

## Phrasing for Basic Pain Care

### Understanding Pain

<b>Patient</b>	"They say my pain is all in my head -- that it's not real."
<b>Clinician</b>	"I'm sorry you've gotten that message. What people may mean is that we now understand that the brain controls our pain -- just like it controls everything else about us. Your pain is very real, but here's the good news: There's a lot that you, your brain and your nervous system can do to reduce that pain. There's a great class (video) I'd like you to attend (watch) that explains this more."

### Stress and pain

<b>Clinician</b>	"Lowering your stress response to pain will reduce your pain. Here's how: The same parts of our nervous system that work hard when we feel stress also work hard when we feel pain. That's because both feelings are part of our Emergency Response System. When our brain senses danger, it activates this system. Stress doesn't directly cause pain. But stress can make pain worse, and it can make pain last longer."
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### Fear Avoidance

<b>Patient</b>	"It's really not safe for me to be active because I have _____ (fibromyalgia, bone spurs, herniated disc, etc)."
<b>Clinician</b>	"We're used to thinking that, if we feel pain, what we are doing isn't safe. But actually, when you have pain that lasts a long time, it often means that your protective pain response has become too sensitive. In this situation, the things we do in everyday life aren't making our condition worse, even if what we are doing causes discomfort."

### Focus on function, not pain!

<b>Clinician</b>	"As you begin to increase your activity and your body adapts to new challenges, you will probably feel sore and stiff. These are normal responses. Gentle movement will ease soreness and stiffness by warming up tissues and helping blood flow through the affected area of your body." -
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<b>Patient</b>	"How long will it take to get better?"
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<b>Clinician</b>	<p>“We will target key goals, including getting back into daily activities. You will find that what gets better first is your ability to do more of what want. We’ll start on this right away.</p> <p>You will probably still have pain during this time, but you will find that little by little, you will be able to tolerate more activity and get back to your life. Over time, your pain should decrease.”</p>
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<b>Patient</b>	<p>“Right now, I try to do as little as possible because everything hurts.”</p>
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<b>Clinician</b>	<p>“Here’s why you should do just the opposite. When you avoid moving, you lose mobility, strength and endurance. This intensifies your protective pain response. Imagine you have an alarm system in your house that is so sensitive that it goes off when your cat walks around. Your brain is that alarm system and it’s been conditioned to react that way to movement. As a result, you feel pain at very low levels of activity. Together, we will gradually increase your level of activity while staying below the ‘alarm.’ Eventually, the alarm, or your pain response, will go off only when it really needs to, such as when you injure yourself.”</p>
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## Returning to activity

First, we will identify the amount of activity you can do without increasing your pain. We will work at this level for one to two weeks. Then, as your body adapts, we will slowly increase your activity, probably by 5 to 10 percent each week. This may seem like a slow process, but it will allow your body to adjust. You should expect to continue to have some pain, as you increase what you do. And over time, your pain should decrease as well.