

pain connection

helping people with chronic pain and their families

Relieving Pain in America

By Malcolm Herman

The eagerly anticipated report of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) was released on 29 June under the title “Relieving Pain in America—A Blueprint for Transforming Prevention, Care, Education, and Research.” The full report is available on the IOM website www.IOM.edu and it was well worth the wait. The Committee has produced a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the current state of treatment of pain in America, clearly stating from the outset that “effective pain management is a moral imperative, a professional responsibility, and the duty of people in the healing professions”. The report emphasizes that chronic pain can be a disease in itself requiring comprehensive treatment which recognizes that pain results from a combination of biological and psychosocial factors. It calls for a cultural transformation in the way that pain is viewed and treated, emphasizing the need for family, employers, health insurers, and others to recognize that chronic pain sufferers have a serious condition. The section on education challenges is particularly interesting and it is encouraging to read the part on patient education which opens with a quote from Pain Connection’s Executive Director Gwenn Herman, LCSW-C, DCSW, testimony to the Committee—“I had to relearn how to live.”

Among the principal findings of the report are that 116 million adult Americans suffer from chronic pain (excluding children and acute pain sufferers), which costs the economy at least \$560–\$635 billion a year, an amount equal to \$2,000 a year for each person living in

the United States. These numbers are likely to increase as the population ages and health care costs continue their upward climb.

The recommendations of the IOM Committee are summarized in what they call “Blueprint for Transforming Pain Prevention, Care, Education and Research”, which provides a list of specific steps required to be taken by all medical providers and organizations involved in the treatment of chronic pain. These recommendations include: creation of a comprehensive population health-level strategy for pain prevention, treatment, management and research; development of strategies to reduce the barriers to pain care; collaboration between pain specialists and primary care physicians; designation of a lead institute at the National Institutes of Health to be responsible for pain research; improvement of the collection and reporting of data on pain; promotion and enabling of self-management of pain; revision of reimbursement policies; expansion and redesign of educational programs; improvement of curriculum for healthcare professionals; increase in the number of healthcare professionals with advanced expertise in pain care; and finally an expansion of the research into chronic pain.

The committee should be complimented for the thoroughness of the report and for their willingness to tackle every aspect of chronic pain—medical, societal, educational and psychological. Implementation of the recommendations should be a national priority and organizations like Pain Connection will play a vital role in publicizing the findings and insisting on their implementation.

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“From Research To Clinical Practice”

Pain Awareness Month Symposium

By Christine Muscolo

This past September, Maryland Senator Jamie Raskin and Honorary Board member of Pain Connection, helped Pain Connection kick off the Pain

Upcoming Meetings

Pain Connection has been changing the formats of its programs to provide the latest and best possible services to the pain community.

FILLING THE GAPS IN PAIN CARE

Fridays, 27 January–16 March,
9:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Must register and be interviewed.

Fee required. See www.pain-connection.org/updates/fillingthegaps.html

MINDFULNESS SESSION

Fridays, 27 January–16 March,
1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.

Must register and fee required.

See article on page 5 for more information.

“PAIN CONNECTION LIVE”

CONFERENCE CALLS

1st Thursdays, 1:30–2:30 p.m. EST

3rd Thursdays, 7:00–8:00 p.m. EST

Registration is required for each call.

For more information, email info@painconnection.org

or call

301-231-0008.

VIRGINIA SUPPORT GROUP

Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine

6829 Elm Street, Suite 300

McLean, VA 22101

2nd Wednesdays, 1:30–3:00 p.m.

NO MEETING IN JANUARY

SPEAKERS SERIES

Holiday Park Senior Center

3950 Ferrara Drive

Wheaton, MD 20906

240-777-4999 (directions only)

Selected Mondays, 1:30–3:00 p.m.

See article on page 6 for upcoming dates and topics.

Awareness Month Symposium entitled “From Research to Clinical Practice”.

Participants were welcomed to the event by Pain Connection Executive Director, Gwenn Herman, who provided an overview of the organization’s history and the impacts of chronic pain.

