

Lesson 1.1: Course Overview

The PACT Program for Preventing and Relieving TMD Pain Guide

Background. Nationally, chronic pain is the top reason for seeking care; a leading cause of disability, work loss, and opioid addiction; and the primary driver of health care, costing more than cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. Temporomandibular disorders (TMD) are one of the most common chronic pain conditions causing facial pain, headaches, earaches, and neck pain. Despite treatment, up to half of persons seeking care for TMD pain conditions still have pain 5 years later, and up to 20% develop long-term disability and dependency on medications. Recent advances in research and care of TMD and other pain conditions have found that there are many risk factors such as repetitive strain, oral habits, poor posture, and emotional distress that can delay recovery and cause chronic pain. In addition, research has shown that many healthy activities such as exercise, healthy diet, and mindfulness are protective factors that can also relieve or prevent chronic pain. To achieve the best success in improving pain conditions, we need to learn to reduce all risk factors while promoting protective factors in each realm of our life to prevent and relieve chronic pain, disability, and addiction. To have the best success long-term, the training needs to be integrated with evidence-based treatments. This model of care is called transformative care– training with treatment– to improve the long-term success of relieving any pain condition.

Goals. The Personalized Activated Care and Training (PACT) program was developed to engage, empower and educate people to reduce their risk factors and promote protective factors to relieve and prevent chronic pain. The PACT program can create a “pact” between the health professional and patient to integrate training with treatments to improve successful outcomes of care. PACT addresses the causes of chronic pain and not just the symptoms by helping people reduce the risk factors in the physical, cognitive, emotional, social, behavioral, spirit, and environmental realms of their life while strengthening protective factors such as exercise, balanced lifestyles, good sleep, healthy nutrition, safety practices, mindfulness, meditation, and many more. The PACT uses web-based, on-line assessments and training, a tele-health coach, and social support to assist patients with day-to-day self-care. The goals of the PACT program include helping people to;



1. Understand the big picture of chronic pain and how each realm of our life plays a role in causing pain conditions
2. Identify and reduce risk factors that can lead to chronic pain
3. Identify and improve protective factors that can improve recovery from pain
4. Learn self-care strategies in all realms to relieve and prevent pain and addiction

Assessments. The program includes a series of brief psychometric assessments to evaluate pain location, severity and health care use; self-management skills; readiness to change; self-efficacy; and risk factors in each of the 7 realm of life.

On-line Training. Based on your personalized assessment, experiential lessons are presented to train you to reduce risk factors for delayed recovery and promote protective factors that encourage healing. The program consists of 8 modules designed to be completed during 8-weeks (Table 1). Each module includes several 10 to 15 minute video lessons to complete. The program begins with understanding the big picture of your condition, how it can be improved by the balance between risk and protective factors in each realm of your life. Then, each subsequent module focuses on each of the 7 realms of your life including the body, lifestyle, mind, emotions, spirit, social life, and environment and what changes can be made to improve the pain. Each module begins with a self-assessment of risk and protective factors followed with recommended video sessions. The program includes guides for quick review and worksheets to understand what to do.

Your Team. Your team consists of your health coach, your friends and family support team, and several well-qualified animated characters with distinct personalities to support your learning within the PACT program.

TeleHealth Coach (THC). THCs are well-trained and certified health professionals who review assessments and provide self-management training to patients to facilitate their knowledge and skills necessary for self- management of chronic conditions. The process incorporates the needs, goals and life experiences of the patients and is guided by evidence-based interventions for the target condition.

Support team. Having friend or family team member who can support you and encourage you along your journey will help you be successful. If you haven't already, you will get another chance to sign up a teammate before you start Lesson 2, or can add one at any time using the team of your dashboard.

Professor James is a distinguished professor and pain specialist who presents the lectures but also tells stories of the many patients he has helped over the years.

Action Annie is a perky, plain-speaking trainer whose main job is to help the participant implement their action plan within their lifestyle.



Calming Kate is an experienced health professional who teaches calming practice using techniques from both mindfulness-based, stress reduction and indirect hypnosis for pain control. She uses a calm voice, enlightening dialogue, and guided imagery.

Barrier Bob is a no-nonsense barrier buster who helps participants identify and change barriers that may be confronted on the way to changing a person's health and life.

