Pain and Addiction
Challenges and Controversies

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“I’m learning how to relax, doctor —
but I want to relax better and faster!
I want to be on the cutting edge of relaxation!”

www.DoctorFunnyBone.com
5 Key Facts:

- All pain is real.
- Emotions drive the experience of chronic pain.
- Opioids often make pain worse.
- Treat to improve function.
- Expectations influence outcomes.
“What’s the difference between being addicted to painkillers and just really, really liking them a lot?”
Diagnosing addiction?
ASAM Short Definition of Addiction

Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry.

Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations.

This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors...
This is a **false dichotomy**
Aberrant drug use behaviors are common in pain patients

63% admitted to using opioids for purposes other than pain

35% met DSM V criteria for addiction

92% of opioid OD decedents were prescribed opioids for chronic pain.

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Emotional Intensifiers

- Guilt
- Anger – Resentments
- Loneliness
- Helplessness
- Fear
Cycle of Uncontrolled Pain and Fear

- Pain
- Avoidance Behaviors
- Decreased Mobility
- Social Limitations
- Diminished Self-Efficacy
- Altered Functional Status

FEAR arrows connect each node, indicating a cycle of uncontrolled pain and fear.
Ways to reduce pain intensity

- Cognitive/Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- DBT/ACT
- Attention/Distraction
- Control/Placebo effect
- Fear reduction
Reversal of Cycle of Fear and Pain

1. Pain
2. Exercise
3. Increased Mobility
4. Improved Function
5. Enhanced Self-Efficacy
6. Less Pain

The cycle starts with Pain leading to Exercise, which improves Mobility. Increased Mobility enhances Self-Efficacy, leading to Less Pain, and the cycle repeats.
Pain Pearls

• Conditioning Increases Pain.

• Pain Patients Are A Pain.

• Secondary Gain Prevents Getting Well.
"I can cure your back problem, but there's a risk that you'll be left with nothing to talk about."
Pain Recovery – Develop Balance

• Mental
• Emotional
• Physical
• Spiritual

RESULTING CHANGES

– Relationships
– Positive actions and behaviors
Non-Medication Treatments at LVRC

• Exercise – Physical Therapy
• Chiropractic Treatments
• Therapeutic Massage
• Reiki
• Acupuncture
• Nutrition
• Individual + group therapy
• Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (Kabat-Zinn)
• Yoga - Chi Gong
Mindfulness Meditation

- Based on Theraveda and Mahayana Buddhism – 500 BC - non religious.
- Focus is on insight (vipassana).
- Goal is NOT to eliminate pain or stress.
- Use intentional, focused awareness.
Mindfulness Practice

Bizarro  Dan Piraro

What do we want?!  Mindfulness!

When do we want it?!  NOW!
Mindfulness Practice

- Willful directed attention to present moment without judgment
- Daily practice – like tuning an instrument
- Changes the brain – neuroplasticity
- Enriches the brain’s neuronal structures –
  - Enhances connections
  - Affects neurotransmitter levels:
    - decreased cortisol & epinephrine (stimulation).
    - increased serotonin & GABA (relaxation, antidepressant).
Mindfulness Practice

- Meta-cognitive process (vs CBT).
- Change out relationship with our thoughts without changing the thoughts themselves.
- Detach from thoughts, feelings and physical sensations (attachment = suffering).
- Observer or spectator of thoughts.
Mindfulness Practice

- Utilize “beginner’s mind”
- Being open-hearted and open-minded to new possibilities
- Be kind to yourself (unconditionally loving)
- Tenderly holding and intimately knowing our suffering in any and all circumstances
Mindfulness Practice

- Sitting still takes courage!
- We don’t want to feel what we feel.
- We automatically want to cover over the pain in one way or another.
- Look directly with compassion and humor.
- Find meaning in the pain – use as an opportunity.
Mindfulness Practice

- Focus on an object - usually the breath.
- Thoughts ebb and flow (like bubbles).
- Bring attention back to the breath (training a puppy).
- No effort to clear thoughts or push away negatives – or hold positives.
- Cravings and urges are a desire for things to be different than they are.
- No “good” meditation – no outcome.
The Effects of Mindfulness Meditation on Chronic Pain

After 3 months of daily meditation in 27 older adults (>65):
- Less pain
- Improved attention
- Enhanced well-being
- Improved quality of life

Morone, Lynch, Cheryl et.al.  
Mindfulness Practice
Suffering (Dukkah)

- Attachment to thoughts or outcomes.
- Wanting physical states to be different (e.g. pain).
- Relentless mind activity (ruminating, obsessing, catastrophizing).
- Deep-seated habitual responses to the world.
- Attachment to PAIN seems grounding – it is solid and familiar!
Mindfulness Practice
Resistance

- Closed – minded
- Impatient – restless
- Unkind thoughts and judgments
- Cynical attitude
- All fear – based!
BODY SCAN

- Burmese practice called sweeping
- Jon Kabat Zinn, Ph.D
- “Self Cat Scan”
- Observer’s attitude – bearing witness to the pain – awareness of the pain is not the pain
- Utilize Compassion and kindness towards self.
Research confirms that drugs give the same benefits as yoga !!!
Halasana
Excellent for back pain and insomnia.
Balasana
Position that brings the sensation of peace and calm.
Savasana
Position of total relaxation.
QUESTIONS?

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www.supportPROP.org
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THANK YOU

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