Proclamations for Pain Awareness Month (September 2011) were presented to Pain Connection by Peter C. Fosselman, Deputy Secretary of State, on behalf of Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley and Chuck Short, Special Assistant to Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett. The proclamations recognized the significance of the chronic pain health crisis, and the importance of increased awareness and understanding of the treatment of chronic pain.

The event featured presentations by three exceptional speakers. The first speaker of the day was Dr. Jay Shah—Director of the Medical Rehabilitation Training Program and Senior Staff Psychiatrist, Rehabilitation Medicine Department, Clinical Center National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. He presented his research on the “Scientific Advances in Myofascial Pain and Sensitization” where he detailed processes in the neurobiology of myofascial pain syndrome (muscle pain). He discussed myofascial trigger points (MTiPs), which are nodules in the muscle that are the origin of muscle pain and demonstrated how these points contain high amounts of chemicals that increase inflammation and sensitivity to pain. Participants found it helpful to learn about the chemical interactions in myofascial pain that allow pain to grow in intensity and spread to other areas of the body. Dr. Shah also introduced the latest research and technology in identifying and measuring properties of MTiPs.

The second speaker was Dr. Gary Kaplan—Founder, President and Medical Director of the Kaplan Clinic and the Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine in McLean, Virginia. He spoke about the complexities of “Treating Chronic Pain and Depression”, a common co-morbidity with unique implications and treatment needs. It was fascinating to learn that the majority of people who suffer from pain also suffer from depression, and that the majority of people who suffer from depression also suffer from pain.

Dr. Kaplan said that these patients experience a unique disease process that leads to the co-morbidity, and it also provides an opportunity for treatment. The process has been named Central Nervous System Sensitization Syndrome (CSS) and involves inflammatory damage of nervous system structures and functioning. He also discussed his approach to treatment of CSS that avoids medications and encourages healthy eating, exercise, and sleep practices.

The final speaker was Dr. Alan Pocinki, Associate Clinical Professor at George Washington University School of Medicine who specializes in treating people with chronic fatigue syndrome. He spoke about “Developing an Individualized Treatment Plan for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome” stressing the importance of



Chuck Short, Special Assistant to Montgomery County Executive (center), presenting PAM proclamation to Neil Goldstein, Board President (left), Gwenn Herman, Executive Director (right).

thorough patient evaluations in selecting targeted treatment approaches. His practice focuses on treating symptoms as “parts of the whole”. He shared his innovative insight into the complex body interactions in chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) that necessitate assessing the entire individual and creating unique treatment plans. Since any number of causes could be affecting the body’s systems and causing the CFS, evaluation and treatment must address the underlying causes of each depression, pain, and poor sleep patterns.

In their feedback, the symposium’s participants expressed that the event was very informative and that learning about the forward progress in the field was an encouraging experience.

Pain Connection would like to thank all of the special guests, speakers, attendees and volunteers that made this event such a success. We thank the following local businesses for their contributions to the event’s success Mykonos Grill and Dunkin Donuts.

Pain Connection Receives Grants

A discretionary \$2,500 grant from Healthcare Initiatives has been awarded to Pain Connection. The grant will be used for Pain Connection’s Filling the Gaps (FIG) program. It is an eight week program designed for people with pain and their families to improve their ability to manage chronic pain.

A \$5,000 Purdue Pharma, L.P. educational grant was received for the Pain Awareness Month (PAM) symposium held in September 2011. This grant allowed Pain Connection to educate health care professionals and spread awareness of new research and treatments in the field of chronic pain.

Pain Connection Board Updates

Mary French, former Board President, has now become an Honorary Board Member, and continues to work on the Program Committee. Mary facilitates the Filling the Gaps (FIG) and Mindfulness Meditation classes and is working on the data collected from FIG to write an abstract.

Michael Sitar, former Director, is filling in as Board Treasurer and represents Pain Connection at community meetings and conferences.

We thank them for their dedication to Pain Connection.

