

Do **you** know  
someone whose body  
always hurts?



A guide to helping children  
understand chronic pain

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# Do you know someone whose body always hurts?

It might be your mum, dad, grandparent, or someone else that you care about. If you know someone whose body always hurts then this booklet is for you.

You might not understand why their body always hurts or what is happening to them. You might feel confused about it.

This booklet will help you to learn:

- \* How some pain can be helpful
- \* How some pain can be unhelpful
- \* What happens at a Pain Management Programme
- \* How people can have fun despite pain
- \* Who you can speak to if you have more questions, or if you feel confused, upset or worried

## Helpful tips!

You should read this booklet with an adult. You can read it aloud and ask an adult to help you with any words you do not understand. As you read it together you should talk about what you are both learning.

**It is important to ask questions if you have any.**  
**It is ok to ask questions.**

An adult can help you to find the answers. This can help you to understand what you need to know. But they should be honest with you if they do not know all the answers.

Asking questions and talking about what you learn will help your loved one to know if you need any extra help.

Take your time reading this booklet and talk about what you are learning. You do not have to read it all at once.

We hope this booklet helps you to understand more about chronic pain. We hope it helps you and your loved one to talk about how their pain makes you feel. If you are feeling confused, upset or worried about pain, we hope the booklet helps you to feel happier and less worried.

We hope that you can talk about fun activities that you would like to do together. We hope you go ahead and enjoy those activities!

**There are some important things to learn and some things to talk about. Most of all we hope you have fun reading this booklet!**

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# Helpful Pain

Have you ever fallen on your knee?  
Banged your elbow?  
Bumped your head?

Was it painful?  
Pain is not very nice,  
but can pain be helpful?

# Yes it can!



This is how:

# Pain can act like an alarm.



The alarm warns us that something could damage our body. It tells us that what we are doing might not be safe.

When we pay attention (or listen) to this alarm we stop what we are doing to make sure we are safe. Then we **remember** not to do it again.

The pain alarm can act like a friend that is trying to look after us. This is helpful pain.

# Helpful pain is called acute pain.

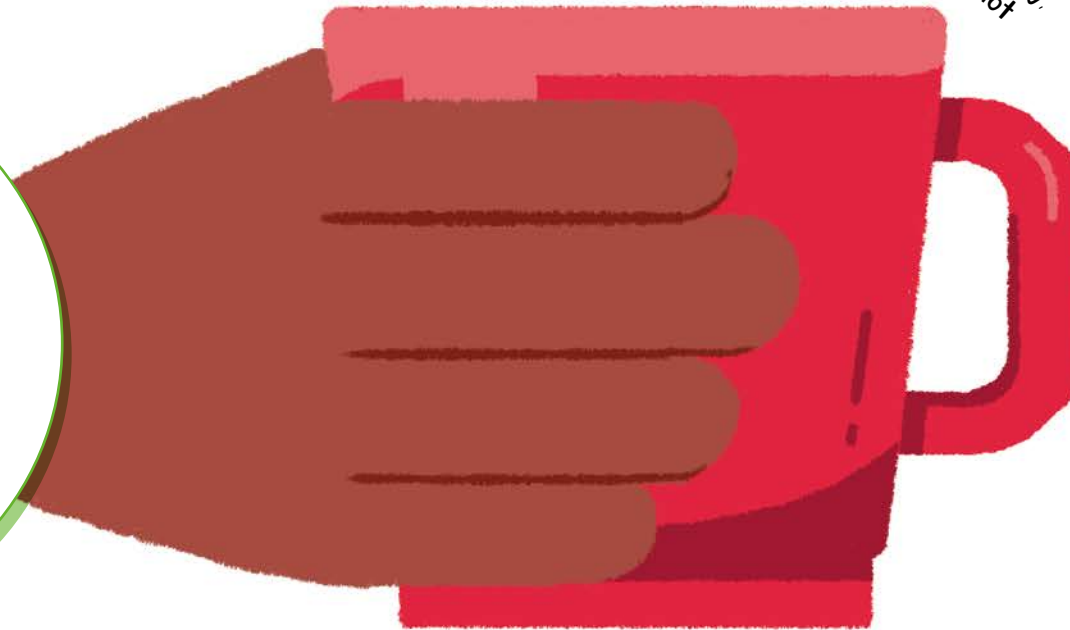


If we pick up a hot cup, acute pain says

# "drop it!"



really, really, really hot



so that we do not damage our hand.

