

## Session Summary: Fatigue and Pain

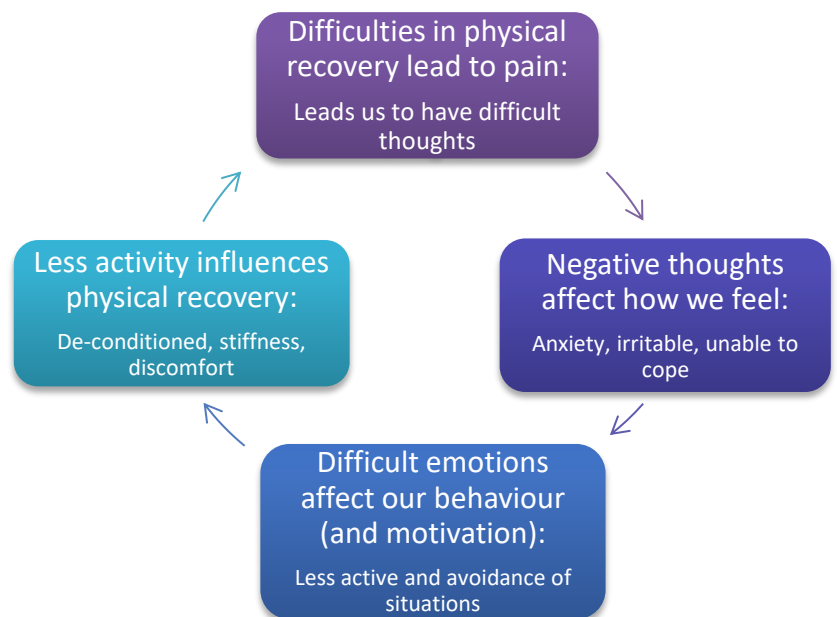
### Understanding Pain

Pain is a signal that can come from different parts of the body and is common following major injury. Pain can be acute (short, sharp and severe) or chronic (pain that lasts for a prolonged period). Pain is complex and can be influenced by many factors including: mood, adherence to medication and the type of injury you have experienced.

### The Pain Cycle

Pain can have an impact on thoughts, feelings and behaviour, influencing your recovery.

This cycle can be interrupted by using strategies to change thoughts or behaviour when presented with difficulties as a result of pain. This is challenging, so it's important to find strategies that work for you!



### Top-Tips to manage pain

The best way to manage pain will differ from person to person. However evidence suggests some successful methods could include:

#### Thinking differently:

- **Manage your thoughts** – become aware of negative or self critical thoughts. It may help to keep a thought diary.
- **Use distraction techniques** – Find enjoyable activities or tasks which help focus your attention away from feelings of pain.
- **Relaxation/Mindfulness** – to improve your sense of wellbeing and reduce stress

#### Do things differently:

- **Monitor what you do** – recording in a diary or on your phone what you do will help you understand patterns in your experience of pain (remember to record achievements – however small!)
- **Set SMART goals** – set a goal which is Specific, Measurable, Accurate, and Realistic and Time specific goal which is meaningful to you.
- **Pace yourself** – do things little and often, gradually increase your activity.

## Understanding Fatigue

Fatigue can be described as a feeling of exhaustion that affects our thinking, feelings, behaviours and body. Fatigue is often misunderstood as *'just tiredness'* when in fact it has a range of types, symptoms and can vary in severity:

### Physical

- Exhaustion
- Muscle weakness
- Worsens over the day

### Psychological

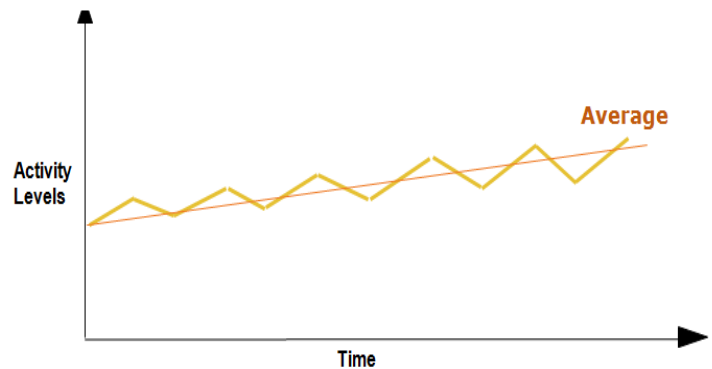
- Effects thoughts, feelings and behaviours
- Increased distress
- Impacts confidence and self-esteem

### Cognitive

- Extra effort
- Slowed processing speed
- Poor Attention

## Top-Tips to manage fatigue

- 1. Pacing yourself** (helps avoid the boom/bust cycle):
  - Choose a starting point of what you can manage on your worst day and build gradually from there.
  - Do it little and often.
  - Know your limitations / know when to rest.



- 2. Prioritising:** When we don't have enough energy to do everything it is helpful to prioritise important activities.
- 3. Planning:** By planning what to do each day it is easier to monitor energy levels. Plan time to take regular breaks during and after activities.



## Goals

Goal-setting is essential to achieving positive outcomes in rehabilitation – we suggest that you make your goals “SMART”:

### Specific

- Make it clear what you wish to work on

### Measurable

- Work out a way of quantifying your success

### Achievable

- Your goal should be something you can plan to achieve

### Realistic

- Practical in a way that can be attained in real life

### Time-Bound

- Helps to make the goal more focussed

## My Goal

Choosing a goal can help you to develop a clear, achievable plan to work towards Managing your pain and/or fatigue. You may wish to write your goal here;

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If you have any questions about the Major Trauma Wellbeing Group please contact:

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