New Board Members

We would like to welcome Honorary Board Member Dr. Gary Kaplan, Elsie Ferguson, M.S., PH D. and Frances Stanford, CPA to Pain Connection’s Board.

Gary Kaplan, M.D., D.O., graduated from Des Moines University College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Kaplan is the founder and medical director of The Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, McLean, VA. A pioneer and leader in the field of integrative medicine, Dr. Kaplan is one of only 19 physicians in the country board-certified in both family medicine and pain medicine. He is also board-certified in Medical Acupuncture and is a fellow of the American Board of Medical Acupuncture. Diplomate American Board of Family Practice Certified, Diplomate American Academy of Pain Medicine, Faculty Appointment Georgetown University School of Medicine, Washington, DC.

Dr. Kaplan has presented at Pain Connection’s Speaker Series, at a professional training conference at Holy Cross Hos-

pital and as a guest speaker at our 2011 Pain Awareness Symposium. Dr. Kaplan collaborates with Pain Connection by providing space in his clinic and social worker, Jodi Brayton, to facilitate our Virginia support group.

Dr. Elsie Ferguson graduated from the University of Pittsburgh’s Graduate Division of Natural Sciences Psychology Department and was a US Public Health Service Fellow in Clinical Psychology for four years. She has worked in Bethesda Maryland since 1979 as a licensed psychologist specializing in clinical psychophysiology. She does bio feedback, neuro-feedback and cognitive behavior therapy in the context of behavioral medicine. She was President and Advisory Board member for a decade of the Mid-Atlantic Society for Biofeedback and Behavioral Medicine and recipient of its Distinguished Service Award.

Dr. Ferguson will be presenting at Pain Connection’s 2012 Speaker’s Series on neuro-feedback and is working on gathering information from our Filling the Gaps in Pain Care program to write an abstract.

Frances Stanford is a Maryland-licensed CPA and has an MBA in Finance from Hood College and an AA in accounting from Montgomery College. She has over twenty years of accounting experience working at small, medium and Fortune 100 corporations in various positions. She is extremely interested in small business and staff training and originally began volunteering as a Pro Bono Consultant through the Montgomery County Volunteer Center. Frances has collaborated with our accountant Tim Abercrombie who is working with Pain Connection through a grant from the Nonprofit Advancement Fund.

Membership

We Need You! Chronic pain is still a new and developing field in medicine and mental health.

We Need You! There still is not enough awareness by the public to try and solve this debilitating problem.

We Need You! Chronic pain is not pressing on the minds of government, foundations and private donors.

We Need You! In order to support and further develop out programs.

Take a Stand! Help solve this pressing problem, become a member and grow with us!

Join Pain Connection Today!!!

- Your payment of a \$40.00 annual membership fee may be made in the following ways:
- Credit card on-line through our secure server.
- Check mailed to Pain Connection with completed application form.
- Fax your completed application and credit card information to 301-231-6668.
- Through Network For Good which is a secure service. Please also send in an application form for our records.

Your membership benefits include:

- DISCOUNTS of up to 25% with local wellness providers
- Monthly notices of support group meetings and the Professional Speaker Series by mail, email and/or phone call
- Chronic Pain resources
- Pain Connection's newsletter
- Contact information for your local support leader (on request)
- Health care practitioner referral list for your geographic area (on request)

New Program: The Women's Group

Pain Connection's new program "The Women's Group" began in November 2011. The purpose of the group is to teach new coping skills and educate women about how pain affects the nervous system. Support will be given by participants working on problem solving and socializing. Using Pain Connection's book *Making the Invisible Visible* guided imagery, meditation and breathing techniques are being taught. Gwenn Herman, LCSW-C, DCSW, Founder and Executive Director and person with chronic pain is facilitating this group.

The group is held on Fridays from 11am-noon, November 4, 11, 18, December 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30. The cost is \$160 for all eight sessions. Pain Connection does not take insurance but provides participants a receipt to give to insurance companies some of which do reimburse for this group.

