Taking a Pain Science Education Approach to Workplace Health and Wellbeing

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Pre-conference Workshop
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Pain Science Education is a form of educational approach to pain management. As an approach, it is recommended in clinical guidelines and in practice, it is commonly integrated within pain management programmes. Pain Science Education aims to change an individual's understanding of persistent pain from the biomedical structural-pathology model towards a more biopsychosocial model of understanding in keeping with contemporary scientific evidence. Pain Science Education has recently been delivered on a public health level through initiatives such as Pain Revolution in Australia (www.painrevolution.org) and Flippin Pain™ in the UK (www.flippinpain.co.uk). This workshop/symposium will explore how Pain Science Education could be brought into the workplace setting. Whilst this session focuses on chronic pain more broadly, a short component will be delivered by Ginevra Liptan, talking about this issue specifically related to Fibromyalgia.

The topics covered: primary, secondary, and tertiary chronic pain prevention: are as follows.

Primary prevention: In health and safety inductions, rather than focusing purely on anatomy and biomechanics, which may have an iatrogenic effect, Pain Science Education could be delivered by occupational health professionals to new and existing staff members to help prevent the development of chronic pain and associated work loss by challenging negative expectations such as the expectation that work leads to structural pathology, and in turn persistent pain. Such expectations may significantly increase the risk of developing persistent pain.

Secondary prevention: The transition between acute pain (< 3 months) and persistent pain (> 3 months) can be a crucial opportunity to prevent the development of persistent pain. Providing Pain Science Education materials at this juncture could help to reduce the number of people who progress from acute to chronic pain by reducing pain-related fear and anxiety and reducing fear-avoidant behaviour, which can lead to disuse, disability, and depression, and encouraging engagement with evidence-based active physical and psychological therapies.

Tertiary prevention: For those with established persistent pain, providing Pain Science Education may help people to reframe their pain and encourage them to (re)engage with evidence-based biopsychosocial occupational health services. It could facilitate early return to work or help to prevent people from leaving work, to begin with.

About Our Speakers:

1. Cormac Ryan (UK)

Cormac is a Professor of Clinical Rehabilitation at Teesside University, UK. He has a BSc in Sports and Exercise Science, an MSc in Physiotherapy, and a PhD in pain management. He is co-lead of PETAL (Pain Education Team Aspiring Better Learning), an international collaboration aiming to facilitate better public understanding of current thought on 'how pain works' (www.petalcollaboration.org). Cormac has contributed to guidelines/standards for organisations, including the British Pain Society and the Faculty of Pain Medicine. He is the Community Pain Champion for Flippin' Pain™, a UK-wide public health campaign to improve public understanding of pain (www.flippinpain.co.uk).

2. Deepak Ravindran (UK)

Deepak is a full-time NHS consultant in the UK and is a Fellow of the Faculty of Pain Medicine at RCOA and the Deputy Editor for ePain – the digital platform of NHS England. He is a Hon Professor at Teesside University and is board certified in Lifestyle Medicine and MSK Medicine. He helped set up an award-winning NHS service for Pain and Long Covid. He lectures nationally and internationally on various aspects of trauma-informed Pain practice and is the author of the Amazon Best Seller – The Pain Free Mindset, published in 2021. He also serves on the clinical advisory board for Pain related Digital start-ups and is the Chief Medical Officer for Boutros Bear.

3. Dr. Ginevra Liptan (USA)

Ginevra Liptan, MD is a graduate of Tufts University School of Medicine, board-certified in internal medicine and trained in functional medicine. A fibromyalgia specialist, she is the Medical Director at The Frida Center for Fibromyalgia, Portland, Oregon, USA. She developed fibromyalgia as a medical student and spent many years using herself as a guinea pig to find successful treatments. Ginevra is one of the few specialists in the world focusing exclusively on fibromyalgia and has fine-tuned her integrative approach to treating thousands of patients. Dr Liptan is the author of The FibroManual: A Complete Fibromyalgia Treatment Guide for You and Your Doctor.

4. Hannah Malyon

Lead Long Covid Physiotherapist at Berkshire Long Covid Integrated Service, Berkshire (UK), Hannah Malyon graduated in 2016 from Oxford Brookes University with BSc in Physiotherapy. She has worked across inpatient, outpatient and community settings covering several specialities and conditions. She joined the long covid team in 2021 after working in acute respiratory care for 3 years. Her specialist interests include respiratory medicine, pain management and rehabilitation for long-term conditions.

5. Sophie Stockbridge

Lead Occupational Therapist at Berkshire Long Covid Integrated Service, Berkshire (UK), Sophie Stockbridge completed her BSc Hons Occupational Therapy at Oxford Brookes University. After graduating in 2016, she has gained a variety of Occupational Therapy experience by working across multiple different fields, including acute mental health, adult social care, community paediatrics, community adult mental health, community neuro, acute adolescent mental health, the community falls team, community rapid response and Long Covid. Sophie joined the Long Covid team in October 2022.