Acute pain reminds us to be careful in the future.

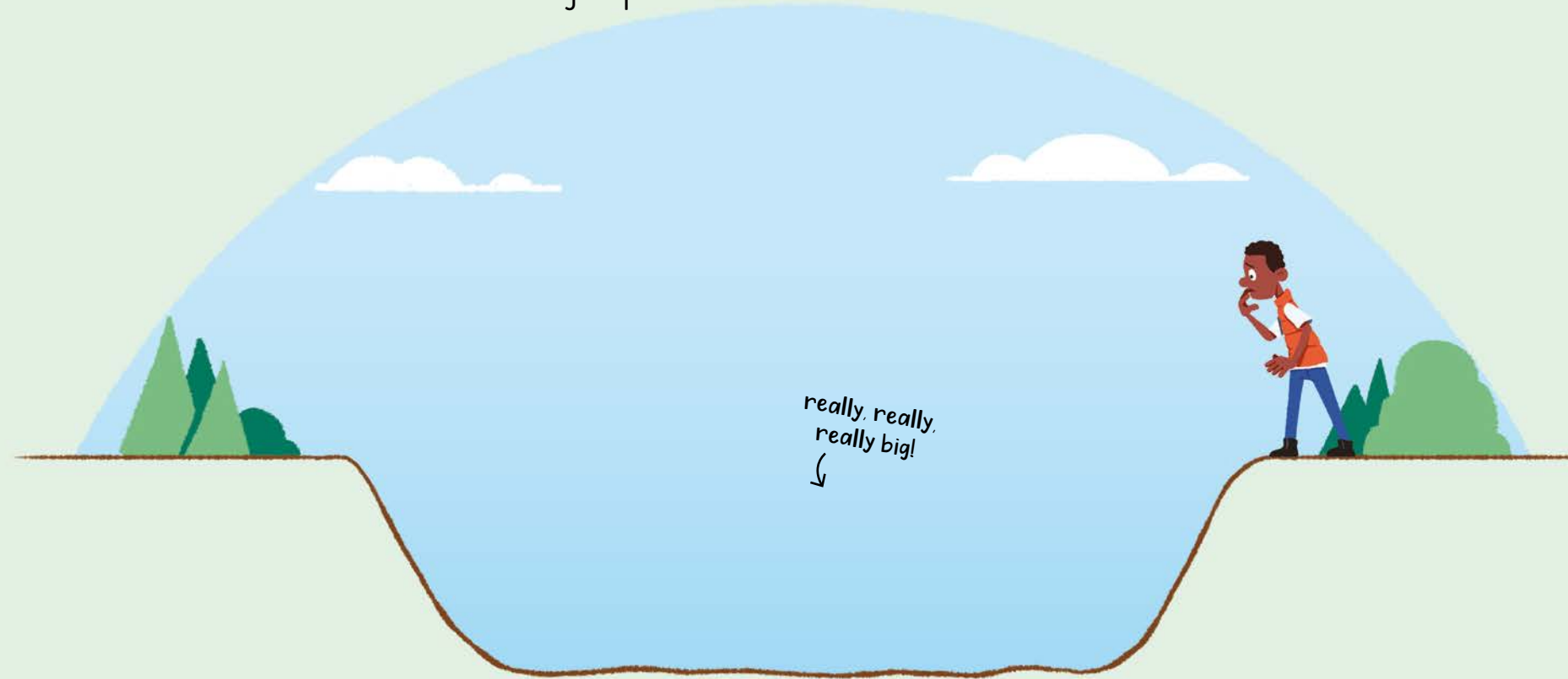


We remember to use the handle because we remember that it is painful. Acute pain is like our friend because it tries to stop us hurting ourselves.

Acute pain helps us learn what is safe and not safe. It helps us to learn how to look after our body. Acute pain helps us to learn to make safe choices.

