

# MINDBODY

Hunter Integrated Pain Service



## KEY MESSAGES

1. The mind and body are part of one whole human system and they both affect the other
2. Our thoughts, emotions and beliefs affect the pain system
3. There is a link between stress and trauma and persistence of chronic pain
4. Unhelpful and fearful beliefs keep people stuck
5. Working on emotional awareness; building healthy connections and letting go of unhelpful beliefs helps recovery

## The science

- The pain system is closely linked to our emotions and beliefs
- Fear, anxiety, life stress and trauma can lead to the pain system becoming over-protective.
- This explains why anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder and depression very commonly occur with chronic pain
- Brain imaging studies show that loss and grief can activate similar areas to the pain system





## Why?

Mind Body knowledge can help heal chronic pain :

- The Stress Response and Pain: Pain is a stressful experience. Other stressful experiences in your life can also wind up pain. Understanding your response to stress is a good first step.
- Sleep and Pain: Our nervous system requires sleep to restore and recover. Working on good sleep habits can help to wind down an over-protective pain system.
- Beliefs and Pain: Being concerned that a serious body problem is still causing pain contributes to an increased pain experience as the brain believes it is in danger and needs to continue to protect you. This can contribute to an over-protective pain system

## How?

- Find a therapist who can help with processing and expressing emotions, stress and trauma
- Learn to meditate - a small daily meditation practice can be helpful in developing skills to manage stress and unhelpful thinking patterns; and increase attention, focus and self-compassion. Try the free Insight Timer app or simply take 3 slow, deep breaths regularly throughout your day
- Try journaling to release pent up emotions. Ask yourself 'how do I feel?' and scribble away! See Nicole Sach's youtube videos on journaling and chronic pain
- Explore the link between fear and pain-have a listen to the podcasts 'Tell me about your pain' 'Like mind, Like body' or check out this free 21 day program: [www.tmswiki.org/forum/painrecovery/](http://www.tmswiki.org/forum/painrecovery/)

