

SEEING MY PAIN STORY: INSTRUCTIONS

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To aid you in SEEing your Pain Story, we will be utilizing a Mind Map and Inquiry Activity. Mind maps help in seeing complex issues in a visual, concrete, and creative way. The inquiry provides questions to increase your awareness of your experience – body, mind, heart and spirit.

Here are some tips for creating your mind map:

- Keep it simple.
- Be creative. Use colors, images, words, diagrams, etc.
- If using words, avoid more than 1-2 words whenever possible...consider a journal if this becomes difficult
- Complete over multiple sessions of approximately 15 minutes per session
- Our Mind Map has limited space – use it as a guide, and feel free to adapt it as you see fit (use bigger paper, add paper/sections, draw your own, etc.)
- Be **curious, kind, compassionate,** and **nonjudgmental** to yourself and others during this activity

Note of caution:

You may notice that by bringing attention to your thoughts, emotions, and sensations that you experience them more intensely. Please be patient with this process and notice your experience and move on. If you experience significant discomfort, notify your provider.

SEEING MY PAIN STORY: MIND MAP



Use these questions to guide you in SEEing your pain story and using your Mind Map. Be curious and nonjudgmental as you complete this exercise.

BODY

Sensations

- What does the pain feel like? (hot, cold, tight, throbbing, stiff, achy, sharp, burning, electric shocks, pins/needles, uncomfortable)
- Where is it located?
- What happens to your breath?
- What thoughts do you have about your body?
- What is your energy level?
- How do pain medications make your body feel?

What Helps/Hurts

- What actions make your body feel better? What makes the pain worse?
- What have you tried or not tried out of fear that it will hurt more?
- What positions make your pain worse/better?

Physical Abilities

- What impact does pain have on your ability to work or do things you love?
- What can you do with your pain? What can't you do with your pain?
- What did you used to do?
- What does your pain not allow you to do?
- How does your energy level impact your physical ability?
- Work? Play? Limitations?
- What are your thoughts about this?

MIND

Thoughts

- What does the fact you have pain mean about you as a person?
I am a _____ person because I have pain.
- What memories do you have when you experience pain?
- What thoughts do you have about your healthcare or healthcare provider?
- How does your pain compare to others' pain?
- Notice thoughts that include the words: only, always, never, should, what if...
- How do your thoughts impact your bodily sensations, your emotions, your attitude and state of mind, and your spiritual connection?

Thoughts: Past

- What happened to cause this? Who/what is to blame for your pain?
- What are your beliefs about pain? What past experiences have led to these beliefs? What were you told as a child/young adult about pain/people in pain/how to deal with pain?

Thoughts: Present

- What is happening right now?

Thoughts: Future

- What will happen in the future? What will always/never happen?
- What will happen if this pain never goes away?
- What will happen if I don't have pain medication forever?
- I am _____ about the future.
- I will be _____ for the rest of my life.

What Should/Shouldn't Be

- What should be different? What should/shouldn't be happening? What should you do more of/less of?

Attitude/State of Mind

- How do you see the world around you when you are in pain?
- How does your attitude affect the actions you take or don't take?

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HEART

Emotions

- What emotions are you experiencing when in pain? (anger, fear, overwhelm, worry, paranoia, anxiety, despair, bitterness, resentment, sadness, depression, hopelessness, _____)
- What emotions do you experience with lessening or absence of pain?
- How do your emotions impact your thoughts, your state of mind, and your bodily sensations?
- What do you fear?

What Helps/Hurts

- What makes you feel better emotionally? What makes you feel worse emotionally?

Relationships

- How does your pain affect your relationship with your friends, family, co-workers?
- What actions do you take (or not take) when you are in pain?
- How do you treat others when you are in pain? What words do you use?
- What is your experience of your relationships when you are in pain?
- What do family/friends do wrong? Right?

Conclusions & Lessons

- What do you notice as you look at your pain story?
- Can you see how the areas are interrelated, as the dotted lines indicate?
- Can you see how your thoughts, emotions, and sensations are separate from your BEING? That you are a witness to these experiences?
- Can you BE with your thoughts, emotions, and sensations without DOING anything? Without judging, changing, or fixing anything?
- Are there thoughts you can give up or let go? Can you forgive yourself or others?

SPIRIT

Practices

- What spiritual practices are you using/not using?
- What are your thoughts on divinity/god/universe? How have they changed over time?
- What is your experience of life?

What Helps/Hurts

- What helps you to hear messages from your higher self/the divine? What stops you from hearing them?