## Harry and the ditches

Harry knows he can jump across a little ditch because he has jumped one before and he did not hurt himself.



This is a much bigger ditch.

Harry knows he may hurt himself jumping across the big ditch. He has hurt himself doing this before. He might feel pain. This might not be safe. Now Harry has a decision to make.



## Helpful Pain

Harry has chosen to use the bridge.  
He did not want to risk hurting himself.  
Harry has learnt how to stay safe.



Pain helped him to learn this.  
Good choice Harry!

Acute pain helps us to learn what is safe and what is not safe. It can also remind us that our body needs time to heal (or get better). Imagine if you broke a bone in your leg. It would really hurt! Acute pain warns you:



**“Danger! I am painful! Do not use me to walk. You must rest me until I feel better.”**

When acute pain goes away this usually tells us that the bone has healed. Then you feel safe to stand on your leg and walk around as normal. It does not hurt anymore. Acute pain can remind us that our body needs time to heal and repair itself.

## Helpful Pain - Important Facts:

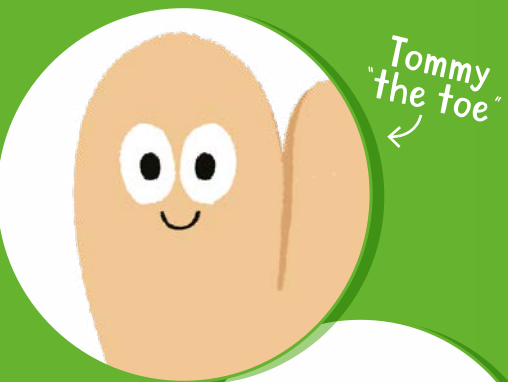
Acute pain is helpful 👍 even though it does not feel very nice. 😞

It does not last very long. 👍

The longest acute pain will last is 6 months (that's half a year!). But most acute pain goes away much quicker than this. 👍👍

# Tommy the talking toe

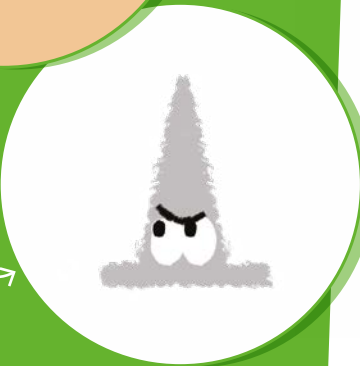
What happens when Tommy the talking toe steps on a drawing pin?



Tommy the toe

V's

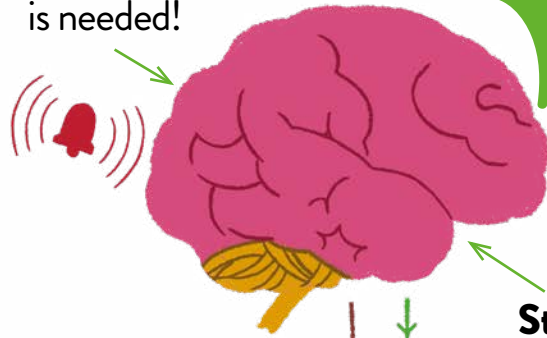
Tack the pin



## Step 3

The brain turns messages into a pain alert. Alarm bells ring in the brain. Action is needed!

Big toe alert!  
Move the big toe and do it quickly!



## Step 4

The brain now sends messages back down to the muscles of the leg, foot and toe.