Practitioners: Please refer appropriate patients/clients to future groups. If you are interested in setting up a group in your area or clinic, the requirements will be an experienced group facilitator that is a licensed mental health professional and appropriate space to run the group. Pain Connection will need to train the person. If you know of someone please contact our office at 301-231-0008.

"Pain Connection Live" Conference Calls Achieve International Success

The "Pain Connection Live" Conference Calls which are open to people with chronic pain, family members, significant others, health care professionals and concerned individuals completed its first year. Participants called from Puerto Rico and even Guatemala! They called from many states including California,

Colorado, Washington, Florida, Maryland, Virginia, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, Georgia, Alabama, Pennsylvania and more.

Conference calls were usually led by Gwenn Herman, LCSW-C, DCSW, Founder and Executive Director of Pain Connection. Special thanks go to Pain Connection board member Kim Thompson who led a call on gentle movement and to Cindy Steinberg, American Pain Foundation Action Network Leader for Massachusetts, who led a group on self-esteem.

Some of the conference calls were taped. Each "call" has a topic dealing with different ways of coping with chronic pain and developing new skills. Participants have the option to discuss the topic or remain silent. Breathing techniques and guided imagery are taught in the last 15 minutes of each call. Participation in a conference call is free. Standard long distance charges apply to the phone call.

Afternoon calls are held on the first Thursday of the month from 1:30-2:30 p.m. EST. Evening calls are held on the third Thursday of the month from 7:00-8:00 p.m. EST. Participants need to register for each call in which they want to participate. For more information, email info@painconnection.org or call 301-231-0008. Conference DIAL IN NUMBER: (610)214-0000; Participant ACCESS CODE: 171649#

After dialing in and entering the access code, we request a first name or you can be silent.

First Filling the Gaps in Pain Care Group Met Its Goals

Our new program "Filling the Gaps in Pain Care" introduced in the spring of 2011 is an 8-week program designed for people with pain and their families to improve their ability to manage chronic

pain more effectively in collaboration with their health care providers, resulting in an increased sense of well being and improved quality of life. Due to its success, it will be offered again beginning 27 January through 16 March 2012.

Evidenced-based practice tailored to meet the needs of people with pain

- One-on-one individual assessment.
- Mind body skills.
- Vital self care skills.
- Learn about complementary and alternative approaches including mindfulness-based practice, biofeedback, guided imagery, nutrition/herbs, gentle movement, acupuncture and massage.
- Treatment planning.
- Family and social interactions.
- Self advocacy that works!

Class description

Even before classes begin participants meet with one of our clinicians for individual assessment. Each week the two hour class, paced for people with pain, includes both didactic and experiential skill building modules with an emphasis on participants utilizing their own internal healing abilities. Clients learn skills to manage pain each week.

Cutting edge features

- Treating chronic pain is complex and affects people physically, emotionally, cognitively, socially, spiritually and environmentally.
- Caring licensed clinicians, many who have personal experience with pain
- Small groups to increase individual attention and support.
- Significant others are included
- Weekly sessions and daily practice of learned skills.
- Outcome criteria is measured and impact is assessed for pain intensity, physical and emotional functioning.
- Cost-effective program that can complement and enhance other treatment.

Data is being compiled from this group and an abstract will be published.

Registration and fee information for next program session

Dates and time: 8-week program, Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., 27 January–16 March 2012
Session costs: \$250 for non-members; \$225 for current paying members, which includes the cost of an initial interview, manual and eight sessions. Family members are free. Receive a \$25 rebate if you attend all sessions and return the 6 month follow-up forms. Payment must be made in full before first class.
Location: Pain Connection, 12320 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852
For more information or to register: Call 301–231–0008

Mindfulness Session to Start in New Year on 27 January!

“Learn to rest and reconnect through Mindfulness Practice”

“Together we will learn and practice ways to relieve anxiety, stress, and pain through awareness and relaxation”, says Instructor Mary French RN, MSW, LCSW-C, Graduate of Internship program Center for Mindfulness, University of Massachusetts under direction of Jon Kabat Zinn in 1994. Mary has 16 years of practice incorporating mindfulness based practices as a clinical social worker and nurse.

