

Psychological Implications of Chronic Illness



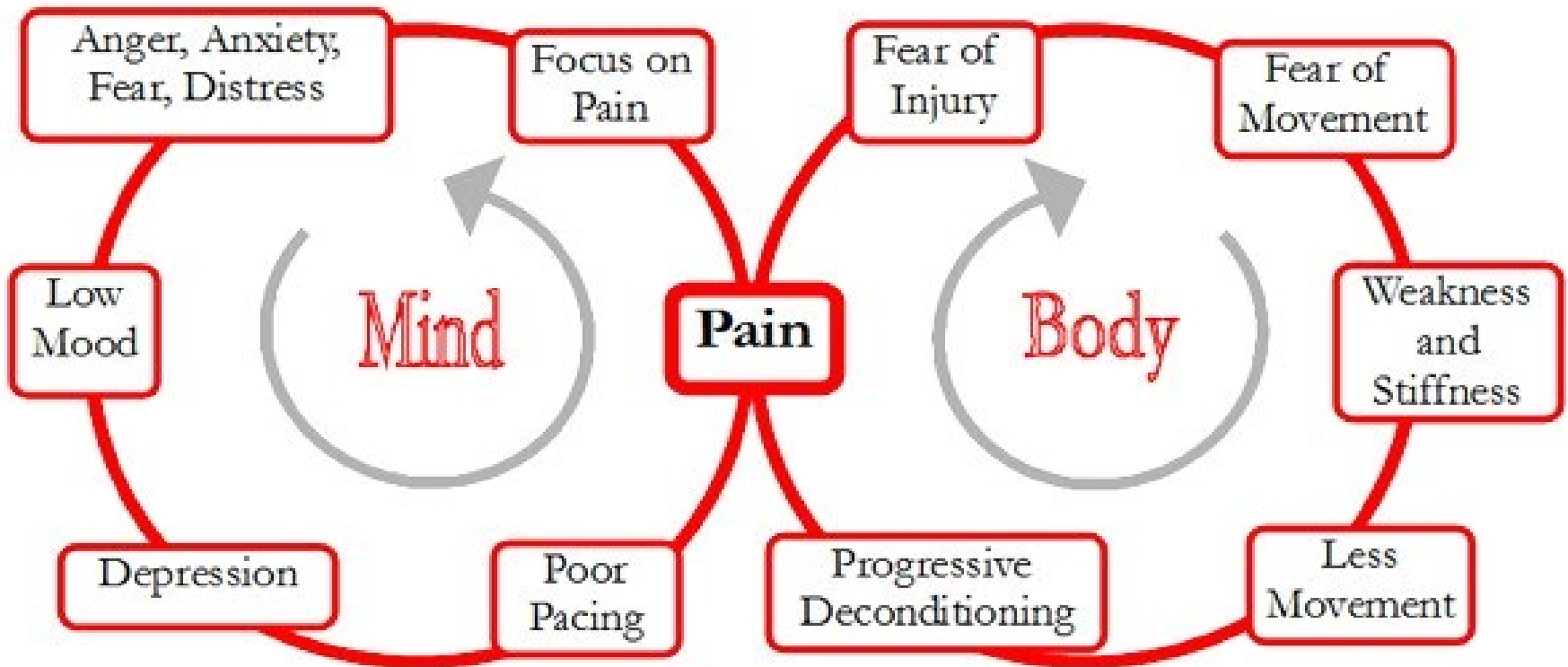
The Chronic Cycle of Pain/Illness



Coping Models

- Cognitive adaption: emphasizes illness acceptance and perceptions of control over illness
- Personality Model: role of personality factors in adjustment (optimism vs. negativity)
- **Stress and Coping Model: strategies used by patients to deal with adaptive tasks imposed by disease-**
 - **Acknowledges that chronic illness consists of several challenges, but appraises and finds ways to cope with chronic illness**
 - **Self regulation which leads to dealing more proactively with pain/illness**
 - **More active role in adjusting to challenges posed by pain/illness**

Pain Affects Body and Mind



Chronic Pain/Illness Affects on Family

- Balance of family changes
- Changes family roles, responsibilities and boundaries
- Spouses face challenge of:
 - Balancing needs of person with chronic pain/illness and their own needs
 - Tired; emotionally drained
 - Feelings of powerlessness
 - May need to restructure family roles and responsibilities

How Families Can Cope

○“Relationship - Focused Coping”

- “focusing on maintaining the quality of the relationship as part of the coping process.”
 - Balance between self and other with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the relationship above either spouse’s needs.



Suggested Strategies

- **View illness/pain as a couple/family**
 - Discuss relationship implications
 - Better able to anticipate how relationship may change and prepare for any difficulties
 - “in this together”
- **Use similar or complementary coping strategies**
 - Understand and talk about each other’s coping method
 - Promotes better understanding and respect for coping style
 - Compromise, communicate about feelings to each other, provide some alone time, remember to say “I love you.”
 - Communicate with each other
 - Communicate constructively
 - Be empathetic, talk openly

Suggested Strategies (cont.)

Support each other

- What will be supportive to your partner? To you?
- Don't be hesitant to ask for help
 - Important both for patient, spouse, family
- Social support

Integrate tasks of illness/pain into family routine

- Helps develop a coordinated, cooperative approach to dealing with illness/pain

Take care of each other's physical and psychological health

- Important for every family member
 - Learn relaxation or meditation techniques
 - Exercise
 - Alone time
 - Have fun

Define your new normal

Resources

- De Ridder, Denise, Geenen Rinie, Kuijer Roeline, van Middendorp Henriët. Psychological adjustments to chronic illness. *The Lancet*, vol. 372, 2008, pp. 246-255.
- Lawrence, Erika. IG Living! *The Impact of Chronic Illness on the Family*. 2012, pp. 20-25