

# HUNTER INTEGRATED PAIN SERVICE (HIPS)

## HIPS Programs

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## About HIPS

HIPS team includes clerical staff, nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists and doctors. This booklet focuses on the programs HIPS offers to treat chronic (long term) non-cancer pain. We also treat people with acute (short term) and cancer pain.

We aim to support people with education and assessment. We then shift the focus to active treatment and expanding life function.

*“At HIPS we accept that your pain is what you say it is”*

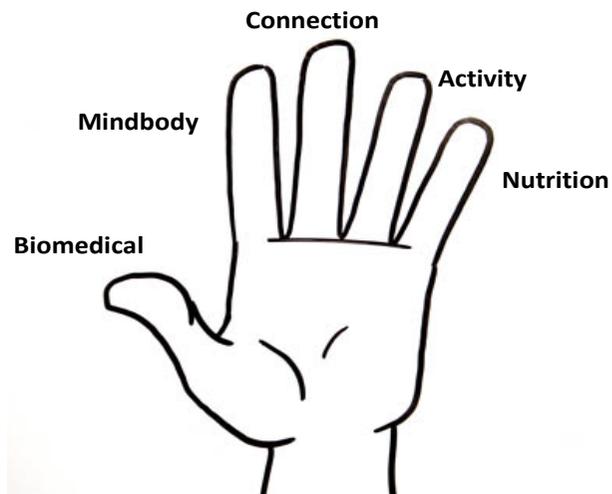
## Acceptance and change

Acceptance of your ongoing pain experience is important for progress. Both you and your health care team need to shift away from less effective medical treatments aimed at shrinking pain and towards building skills that lead to a better quality of life.

*“ like being caught in a rip ... it’s important not to panic and swim against it but rather to accept and go with the flow. By angling across you can gradually swim out of its pull”*

## A whole person approach

There are many factors involved in pain. Changing any of the five key areas (shown below) can reduce pain intensity and the impact of pain on your life. Sometimes change can lead to pain slowly going away.



Medical treatments can be used for a short time but are not the main focus. They have limited benefit in chronic pain.

A whole person approach balances acceptance with new knowledge and skills:

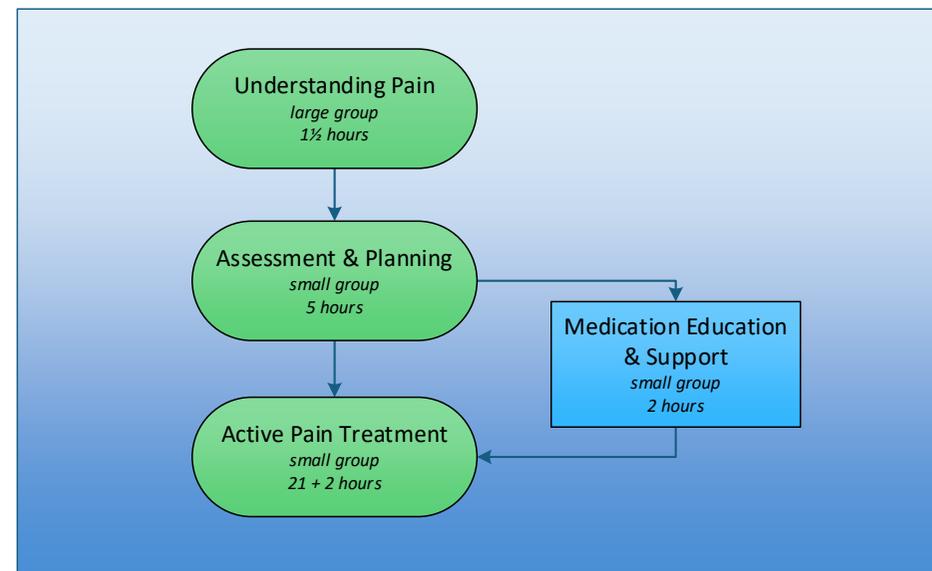
- brain messages of safety rather than danger
- winding down a sensitised nervous system
- time limited use of any medical treatments
- developing awareness of mindbody links
- restoring lost connections
- a comfortable level of activity
- working on good nutrition

## HIPS and your GP

HIPS will speak or write to your GP. This helps to plan your whole person approach. You and your GP will work together towards pain management and recovery. As you gain confidence and progress you will need less input from HIPS.