- Learn how meditation affects the body and the mind and can improve health and wellbeing.

- Practice reconnecting to the body and mind.
- Explore your own body and mind, increasing awareness of your inner and outer landscape and personal challenges.

Registration and fee information for next program session

Dates and time: 8-week program, Fridays, 1:30-3:30 p.m., 27 January–16 March 2012
Program cost: \$325 Non-members; \$295 Current paying members
Location: Pain Connection, 12320 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852
For more information or to register: Call 301–231–0008
Please bring: Yoga mat, bag lunch, zafu cushion if you desire, chairs will be available.

Mindfulness is based on ancient Buddhist practices of Vipassana (“Insight”) Meditation and was first introduced into mainstream hospital based programs back in the late 1970’s by Jon Kabat Zinn author of “Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and illness.”



Members of the Mindfulness Program practice ways to relieve anxiety, stress, and pain through awareness and relaxation.

Give a Great Gift and Support Pain Connection Too!

Pain Connection's *Making the Invisible Visible: A Chronic Pain Manual for Health Care Providers* is a comprehensive and unique publication that contains up-to-date information on chronic pain, exercises and handouts for developing coping skills and strategies, and insights and experiences of chronic pain sufferers and their families.

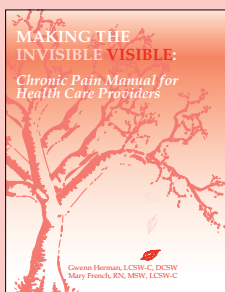
Written by Gwenn Herman and Mary French, who each have more than 25 years of experience as health providers and also live with chronic pain, the 262-page manual examines a wide range of topics including:

- Myths and misconceptions about chronic pain clients
- Psychosocial effects of chronic pain
- Pain Connection's Support Group Model
- Complementary and alternative treatments

"Ms. Herman's and Ms. French's firsthand exposure to the difficulties of getting healthcare providers to properly recognize, diagnose and treat chronic pain makes this an excellent resource for both professionals and patients."

Dr. Gary Kaplan, Founder and Medical Director of The Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine

The book is \$25.00, plus \$5.00 shipping and handling fees plus tax. To order, go to www.painconnection.org or call 301-231-0008.



Montgomery County Speakers Series

The 2011 Pain Connection's Speaker's Series held at Montgomery County's Holiday Park Senior Center included the following presenters:

May 23—Molly Carr, Nurse Practitioner, Herbalist and Nutritionist, "Diagnosing and Treating Pain"

June 27—Kim Thompson, Yoga Specialist, Feldenkrais®, Bones for Life®, "Feeling Stressed? Learn How to Relax with Body Meditation"

September 26—Paula Mintzies, DSW, LCSW, "Learn to Use the Relaxation Response and Energy Medicine"

October 24—Anita Bains, APRN, BC, "Learn to use the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) a self-acupressure technique"

November 28—Malcolm Herman, Attorney, "Pain and the Law – Can the Law Feel Your Pain?"

2012 upcoming presenters will be:

January 23—Michael Sitar, PhD, "Learn about Biofeedback and Lowering Stress and Pain Levels"

February 27—Sheri R. Abrams, Attorney at Law, Needham Mitnick & Pollack, "Social Security Disability & Special Needs Planning Updates".

March 26—Elsie Ferguson, PhD, "Better Breathing for a Better Life"

April 23—Dr. Jay Shah, NIH, "Scientific Advances in Myofascial Pain and Sensitization"

All presentations are held from 1:15–2:15 p.m. at the Holiday Park Senior Center, 3950 Ferrara Drive, Wheaton, MD.

Members' Forum

A story of hope

By Julie Litten

As a physician assistant (P.A.), all of my training and experience did not prepare me for being a person with chronic pain. I learned how to diagnose and treat many illnesses and conditions. I prescribed medications and did patient education. Pain was just a symptom to be treated, and chronic pain as a separate illness was never mentioned.

