

Brief Counseling Techniques for Chronic Pain

Technique	
Motivational Interviewing (MI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express empathy • Develop discrepancy between clients' goals or values and their current behavior • Avoid argument and direct confrontation • Roll with resistance, it disrupts the struggle • Support self-efficacy, essential for behavior change • Develop strategies to elicit the patient's own motivation to change • Refine your listening skills and respond by encouraging change talk from the patient
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "gold standard" counseling intervention for pain • Cognitive restructuring: replacing unhelpful/false beliefs about pain with positive adaptive behaviors • Effect on pain and functioning comparable to standard medical management • Yields longer term improvement on disability beyond usual medical care • Valuable component of multidisciplinary pain rehab programs • Can be performed by a primary care provider during a regular office visit
Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MSBR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncouples sensory aspects of pain from the evaluative/emotional aspect • Promotes "detached awareness" of pain signals • Taught over a series of sessions: 1-2 hours each x 10 sessions is typical • No judgment is attached to thoughts; only awareness that they are discrete events • No goals are sought, only observation
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful acknowledgement/acceptance of pain and associated thoughts/emotions • Fostering awareness of the present and one's ability to adjust behavior • Focus on fulfilling functional and behavioral goals despite pain • Goals/values of patient need to be identified

Resources

- Baer RA. Mindfulness training as a clinical intervention: a conceptual and empirical review. *Clinical Psychology: Scientific Practice*. 2003; 10(2):125-143.
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- Thorn BE. *Cognitive Therapy for Chronic Pain*. 2nd ed. New York: Guilford Press; 2017.
- Otis JD. *Managing Chronic Pain: A Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Approach Workbook (Treatments That Work.)* University of Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2007.
- Day, MA. *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Chronic Pain: A Clinical Manual and Guide*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd: Chichester, West Sussex; 2017.
- Caudill, MA, Benson H. *Managing Pain Before It Manages You*. 4th ed. New York: Guilford Press; 2016.
- CBM Concepts Ltd. *10 Minute CBT in Primary Care*. Scion Pub Ltd: 2014.