



The Pain-Disability Prevention (PDP) Program

An Evidence-Based Treatment Program for Reducing Pain-Related Disability

The Pain Disability Prevention (PDP) Program was developed as a community-based standardized treatment program designed to specifically target psychosocial risk factors for pain-related disability. The risk factors targeted by the PDP Program include fear of movement/re-injury, catastrophizing, perceived disability and depression. Psychosocial factors were chosen as targets of the intervention on the basis of emerging research supporting their relevance to return-to-work outcomes, and their amenability to change through intervention. The PDP Program is designed to complement existing community-based services for the treatment of occupational injury (e.g., medical management and physiotherapy). By adding a psychosocial risk-factor targeted intervention to existing community-based treatment services, the goal is to establish virtual multidisciplinary treatment teams at the level of the community.



Activity as the Key to Rehabilitation Success

The client and clinician meet on a weekly basis for a maximum of 10 weeks. The Program can be terminated prior to 10 weeks if the client is ready to return to work. In the initial weeks of the Program, the focus is on developing a structured activity schedule for the client in order to facilitate resumption of pre-injury activities. Activity goals are established in order to promote resumption of family, social and occupational roles. Different treatment modules are invoked to target specific obstacles to rehabilitation progress (e.g., depression, catastrophic thinking, fear of movement and perceived disability). In the final stages of the Program, the intervention focuses on activities that will facilitate re-integration into the workplace.



Maintaining Consistency in Treatment Delivery

During the first session of the PDP Program, clients are invited to view the PDP Information Video. The PDP Information Video features interviews with medical and rehabilitation experts on the factors that contribute to successful recovery from musculoskeletal injury. The information content emphasizes the benign nature of most musculoskeletal injuries, the importance of activity involvement and return to work, the dangers of liberal use of narcotic analgesics, and briefly describes the goals of the PDP Program. The video was conceived as a vehicle for providing important medical/rehabilitation/reassurance information that is often difficult to communicate effectively within the time constraints of typical physician visits.

Clients are also provided with a copy of the PDP Client Workbook. The PDP Client Workbook serves as the platform for the implementation of many of the intervention components of the program and also serves to maximize fidelity to treatment protocol. The Client Workbook is formatted as a daily agenda to facilitate the tasks of goal setting, activity scheduling, and graded activity involvement. The PDP Client Workbook contains detailed information on the basics of activity planning, structured scheduling, and strategies for overcoming barriers to activity involvement. The PDP Client Workbook also provides the client with a summary of the central themes of the treatment sessions.

Impact of the PDP Program

Research conducted to date has supported the effectiveness of the PDP Program. A preliminary study yielded encouraging results with 60 percent of PDP treated clients returning to work, as compared to an 18 percent base rate of return (Sullivan and Stanish, 2003). A recent study showed that, in a sample of 215 injured workers who completed the PDP Program, treatment-related reductions in pain catastrophizing significantly predicted return to work (Sullivan et al., 2005). This research illustrates how the PDP Program might represent a viable approach to the management of work disability associated with musculoskeletal disorders.

For more information about PDP, training workshops, or referrals please contact: info@PDP-PGAP.com or visit our website at www.PDP-PGAP.COM

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