My journey into chronic pain began two years ago, when a few 'minor' accidents led to a total of five herniated discs. I had the worst pain of my life and couldn't do most of what I had been able to do before. I began the familiar story of emergency room visits, going to doctors, and trying various medications and treatments. I never told the providers that I was a P.A., because I found from past experience that it got in the way. But because I was a P.A, I came away with a sense of disappointment and frustration that took me to the edge of despair. And still, I had unrelenting pain. I tried to get information from my books and the Internet, and found a lot of diagnoses, but no clear solutions. Pain seemed like the unexplored territory, the last frontier. And, of course, there were the horror stories of failed spinal surgeries.

The journey was harrowing. I had never met a patient, or anyone in my personal life, who had a story like mine. My family just wanted me to get 'cured,' and waited for me to get back to my old self. I was not a candidate for surgery, according to top neurosurgeons. Physical therapy was too painful, and medications did not take the pain away, but just dulled my senses and my brain. Time did not seem to be my friend either. Every day began and ended with pain, endless days and sleepless nights. I started down the slippery slope of

depression. Who would be happy in this situation?

I went through months of fighting my new reality, and at the same time learning to find my way. I grasped at anything that would help to distract me from pain—music, art, TV, my dogs, and occasional trips out into the world. I could not drive and needed help with household tasks. I learned to rest when I needed to, to detach from too much stress, and to take care of myself in a way that I never had to before. Gradually, I built a support team of caring and knowledgeable doctors. My family learned not to expect a cure, but still hoped for one.

Last spring, I remembered the name of an organization that had been helpful to a friend of mine. Since the computer filled many of my hours now, I searched for Pain Connection and found out that a brand new class was starting in a few days. Filling the Gaps in Pain Care became the next step in my journey. I was a bit apprehensive, because I had never been in a room filled with people in chronic pain, and I was still in pain myself. There was a textbook, lectures, and homework assignments. The difference was that the subject was about my life, and how I could improve it. For eight consecutive Friday mornings, I showed up for class. I learned about the neurobiology of pain, and how pain affects every aspect of a person's life. There were lectures on sleep, nutrition, exercise, and addressing mental health concerns. We learned about the use of acupuncture, massage, and biofeedback in the treatment of chronic pain. We learned the importance of pacing and practiced mindfulness meditation. And we shared stories...I met amazing people, who had been through similar experiences to mine. That alone was healing.

I try not to think too much about how the story began, but to see new possibili-

ties unfolding. I have learned so much about chronic pain, and would like to help others avoid the frustration and isolation that I went through. Today, I walked into my living room to check on a few of my plants. I noticed the Christmas cactus, which has looked like it was on its last legs for a very long time. There, on the end of one of its leaves, was a beautiful, hot pink flower. It was a wonderful surprise, one of those small things that can make my day. I had been looking at myself as less than, as incomplete. I have chronic pain, and there are still a lot of things I cannot do; but I have hope, and I still have something to give.

A new beginning

Dear Gwenn,
The conference (American Pain Foundation's Western Summit) really shifted my outlook on chronic pain and the many

different ways in which it can be treated. It was also a very different emotional experience because in my life, especially in the last 5 years that I've been in pain and dealing with the implications that is Chiari Malformation, I felt much older than my actual age. But when I sat down and listened to the lectures I felt emotionally inexperienced with what a diagnosis of chronic pain meant for my life, and how not to be discouraged by it. I'm feeling like my clock was reset this October and a new journey is beginning, but I am moving on with everything I've learned in the past five years.

Sometimes I feel like I'm trying to build myself a home on a riverbank, but the ground under my foundation is being eroded and the parts of my house that I've worked to build are falling apart because the foundation is no longer on solid ground. And this process is being

Members' Speaker Corner

"Upheaval"

By Sarah Woods

Derailment, upheaval,
What word makes sense to people?
Because nothing makes sense any-
more
Beneath all the blood and gore
That my life has become.
What more can I recover from?

Why resilience
Instead of brilliance?
Jarred and scarred,
Bruised and confused
From what life has thrown.
This is not what I want to own.