## Step 2

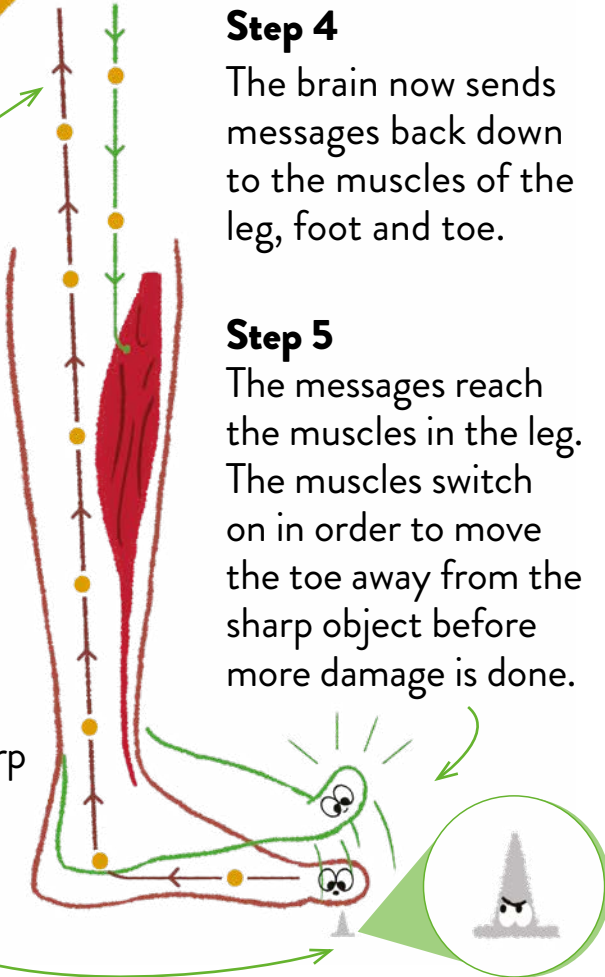
Electrical messages whizz along the nerves to the brain.

## Step 5

The messages reach the muscles in the leg. The muscles switch on in order to move the toe away from the sharp object before more damage is done.

## Step 1

Nerve endings are excited by the sharp pin and electrical messages are sent along the nerves.



“Pain is my hero!”



Why would Tommy say pain is his hero?

Now we understand that acute pain can be like a very helpful friend.

\*It tries to warn us about danger.

\*It sometimes tells us when we have injured ourselves and reminds us to rest and let our body heal.

But is all pain like a helpful friend?

No, not all pain is helpful. In fact, some pain can be very unhelpful...



Unhelpful Pain  
This is

# BUZZ



Buzz always shouts:

## "DANGER! STOP! IT'S NOT SAFE!"



Imagine Buzz shouts this **every time** you play a game.

Buzz thinks everything is dangerous so Buzz tries to warn you.



## Unhelpful Pain

Imagine Buzz shouts this **every time** you eat your tea.



Imagine Buzz shouts this **every time** you go to sleep.



Imagine Buzz shouts this **every time** you walk.



But Buzz shouts even when there is no real danger. Buzz can be **REALLY** annoying!