## HIPS Standard Pathway

Usually the first HIPS appointment is the Understanding Pain seminar. After this you attend the group Assessment and Planning workshop. Then you progress to the active treatment phase.



## Understanding Pain

A 90 minute seminar on the new science of pain

The seminar covers:

- the difference between acute and chronic pain
- the new science of chronic pain
- a whole person approach to treatment
- the limited role of medication
- HIPS pathway options

You are welcome to bring a family member or close friend to listen and provide support. There is an opportunity for questions and discussion.

Understanding Pain videos are available on HIPS website for those who live outside the Newcastle area.

## Assessment and Planning

A 5hr workshop to complete your assessment and plan your treatment

After Understanding Pain the next step is usually Assessment and Planning. The HIPS team will help you assess contributors to your ongoing pain and develop your recovery plan.

You will learn new ways to reduce the sensitivity of your nervous system and improve your health and wellbeing.

Gaining confidence in pain management takes time. In Assessment and Planning you will have the time to choose which strategies best suit you. You are encouraged to bring a family member or close friend for support.

By the end of the day ***you*** will have developed your own ***pain recovery plan***. You and your GP will get a copy.

Your plan may include strategies about your medication, physical and emotional health, diet and lifestyle. For most, treatment will involve progressing along HIPS group pathway. Others may choose to see health professionals in their local community.

The Assessment and Planning workshop is run by a pain medicine specialist, a physiotherapist and a nurse or psychologist.

## Pain Recovery Plan

Your Pain Recovery Plan is initially developed at the Assessment and Planning workshop. It covers 2 main areas.

**Firstly** it involves assessment of contributors to your ongoing pain experience and other health issues.

### ***Example of assessment findings***

- Medication difficulties
- Stress
- Lying down 4 hours a day

**Secondly** your plan allows you to choose steps to address the assessment findings.

### ***Example of steps to recovery***

- Start a medication weaning plan
- Regular relaxation or mindfulness
- Wean off lying down

Your **Pain Recovery Plan** allows you to identify life goals and how you can work towards them.

## Medication, Education and Support

2 hour group session

This group is for people who want help with weaning off medications.

## Active Pain Treatment

6 x 4 hour group sessions

***Introducing Active Pain Treatment:*** 1 hour individual session to help people prepare and commit to the longer Active Pain Treatment program.

Active Pain Treatment group is HIPS main treatment pathway. You will learn new skills to expand life and treat pain.

## Other treatments

**Mindfulness:**

8 x 2 hour group sessions to learn mindfulness skills

The mindfulness group teaches practical skills to calm the mind and the nervous system and reduce the experience of pain.

**HIPS Individual Support:**

When individual support is indicated (eg. people with dementia or cancer) HIPS usually offers an individual appointment with two clinicians.

## Local community options

An alternative to HIPS pathway involves seeing local community health providers with experience in chronic pain. Look for local activities such as walking, bowls, swimming or Tai Chi groups. Some people find joining a volunteer organisation or participating in community events helps to broaden their approach to pain.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *How long does it take to get started at HIPS?*

The Understanding Pain seminar is usually offered 4-8 weeks after you are referred.

### *What happens next?*

Most people will be offered the Assessment and Planning workshop within 3 months of attending Understanding pain.

### *Can stress and mood be linked to pain?*

Stress and mood are often linked to pain. Exploring these links is helpful.

### *I have tried physiotherapy, medication and acupuncture. Nothing works. Is it still worth coming to HIPS?*

Yes. Both you and your health care team need to shift away from less effective medical treatments aimed at shrinking pain and towards building skills that lead to a better quality of life.

### *Does my medication need to be stopped?*

Medication is not recommended for the long term treatment of chronic pain. Speed of medication reduction varies from person to person. HIPS doctors and nursing staff will work with you and your GP to find the right rate of weaning for you.

## Getting to HIPS Step by Step

### Step 1

Get a **medical referral** (from your GP or specialist).

### Step 2

HIPS will send you details of your first visit and usually a **referral questionnaire**.

### Step 3

Fill in the **referral questionnaire** and bring it to your first HIPS visit.

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