for CUE Skills Practice

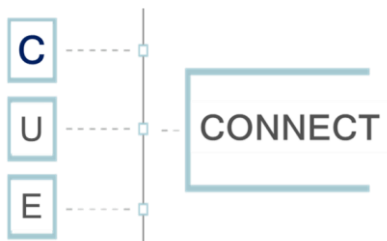


Deepen your connection to the person by asking:

- *"What is important to you that the pain is keeping you from doing?"*
- *"What brings you meaning and joy?"*
- *What would you most like to do if we could improve your pain?"*

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Set Up for CUE Skills Practice

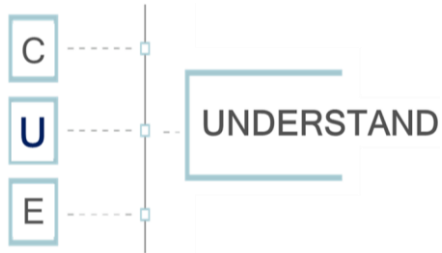


Then, **Reflect Back:**

- *"What is important to you that the pain is keeping you from doing?"*
-
- *When I asked you about what is important to you—that the pain is keeping you from doing—I heard you say . . . "*

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Set Up for CUE Skills Practice



Then, explore and understand the Pain Cycle:

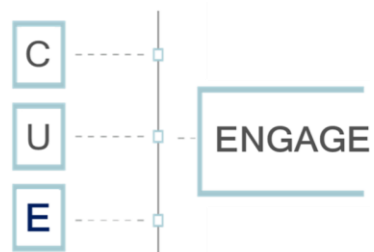
Their Agenda: *Pain control*

Your Agenda:

- *You would like to get to the root cause of their pain*
- *Explain and explore the pain cycle*

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Set Up for CUE Skills Practice

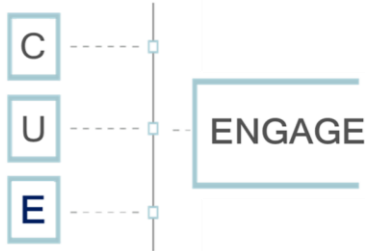


Use **Name & ROL** to engage the person's experience, by recognizing and responding to emotions:

- *"Anyone in your shoes would feel exhausted all the time."*
- *"Let's build on what you've already tried to address stress and strain."*

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Set Up for CUE Skills Practice



Finally, link the person's intrinsic motivation to long-term coaching and self-care:

- *"I hear that you live for your family and that you want to go on hikes with them again. That's an important motivation. I believe we can build a pain management plan beyond medications that will help get you there."*

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Practice: Explore the Pain Cycle

- *"What is important to you, that the pain is keeping you from doing?" (Connect)*
- *"How would you describe your cycle of pain?" (Understand)*
- *"What are the factors that tend to worsen your pain cycle?" Make it better?" (Understand)*
- *"I want to help you with treatment, and also help you learn more about how we can help you manage your own pain cycle. How does that sound?" (Engage)*

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Practice: Joint Agenda & Pain Cycle

- One partner plays the role of a person who wants medication for pain relief
- You will need to come up with something that is important to you, that the pain is keeping you from doing
- You will need to think about how to describe your pain cycle to your partner, when asked

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Practice: Joint Agenda & Pain Cycle

- The other person plays the role of a clinician, seeking to *explore the pain cycle*
- Make a statement about helping/treatment and long-term support for self-management.

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Joint Agenda with Pain Cycle Practice

- Break into Pairs
- Agenda for person 1: *Pain control*
- Agenda for person 2: *Get to the root cause of the pain, explore and work on the pain cycle*

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Practice: Explore the Pain Cycle

- “What is important to you, that the pain is keeping you from doing?” **(Connect)**
- “How would you describe your cycle of pain?” **(Understand)**
- “What are the factors that tend to worsen your pain cycle?” Make it better?” **(Understand)**
- “I want to help you with treatment, and also help you learn more about how we can help you manage your own pain cycle. How does that sound?” **(Engage)**

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Debrief

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Summary

- We need to help people, not simply treat syndromes and conditions
- Emotions often run high during conversations about pain
- Working on human connection – not just technical treatment – is vital to help people manage their pain
- Attention to 2 human factors can help:
 - Recognize and respond to emotions
 - Explore the pain cycle and impact on hopes and motivating factors

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Thank You!