**Buzz can sound scary and can spoil your fun.**

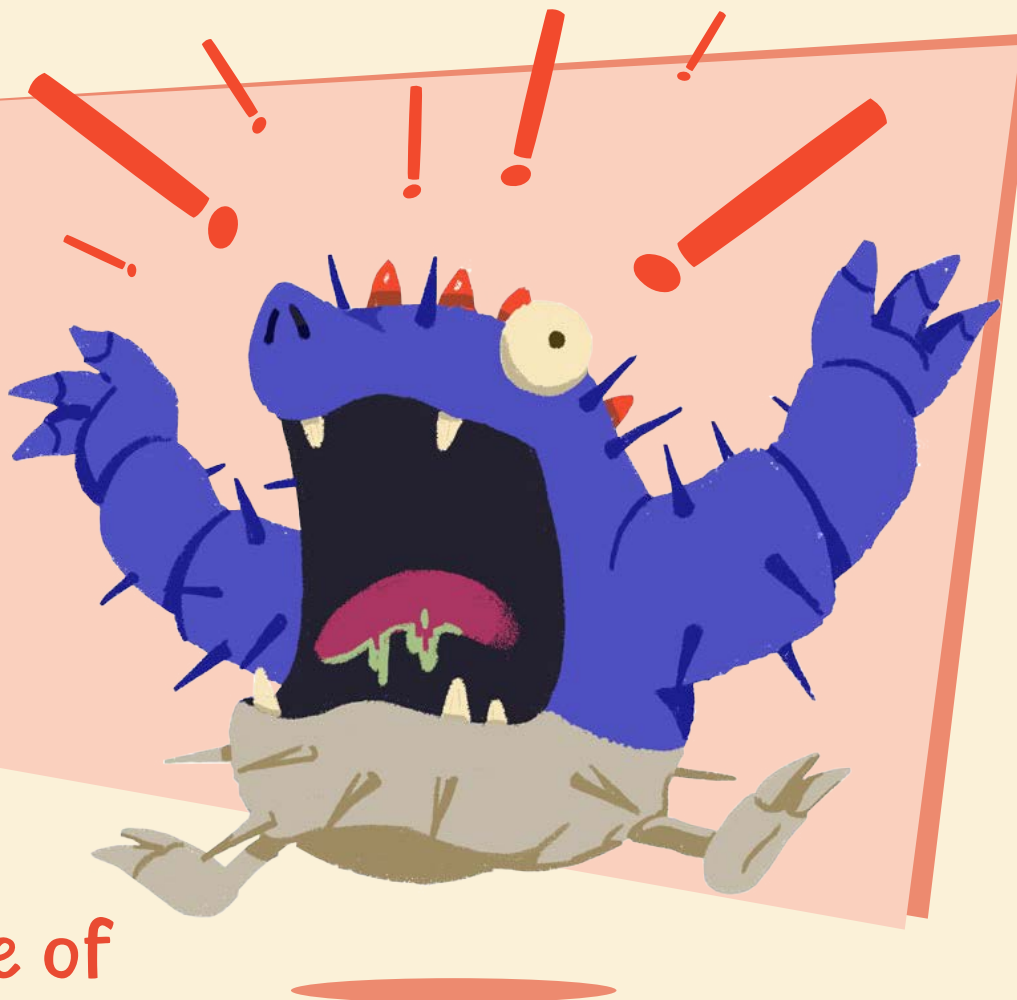


Sometimes our pain alarm can become faulty. A faulty alarm sounds **all the time** even when there is no danger. Just like Buzz, the faulty pain alarm keeps shouting.

**"DANGER!  
STOP! IT'S  
NOT SAFE!"**

This noisy alarm makes us worry about hurting ourselves even when we are safe. Just like Buzz, a faulty pain alarm is really unhelpful and very annoying!

**This unhelpful type of pain is called chronic pain.**



## Unhelpful Pain - Important Facts:

Chronic pain is only called chronic pain once someone has had it for at least 6 months. That is half a year! Once someone has chronic pain it usually does not go away. 😞

(((🔔))) Sometimes an injury or an illness can cause our pain alarm to become faulty. But sometimes we do not know why the pain alarm becomes faulty. When someone has chronic pain, it is not their fault that the pain will not go away. And it is not your fault either! 👍

Nobody knows how to switch off the faulty pain alarm and keep it switched off. 🚫 But sometimes people can find ways to turn down the volume on the pain alarm. 🔊))) This makes it easier to live with. 🔊)

We will tell you more about this in the section about a **Pain Management Programme**.

There is no cure for chronic pain. Medication can help turn down the pain alarm for some people but medication does not help everyone. Some people with chronic pain do not take any medication at all. A doctor will advise on which medication may be helpful to try.

Even when medication is helpful it does not cure the faulty alarm. (((🔔))) Medication might help to turn down the pain alarm but it does not switch it off fully. 😞



## Do you know?



There are two main types of pain that we have talked about.  
Can you remember what they are both called?

1. ....

2. ....



Which type of pain can be helpful? .....

Which type of pain is unhelpful? .....



If you are unsure about the answers, you could go back and read the sections about helpful pain and unhelpful pain again. Reading things again is ok. This can help you to learn.

**It is ok to ask questions  
to help you learn too.**

# I know someone with chronic pain



I know someone with chronic pain

## Who are they?

Do you know someone with chronic pain? (Please write their name:)

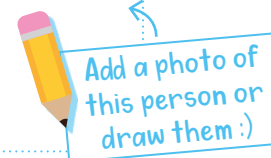


.....has chronic pain.

They are my: (mum, dad, grandma, grandpa, etc.):



.....



## What do you like about them?

Try to think of some things that you really like about them?  
And if you can, say why you like it?

Example

I really like: **Grandpa's jokes** because **they make me laugh**

I really like:

1. .... because .....

