

COPE services

COPE provides services for patients with chronic pain with significant psychological distress and/or high levels of disability who are willing to consider a self-management approach to their pain. The service offers an introductory education session, an eight week pain management programme, and individual psychological therapy and specialist nurse and physiotherapy clinics. The service uses an interdisciplinary cognitive behavioural approach as recommended by The British Pain Society.

Introductory pain education session

All patients referred to the service are offered a half-day introductory pain education session in a group of up to 20 people. The aims of the session are:

- To explain the biopsychosocial model of pain
- To teach some basic coping strategies for chronic pain
- To inform patients about the pain management programme and help them to make an informed decision about whether to opt-in to further multi-disciplinary assessment and intervention.

Pain management programme

The pain management programme consists of an eight week outpatient course, attending once a week, with three follow-up sessions over the next year. The aim of the programme is to help people with chronic pain to lead as

It includes a programme of physical exercise, stress management, advice on medication and practical advice about managing daily activities. Relatives or close friends are invited to one session so that they are able to offer appropriate support.

The clinical team

The service uses a team approach to the complex problems of chronic pain. The team comprises of clinical psychologists, physiotherapists and nurses, all specialising in the management of chronic pain.

What if my patient needs medical advice?

Please note that a medical doctor is not involved in the COPE assessment process or the pain management programme. If your patient needs a medical opinion they should be referred to the pain clinic by letter or via the Choose and Book system. If appropriate the pain consultant will refer the patient on to COPE.

Referral criteria

Patients who meet the following criteria will be considered for the pain management programme:

- Patient has had chronic pain for more than six months
- Initial medical investigations have been carried out and physical treatment, eg physiotherapy has been tried
- Patient is able to manage self-care needs during the programme sessions

- Patient is able to cope with being in a group
- Patient is open to and able to make behavioural changes
- Patient is able to understand English.

Plus one or more of the following presenting problems:

- Significant psychological distress
- Pain interferes with daily life
- Pain interferes with work
- Pain causes sleep disturbance
- Analgesic medication is used inappropriately.

What should I do if I think my patient is suitable for the pain management programme?

Please ensure that the patient is willing to consider a self-management approach to chronic pain and understands that this can be an effective alternative to medical management. This can be a difficult message for some patients and the introductory session aims to further help patients to understand the benefits of and the necessary commitment to the pain management programme. **Referrals should be made in writing to the address provided.**

What happens at the end of the programme?

Making changes in managing chronic pain can be challenging and patients are followed-up for one year to encourage maintenance of behavioural change. There is an on-going telephone helpline for people who have completed and been discharged from the programme.

Outcomes

Our outcomes demonstrate that most people who complete the pain management programme, become more confident, less distressed by their symptoms and are able to focus on the important things in their life. Many people are able to reduce their medication due to learning different ways of coping with their pain. The programme does not aim to reduce pain however many people have reported lower pain levels and less frequent flare ups following the programme.

What happens if the patient is not suitable for the programme?

Some patients with complex needs or who are not suitable for the programme for other reasons may be offered individual sessions with the clinical psychologist or physiotherapist for further assessment, therapy or preparation for the group programme. Some patients who have specific issues around medication use may be seen individually by the clinical nurse specialist. Where appropriate, patients may be referred to a different service.

Contact us

COPE
Malvern Centre
Sutton Hospital
Cotswold Road
Sutton
SM2 5NF

Tel: 020 8296 3900

www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk/centre-of-pain-education



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Author: Dr Hilary Rankin
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*Information for
referrers*

*Centre of Pain
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every day*