

Before You Go: Additional Information about Chronic Pain Treatment Options

Today we discussed some of the challenges of living with chronic pain. We also discussed some options available to help manage chronic pain. One option that may be a good fit for you is Brief Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Chronic Pain, or Brief CBT-CP. Some key information about Brief CBT-CP is summarized here, in case you would like to begin this treatment at a future time:

1. *Brief CBT-CP can help decrease distress and disability from pain and is safe for almost anyone.*
2. *Brief CBT-CP includes six, one-to-one meetings of about 30 minutes each. Treatment can be spread out over 6 to 12 weeks.*
3. *A new pain management skill is covered each week based on the order you prefer. Key topics and skills include:*
 - *Activity pacing, which helps with avoiding a common pitfall of overexertion that causes a pain flare-up.*
 - *Relaxation training, which will help to reduce tension in your body and manage distress.*
 - *Cognitive coping, which will help with managing unhelpful thought patterns.*
 - *Developing an action plan, which will help you move forward with meeting important personal goals based on new pain management skills.*

Here's a quick deep breathing exercise to consider that can help manage the stress that comes with living with chronic pain:

1. *Find a safe, quiet place to sit or lie in a comfortable position for at least five minutes. Use soothing music to block out distracting noises, if necessary.*
2. *Breathe in deeply, but comfortably, taking a moment to focus your thoughts on your breathing.*
3. *Count to yourself "one" at your next inhale, and exhale at your own pace. Continue to count (e.g., "two"..., "three"..., "four"...) each time you inhale until you get to ten.*
4. *Take a moment to notice your breathing as it slows and develops a new rhythm. If disruptive thoughts enter your mind, re-focus on counting each inhalation.*
5. *Count in sets of ten breaths for as long as you feel comfortable. Practicing two to three times a day for short periods can be helpful when first learning this skill.*

Visit the VA mobile app store (<https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>) to download free apps to help with stress management and healthy lifestyles. These are a few examples of the health topics these apps address:

- *Chronic pain*
- *Sleep*
- *Weight loss*
- *Smoking cessation*
- *Stress management*
- *Coping with depression, anxiety, PTSD, and other mental health concerns*



We discussed several options that can help you with better pain management and overall wellness. Here is a summary of next steps to follow:

Provider: Include helpful information below on referrals to other services initiated today.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Living with chronic pain can be very challenging. It can negatively impact how we live our lives, including our ability to participate in activities and important relationships with others. Treatment options are available that can lead to new ways of coping with pain to maintain connections to the people and daily routines that we value. My goal is to work with you in a way that you find supportive and empowering.

If you would like more information about your treatment options for chronic pain or related concerns, please contact me at the number below:

Provider/Clinic name: _____

Phone number: _____

Additional information: _____