2. .... because .....

3. .... because .....

What nice things do you enjoy doing together?



.....

.....

.....

.....





## Remember Buzz?


Buzz is really annoying, really loud, and really unhelpful.  
When he shouts loudly he can be really scary.  
But he cannot do anything to damage your body.

Just like Buzz, chronic pain is unhelpful. It can sometimes  
make it harder to do things. People with chronic pain can  
still enjoy things but they may have to do them differently.


We will tell you more about that later on in the booklet  
when we tell you about a **Pain Management Programme**.

I know someone with chronic pain

## What do you want to do together?

 What things would you like to do together?

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

 What would you enjoy about it?

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

So far we have learnt that some people have pain that does not go away. 😞

This is called chronic pain.

We learnt that people with chronic pain have a faulty pain alarm. 📢

Chronic pain does not feel nice 😞 but it is **not harmful**. This means the person you know with chronic pain is safe. 😊 They are not in danger.

You are very unlikely to get chronic pain yourself, even if your loved one has chronic pain. 👍 No one really knows why the pain alarm can become faulty. But most people will never develop chronic pain. 👍

Most people only ever feel acute pain. Remember - acute pain is the helpful type of pain that does not last very long.

You are reading this booklet because you know someone with chronic pain.

You may feel scared 😞 that something bad might happen to your loved one.

It is not very nice to know that your loved one is in pain. 😞 But chronic pain will not cause anything bad to happen to them.

Chronic pain will not cause them to die.

People can live a happy  
life with chronic pain.



# How do I feel?

How do I feel?

The pictures below show different feelings or emotions.

## It is ok to feel different emotions.

Everyone can feel these emotions sometimes.  
What emotions do you feel today?



Happy



Sad



Lonely



Curious



Angry



Anxious



Excited



Calm



Confused



OK



Guilty



Afraid

What emotions do you feel?



What makes you feel like this?



What do you do when you feel like this?



If you feel scared 😨, angry 😡, sad 😞 or confused 😕 it is important to tell your loved one. They can talk to you about this.

## Talking can be really helpful.



Sometimes people with chronic pain visit a doctor or go to hospital. This is so they can get help.

Pain Management Programmes teach people more about chronic pain. A Pain Management Programme team can work in a hospital or a community centre.

Your loved one goes to a Pain Management Programme. They may go to **The Walton Centre** or they may go to a Pain Management Programme somewhere else.

# Pain Management Programme

This is what  
The Walton Centre  
looks like.





## What happens at a Pain Management Programme?

Going to a Pain Management Programme is a bit like going to school because people learn new things there.

People go there to learn about chronic pain.  
People learn how to exercise better.  
They learn how to do more activities and how to feel happier.  
They can ask questions to help them learn.  
They meet other people who also have chronic pain.  
Sometimes people can make new friends too!

**The pain will not go away but people can learn how to feel good and enjoy activities.**

Take a look at a Pain Management Programme and find out what we do.



## Exercise

There is a gym with exercise machines.  
This is what the gym looks like.



There is a swimming pool too.



## There are many ways people can exercise. Exercise can be fun!

People with chronic pain can get better at doing exercises when they practise regularly.

You might see your loved one doing exercises. You might want to join in with them! You do not have to go to a gym to exercise. You can exercise at home.

Walking is a good way to exercise and stretching is important too. You might be able to do more exercise than your loved one, or you might be able to do it faster. This is ok because everyone exercises at their own speed.

## Mindfulness

People learn how to practise mindfulness on a Pain Management Programme. We practise it most days.

**Do you know what mindfulness is?**  
**Maybe you have learnt about it at school?**

Mindfulness means paying attention to what is happening right now. It means noticing what is happening around us, noticing how our body feels, noticing what we are thinking and what emotions we are feeling.

We can practise paying attention and learn to notice many different things! This can help us in many ways. Just like learning to ride a bike or learning to play a musical instrument - it gets easier with practise. That is why you might hear it being called mindfulness practise!

You might also have heard it being called mindfulness meditation. Meditation is a good way to practise mindfulness.



# Planning and Pacing Activities

There may be some activities that you and your loved one have stopped doing together.

