

Guide to the MSK Online Programme (MOP)

Persistent pain (also sometimes called chronic pain) refers to pain that lasts beyond 3-6 months. Often persistent pain does not resolve with physical or medical treatment. Our Patients tell us that group-based approaches (e.g. Pain Management Programmes or virtual pain groups) can be useful; they help people to move towards living a life that they would like, with pain.

Covid-19 led us to develop a shorter online version of a pain self-management programme. For some people this is something they can commit to where they would not be able to attend for an in-person pain management programme. We are therefore continuing to run these programmes, alongside face-to-face group Pain management programmes.

What Happens if I Have Been Referral for a MOP?

After you have completed an assessment with a member of the Persistent Pain Team, you may be interested in attending an online Programme to help you live better with pain, (MOP: MSK Online Programme). This leaflet is designed to help you decide if you would like to join a MOP group.

What is the MOP?

The MOP is an 8 session (twice-weekly) online psychoeducational group for people living with persistent pain.

The MOP offers the chance to learn self-management strategies to help you to make changes to live more meaningfully with pain. This approach does not offer a “cure” for pain but rather helps you to start expanding your world so that pain is a smaller part of your world.

The group also allows you some opportunity to connect with others living with pain in the Sussex area as we know that it can be helpful to connect with others also living with pain. During the MOP you will start to:

- Learn about theories of pain
- Look at the impact of pain on your thoughts, feelings & behaviours
- Learn about pacing of activity and rest
- Develop skills to manage pain flare-ups
- See how to set manageable goals for yourself
- Understand how movement can help in managing your pain

How Does it Work?

You would attend 2 x 1 hour online sessions per week as a group. These sessions run over 4 weeks (8 sessions). There is also a 1 hour group follow-up session 6 weeks after the group sessions end.

The MOP is run on the Microsoft Teams video conference platform.

You will be invited to an online 'orientation session' before the actual group sessions to meet other group members and also to get familiar with Microsoft Teams. You will be emailed links to the group sessions beforehand.

You will also be sent weekly links to videos about what we know about living well with pain (4-5 short videos at most each week); these have been made by the team.

What Can You Expect From Us?

- The group is facilitated by members of a multidisciplinary team which includes: a clinical psychologist and a physiotherapist.
- We use your questions about the videos as the basis for the group discussions - obviously then people in the group need to have watched the videos!
- Making changes in how we work with pain can be both physically & emotionally challenging. The team aim to support you to start gently making these difficult changes at your own pace in gently & kindly.

What am I Expected to do?

The group involves time, commitment and also the technology (stable internet connection, a device such as a laptop, iPad or tablet) for you to get the most of it.

You need to be able to commit to attend all the sessions & also to watch the videos between the sessions. We have found, where people miss sessions, or do not keep up with watching the video material between sessions they struggle to follow the group discussions, make changes and catch up with the group conversations that are taking place, and so are less able to use the group to make helpful changes.

We cannot offer people another MOP, so please do think beforehand whether you can commit to attend sessions and to watch the videos between the sessions.

The MOP involves being able to practice applying some of the techniques that we discuss in your everyday life. This is what makes the most difference in the long-term and it also allows you to see what aspects feel tricky to do.

We try to allow the opportunity for everyone to contribute to the group within the time constraints.

Confidentiality

You can find out about how we manage your records and maintain your confidentiality (within legal requirements to keep you and others safe) [on this page](#).

You will be part of a group and together (the group and the team), we aim to provide support and create a safe enough space for people attending to explore putting these ideas into practice.

If you are offered a place in a group, you will be sent information talking about how all group members (including you) can play their part in supporting each other to feel safe and respected.

We discuss group 'guidelines' in the group orientation session, to allow people to talk about what this means to them, you will be expected to respect these guidelines and those we outline around behaviour and confidentiality, for the benefit of the whole group.

Along with this information, will also be further information about what to do if you have technology problems which make it hard to access the online sessions.

Prior to signing up for the group, please think about if you have a private space you can use to attend. (This is so that other group members will not be overheard — part of group confidentiality). If you are not sure about what this means, please discuss it with the team.