



Connections



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PAIN SUPPORT GROUP

SPRING 2002

Making a good life without good health

A dear friend told me the other day that good health is everything. I can't blame her for thinking that. For the past six years, she has watched as Alzheimer's disease has claimed her sweet mother's mind and now her body. I, too, watched as Alzheimer's decimated my father. Without memory, personality, or thought, the person who was my father died long before his heart stopped beating.

But I don't accept the premise that good health is *everything*. I have other friends who prove that life can be enriching and worthwhile in the face of deteriorating health.

One friend can't work because of an on-the-job injury that causes constant pain and prevents him from standing or sitting for more than a few minutes at a time. Without a job or

the physical ability to perform any sustained activity, he has focused on making his life worthwhile. "My goal is to do something to help at least one person every day," he says. And he does. He drives people to appointments, bakes goodies for friends, and performs many small acts for others.

We would all like to be healthy, to have bodies and minds that function perfectly. That is not the case with those of us who live with chronic pain. But that does not mean we can't lead fulfilling and purposeful lives.

In his series "Healing and the Mind," Bill Moyers interviewed a remarkable woman, Rachel Naomi Remen. A medical doctor, Remen founded a retreat to help people cope with cancer. She herself has Crohn's disease, a debilitating, chronic illness.

Though she is not physically healthy, Remen says she's whole, an even more important state of being.

"Health," she notes, "is not a goal, it's a means to doing what is purposeful or meaningful in life." And while she acknowledges that being healthy often makes it easier to accomplish things, "you can do [meaningful things] anyway, even when you're not physically healthy."

Chronic pain may interfere with jobs, recreation, and even relationships, but it doesn't have to stop us from living a good life. My friend who helps others has learned that lesson. And because of the effort, his acts are often more meaningful than they would have been. He brings joy to others—and to himself. So might we all.

Sue Gold

Spring 2002 Schedule: Get motivated, learn coping skills, and prepare for surgery

Embarking on an exercise program for the umpteenth time only to give it up after three days? Our co-leader, Shirley Gagne, may have just what you need to hang in there. She will guide us through a mini-course in motivating ourselves to change at our

April 4 meeting. Based on a "Motivational Counseling" conference, Shirley's talk will address why we resist change and what to do about it.

On March 21, Dr. Jamie Raymond will discuss the benefits of acupuncture and chiropractic in treating

patients with chronic pain.

Dr. Christine Gray will help us develop strategies to adjust to chronic pain. She will also outline pain management techniques at our May 2 meeting.

Mercy Hospital's Kristen Lombard will give us valuable advice on what to

do to make surgery less painful. Many of the techniques also apply to everyday living with chronic pain.

As always, you will have a chance to share your struggles with chronic pain and get support during our group discussions.

Join us!

MARCH	Speaker: Shirley Gagne,	JUNE	Meetings are held at the
7 Group Discussion	R.N.	6 Group Discussion	Hospitality Room, The
21 "Alternative Approach to Chronic Pain"	18 Group Discussion	20 "Preparing for Surgery"	Pines, Manor St., Ocean
Speaker: Jamie Raymond, D.C., C.C.Ac	MAY	Speaker: Kristen Lombard, Dir. of Integrative Care, Mercy Hosp.	Park, 7-8:30 p.m., 1st & 3rd Thursdays. All are welcome! For directions, see our web site at www.desk-toppub.com/support/ or call Susan Gold, 284-4655.
APRIL	Speaker: Christine Gray,	NO MEETING JULY 4TH	
4 "Motivating Yourself to Change"	Psy.D.		
	16 Group Discussion		



"When Hugs Hurt" Conference to explore coping techniques

The Fibro/CFIDs/Chronic Pain support groups of the Seacoast Area (New Hampshire) will hold a day-long conference May 18 called "When Hugs Hurt," focusing on how to cope with fibromyalgia. Many of the techniques also apply to those in chronic pain from other diseases and conditions.

The conference will take place at the Community Education and Conference Center at Frisbie Memorial Hospital, Whitehall Road, Rochester, N.H. Registration fee is \$15, which covers admission, a continental breakfast, lunch, and beverages. Sign-in is from 8:30-9 a.m.

The event is open to all those with

fibromyalgia and other chronic pain issues as well as anyone who wants to learn more about the disorder. Couples are invited to attend together.

For more information, contact Becky Matile via e-mail <smatile@maine.rr.com> or go to the Fibro/CFIDs/Chronic Pain support groups of the Seacoast Area (NH) Web site at www.seacoastfms.org. You can also call Nancy Fowler at 207-339-9652.

The hall will hold only 100 people, and seats are filling up fast, so if you're interested, register today to ensure that you can attend. Our group will be organizing carpools to the conference. If you need a ride,

please sign up at the next meeting or contact Susan Gold at 284-4655.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Pain Support Group is to provide a safe place where people with chronic pain can support one another, develop friendships, share ideas and thoughts, obtain information about their condition from professionals and each other, and learn coping skills in a nonjudgmental and caring atmosphere.

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ON-LINE INFORMATION & SUPPORT

If you'd like to be on our on-line support list, just e-mail custom@desktoppub.com and include a brief message saying you'd like to join the Pain Support Group's e-mail information network. You will receive occasional postings of pertinent information, notice of meetings and events, and can correspond with other members.

Our web site address: <http://www.desktoppub.com/support/> Check it out!

FIBROMYALGIA & CFIDS GROUP

Turning Point, a support group for people with fibromyalgia and CFIDS meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month from 6:30-8 p.m. The first meeting is held in Old Orchard Beach (call Karen Grant for directions). The

second meeting of the month is held at Southern Maine Medical Center's building at 13 Industrial Park Road, Saco. Call Karen Grant for information/directions at 207-934-6297 or e-mail kmegrant@maine.rr.com. Sponsored by the Arthritis Foundation.

JOIN THE AMERICAN CHRONIC PAIN ASSOCIATION TODAY

Our group has been a member of the American Chronic Pain Association for the past three years. This non-profit, worldwide organization, provides a support system for people with chronic pain.

We urge individual members to join ACPA today. As members, you will receive "Patient to Person," an invaluable manual on coping with

chronic pain; a year's subscription to the quarterly newsletter, "The ACPA Chronicle," written by and for ACPA members; and a 10 percent discount on a long list of ACPA materials. You will also be supporting ACPA's efforts to aid those with chronic pain and to push for better treatment for those in pain. To join, call Penney Cowan at (916) 632-0922 or e-mail ACPA@pacbell.net. Check out the group's web site at <http://www.theacpa.org>.

NOTE: The information shared in Arthritis Foundation support groups is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment. The Arthritis Foundation recommends consultation with your doctor or health care professional.