

Healthy Living with Chronic Pain for Opioid Addiction

The Problem

According to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) chronic pain in the US is a major public health problem. It affects over 100 million adults and is a major cause of missed work. Chronic pain, defined as pain for greater than 12 weeks, can lead to additional problems including trouble sleeping, depression and anxiety, reduced quality of life, fatigue, and can lead to negative changes in the brain over time. (IOM, 2011) Chronic pain is often not treated adequately and there are concerns about the side effects of medical approaches and the potential for opioid addiction.

Opioids are powerful painkillers prescribed for chronic pain that can be highly addictive. Safe prescribing and use of opioids can improve patient safety, reduce harm, and prevent unintended consequences. Findings and recommendations from the IOM study on pain guided the development of the National Pain Strategy (NIH, 2016). These recommendations include:

- Recognition that chronic pain is a biopsychosocial condition that often requires integrated, multimodal, and interdisciplinary treatment. All of these components should be evidence-based.
- Recommendation that self-management programs can improve quality of life and are an important component of acute and chronic pain prevention and management.

Our Solution

The Arizona Living Well Institute is the state-wide hub for Stanford University's evidence-based Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME) programs. The Chronic Pain Self-Management Program (CPSMP) is called Healthy Living with Chronic Pain. These workshops are offered for 2 ½ hours, once a week, for 6 consecutive weeks. Throughout the workshop, participants have the opportunity to learn and practice many self-management skills. Healthy Living with Chronic Pain specifically addresses addiction, proper use of pain medication, and use of opioids.

Many patients that have been prescribed opioids have not been educated on alternative methods to manage pain which can lead to opioid abuse. Healthy Living with Chronic Pain is a useful tool in reducing opioid misuse and abuse and the current opioid epidemic. It can also be used in conjunction with a medication assisted treatment (MAT) program to increase self-confidence and empower participants to take an active role in their lives.



Workshops are reimbursable by AHCCCS through the Regional Behavioral Health Authorities. Individuals can self-refer or healthcare professionals can refer into Healthy Living with Chronic Pain workshops by clicking on the “Enroll Now” button at

AZLWI.org