Remember the list of activities that you wrote down before? If you cannot remember, go back to [page 21](#) and have another look at [What do you want to do together?](#)

Chronic pain can make it more difficult to move around quickly or do activities in one go. A Pain Management Programme helps people to think about what activities are important—just like the things you wrote down.

**Planning** means thinking about it first before doing it. This helps people to do things more slowly when they need to and stop for regular breaks. This usually means activities take longer but this helps people to avoid feeling too tired or in too much pain afterwards. This is called **pacing**. Planning and pacing helps people to enjoy days out, go on holidays and do other important things. It helps with the boring stuff too!

## What activities might you plan with your loved one?



## The Common Room

Here is the common room. This is where people eat breakfast and lunch. People can meet here at break time and have a nice chat. People often enjoy fun times together.





# The Group Room

There are different lessons and lots to learn.  
Here is a room where people meet and all learn together.



Does this look anything like your classroom at school?  
What things look the same?



.....

.....

What things look different?



.....

.....

.....

You might be wondering if it's a bit like school; does that mean people get homework?

People are not set homework for a teacher to mark or sit exams or tests. But they might have some things to read and some things to write. There will be things to practise at home too. So this is a *bit* like homework but not quite the same.

**This all helps people to learn and remember.**



# Who works at a Pain Management Programme?

Many people work at a Pain Management Programme. Just like there are many teachers at your school.

Each person helps people with chronic pain in different ways.



## Physiotherapist

“Hi! My name is Graham and I am a Physiotherapist. I show people with chronic pain how to enjoy movement and exercise again. I show people many different types of exercises. Regular exercise can help us have the strength, energy and confidence to be able to do more.”

## Clinical Psychologist

“Hey guys! I am Kerry and I am a Clinical Psychologist. I talk to people who have chronic pain. I ask them what it is like for them. If people feel upset or worried, I talk to them about emotions and what makes them feel bad. Talking can help people to understand how to feel happier.”



## Occupational Therapist

“Hi! I am Lucy and I am an Occupational Therapist. When people have chronic pain they sometimes stop doing activities. I help people to do more activities again. I help them to learn planning and pacing. I also teach people about mindfulness!”





### Pain Doctor

“Hello! My name is Rajiv and I am a medical doctor. I help people to learn more about how their bodies work and I explain how medications work. I tell people which medications can be helpful to use alongside the pain management skills.”