I guess we never have a choice
Between life and a voice
Does pain make us
Or break us?
Sometimes I don't feel the might
Or the will to fight.

"I want to go home"

By Sarah Woods

I want to go home...
To the body I knew
But no longer know,
What the Pain has erased
And I can no longer go.

I want to go home...
To the life lived so freely
But chains now keep hold,
What the Pain has taken
And left me nowhere to go.

I want to go home...
To when the decision was mine
And I was not pushed out all alone,
What the Pain has isolated
And forced me to go.

I want to go home...
To a place I'm not sure exists
But refuse to give up on,
What the Pain tries to tame
And I can't help but blame.

repeated over and over. How am I ever supposed to feel safe in my home, my body, again with my foundation crumbling? And I can't help but feel that I was never even allowed a chance to build a substantial foundation because of the time in which my illness reared its ugly head, at 18. But then I play devil's advocate and point out certain experiences that gave me the wisdom and knowledge to be able to get through it. And honestly, at this point I know I can live through the catastrophes, but I'm having a really hard time with normal everyday life. It's hard to try and fit back in to the same world I left when I feel like a completely different person. And I have a hard time trying to subdue the panic I feel when I try to translate my experiences and knowledge to a career or something that can sustain me throughout the rest of my life.

Sarah Woods

Dear Sarah,
Your experience from the conference is awesome! It is an amazing experience to be with other people that share chronic pain. You see how they are dealing with it and it helps you identify what you've experienced. No one to judge or minimize your pain. It feels good not to be alone and feel like you are the only one that is going through this unwanted journey.

You say it beautifully of how pain has changed your world. Very poetic. One's foundation does get shaken and it changes. The art of developing a new life or 'recreating yourself' is to realize and accept that because of the physical changes in your body you must change with it. To live in the old body keeps one in darkness and depression. That's where all the strong emotions are held-anger, resentment, guilt, pity, being a victim, loneliness, hopelessness.... Because you are trying to live in the past with your old body.

Your foundation-your core-who you are-never changes. Your strengths are your strengths. We just learn to use them with the body we have now. We stay in the 'now' in the moment. The river bank that washed away was your past life. What springs forth from the river is your new house. Yes, we never asked for the changes but they are here. It's almost like Lego's. You build a house with so many pieces then you take it down and build a new one with the same pieces. It looks different but it's still your house-it is your body. It didn't crumble. Your feelings did. We all go through a grieving process. It is normal. It takes time....

What crumbled also is the vision or dream you had of yourself. That's where the panic lies. Who am I now? Who am I underneath this pain? Identity crisis again! It's scary because you have to change and alter your perception of yourself. But you, your core, is the same beautiful person that you were and will always be. One has to relearn how to love and honor oneself in the body you have now.

Your art work and poetry is the beauty of how your mind worked to create something out of this chaos. Through the dark light was born. You have a full future ahead of you.

From all your medical experiences you have learned the hard way(because we were never taught how to deal with pain) what works and doesn't work. You have lived and survived through several operations and days of being a '10+' in pain and you got through it. You learned also who will be there for you. You are very strong. Most people couldn't live through what you went through. Even though you feel vulnerable you are strong because you go on wanting to be better and stronger. Some people give up. This is where your safety comes in. your strengths, determination and your loved ones.

Thriving in your life is learning how to pace yourself. Learning what is truly important to you.

Gwenn Herman

Holiday Giving Gift Ideas

Making a donation to Pain Connection makes a wonderful gift for you to send to your friends and family. And your donation helps the thousands of people that use our free services!

It is tax deductible for you, and your friends and members of your family will know that the gift comes straight from the heart.

Send your gift donation and donations for your friends and family to Pain Connection at 12320 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852.
www.painconnection.org.

MORE great holiday giving gifts!