Action Plan. An action plan that is generated for each module includes 3 components: Healthy HABITS, daily PAUSEs, and CALMING practice. Overcoming barriers are discussing to help completing the action plans.

Healthy HABITs means taking dedicated time each day to work on enhancing protective factors in order to decrease risk factors. This includes healthy habits of exercise, sleep, diet, healthy substance use, maintain activity level, optimism, positive emotions and others. *HABITs mean H-healthy, A-Actions, B-Bring, I-Improvement, and T-Transformation.*

Taking PAUSEs means practicing mindfulness by taking a brief time-out to check-in and notice how you are doing right now in a non-judgmental way. This is essential to living a life in the present and being mindful of protective factors to enhance health and well-being. *PAUSE means P-pause, A-assess, U-understand, S-Start new, and E-enjoy the moment.*

CALMING practice means spending a few minutes each day doing a brief relaxation technique allows many benefits. These include meditation to calm the mind, relaxing the muscles and nerves, contemplation about your life, and reflection on how you will move forward. *CALM means C-Calming, A-Action, L-Lift, M- Mind.*

Table 1.
Lessons in understanding pain and how each of the 7 realms of our lives can help to relieve and prevent chronic pain

8 Lessons	Protective Factors	Risk Factors
1. Understanding pain	Understand the big picture of pain, protective factors, treatments , self-management	The conditions, the risk factors, and the cycles that cause pain to persist
2. Body is our physical structures and their function	Stretching, strengthening, fitness, conditioning, balanced relaxed posture and reducing strain	Tight weak muscles and joints, poor conditioning, tense unbalanced postures, repetitive strain
3. Lifestyle is our daily behaviors	Pain-free diet, restful sleep, steady active pacing, and limiting substance use	Poor diet, poor sleep, sedentary or hurrying/rushed, and substance misuse
4. Mind is our thoughts & attitudes	Optimism, self-efficacy, realistic expectations, coping, resilience,	Pessimism, low self-efficacy, unrealistic expectations, passive coping, low resilience
5. Emotions are our feelings	Joy, happiness, calm, courage, gratitude, forgiveness, empathy, self-acceptance	Depression, sadness, anxiety, fear, anger, frustration, guilt, shame
6. Spirit is our purpose & energy	Purpose, energy, self-compassion, hopes, dreams, grit and determination	Stress, burnout, cynicism, doubt, feeling helpless and hopeless
7. Social life is our relationships	Love, belonging, social support, work well-being, releasing social stress	Isolation, loneliness, low social support, work stress, conflict, abuse, social stressors
8. Environment is the world we interact with	Safe living, safe driving, clean, infection-free, pollution-free, and risk-free health care	Risky unsafe living, risky driving, unclean, infection-prone, pollution, toxicity, unsafe risky health care

Table 2.
The success of the PACT program is based on several person-centered concepts

New paradigm	Description and presenting concept
Understand the whole person	You need to identify all conditions, risk factors, and protective factors in the 7 realms of your life to shift the balance from illness to health. <i>Are you willing to do self-assessments?</i>
Each person is complex	Multiple conditions and interrelated contributing factors may initiate, result from, increase risk, or decrease risk of illness. <i>Are you willing to address each?</i>
Self-responsibility is key to recovery	You have more influence on the problem than any treatment provided. <i>Will you take ownership and control of the condition?</i>
Self-care	You will need to make daily changes in order to improve your condition. <i>Are you willing to take the time to do this?</i>
Education and training	You need to learn how to make the lifestyle changes that will improve the condition long-term. <i>Are you willing to learn it?</i>
Long-term change	Change occurs gradually over time and it may take months to have a large impact. <i>Are you patient and persistence to see success?</i>
Personal motivation	It takes a commitment to a daily action plan to have success. <i>Are you motivated to do so?</i>
Social support	You may need help from a health coach, family, and friends to make these lifestyle changes. <i>Are you open to receiving help?</i>
Change process	Change and improvement will occur in small steps incrementally over time. <i>Will you notice the gradual change?</i>
Fluctuation of progress	Expect ups and downs during the recovery process. <i>Are your resilient enough to overcome the ups and downs?</i>