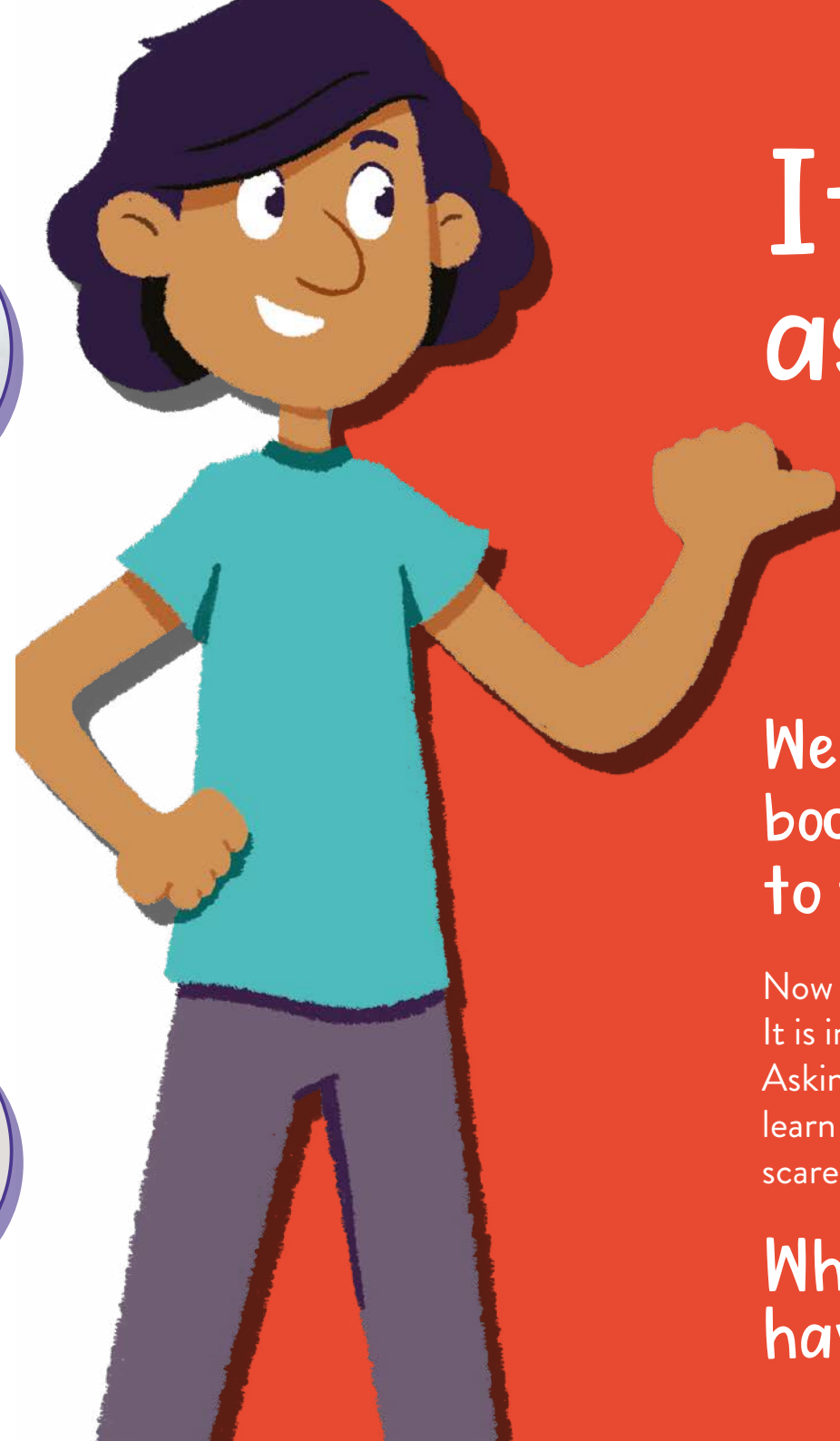
### Volunteer

“Hello! I am Alan. I have chronic pain and I finished a Pain Management Programme some years ago. It was really helpful for me. Now I work here. I help other people when they come to the Pain Management Programme at The Walton Centre. I talk to people during break times and I make sure people have a nice breakfast and lunch while they are here.”



### Administrator

“Hi! My name is Caroline and I am an administrator. I meet people when they arrive in the mornings and before they leave in the afternoons. I answer the phone when people call and I answer their questions.”



# It's good to ask questions!

## Well done for reading this booklet! You have had lots to think about!

Now it is time to think about what you have learnt. It is important to ask questions if you have any. Asking questions can help us to learn. When we learn more about something it helps us to feel less scared or confused.

## What questions do you have about chronic pain?

## Read the following questions.

These questions will help you think about what you have learnt. It can be helpful to talk them through with an adult.

If you do not know the answers, go back and read some parts of the booklet again.

1. What is chronic pain?  
(Read page 14 for the answer)
2. Is it my fault that you have chronic pain?  
(Read page 15 for the answer)
3. Do people die from chronic pain?  
(Read page 24 for the answer)
4. Will I get chronic pain too?  
(Read page 23 for the answer)
5. What happens when people go to see the pain doctor?  
(Read page 40 for the answer)
6. What activities can you do at a Pain Management Programme?  
(Read page 30 for the answer)

7. Why do people with chronic pain take medication?  
(Read page 15 for the answer)
8. Can people with chronic pain do exercise?  
(Read page 32 for the answer)
9. What things can we still do together?  
(Read page 34 for the answer)
10. What is mindfulness?  
(Read page 33 for the answer)
11. Does chronic pain go away?  
(Read page 15 for the answer)



Write any of your own questions here:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....

# What happens next?

You have now finished reading this booklet.  
Well done! We hope you have enjoyed it!

Now it is time to plan things you would like  
to do with your loved one.

We hope you enjoy  
your activities!



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