Pain Connection's "Pain Awareness Month Symposium, From Research to Clinical Practice" DVDs are now available. If you missed the symposium you can see presentations by Dr. Gary Kaplan, Osteopath, Pain Specialist, Kaplan Clinic, "Treating Depression and Chronic Pain" and Dr. Alan Pocinki, Internist, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFIDS) Specialist, "Developing an Individualized Treatment Plan for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome".

Cost for both DVDs: \$30 non-member; \$25 current paying member plus \$2.00 shipping and 6% MD sales tax (if applicable). **Cost for one DVD:** \$20 non-member; \$15 current paying member plus \$1 shipping and 6% MD sales tax (if applicable). **Priority shipping** is available for \$5.00.

Order now at: www.painconnection.org/updates/symposiumdvds.html.

Look for our new book being released soon!

Recent research says that doing puzzles helps to revive and grow your gray brain matter! *Painless Puzzles of the Acrostic Kind* written by our board president, Neil Goldstein can help you do just this!

Acrostic puzzles are a mix between a cryptogram and a traditional crossword puzzle. Solve the crossword clues to gradually fill in the letters in the hidden quote. As the quote begins to emerge, it will provide you with letter clues for the words you've not yet found. Work the puzzle back and forth between clue and the quote until you've revealed the solution!

For each \$25 contribution you will receive this book. All proceeds of this puzzle book benefit Pain Connection. RESERVE yours now!

You can support Pain Connection through various ways

United Way Campaign

Our United Way National Capitol Area Campaign designation is #8695. Our



United Way Combined Federal Campaign designation is #62705. Please designate us on your donor card at work or when making a donation! Also, tell your co-workers, family, and friends.

Donate your car to Pain Connection

Pain Connection has made arrangements with a company called CARS (Charitable Auto Resources) to enable us to accept donations of vehicles in an efficient and cost effective manner. If you have a vehicle (car, truck, RV, boat, motorcycle, or other vehicle) you no longer want or need, please consider donating it to Pain Connection. To learn more, call CARS at 877-537-5277. Read the Frequently



Asked Questions at www.pain-connection.org/donatecar.html.

GoodSearch.com



Raise money for Pain Connection just by searching the web and shopping online! Also, register to earn donations while going to your choice of thousands of participating restaurants, bars, and clubs—including many of your favorites. You can earn up to 6% for Pain Connection when you dine out.

Rockville Rewards

Ready to save? Spend \$25 to support Pain Connection and receive savings at over 75 local businesses!



Purchase a Rockville Rewards Card for \$25 from Pain Connection (www.painconnection.org/updates/rockvillerewards.html), and show it at participating Rockville businesses to receive a discount. The card is valid from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. As a cardholder, you will receive both Everyday Rewards, as well as a Weekly Hot Deal, providing a way for savvy shoppers to give a little, but get a lot!

Fifteen area non-profits are involved in the program and can potentially raise up to \$25,000 each through card sales. Give a little, get a lot. The only cost to you is the cost of the deal.

News Updates

Thank you to our outstanding volunteers!

Sherry Hutchinson, Cordelia Goldstein, Gael Creek, Neil Goldstein, Sharon Barrett, Kim Thompson, Dr. Michael Sitar, Malcolm Herman, Mary French, Dr. Elsie Ferguson, Kelli Yates, Frances Stanford, Christine Muscolo and Ginny Gong, who help keep Pain Connection programs growing.

Contributions of \$100 and over

Purdue Pharma L.P., Healthcare initiative, United Way, Neil Goldstein, Malcolm Herman, Kim Thompson, Michael Sitar, Elsie Ferguson, Frances Stanford, Sharon Hellman, Nancy Magnusson.

There are 116 million Americans suffering from chronic pain who are not receiving the treatment they need. Many fall between the cracks in their own private health insurance, workman's compensation, and disability benefits. Others are helpless because of a lack of insurance.

Pain Connection's mission is to help people with chronic pain improve their quality of life, decrease their sense of isolation and take a more active role in their treatment. We do this by providing information, psycho-social support, skills-building and training to people with chronic pain, their families and health care providers.

Pain Connection is a 501(c)(3) human health service agency and was incorporated in 1999.

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