

Reflection: Chronic Pain Workbook

Although I have not had an opportunity to work through the chronic pain workbook with a client, it has had an impact on my understanding of how therapy has the potential to help people suffering from chronic pain. Honestly, I was unaware of how to address chronic pain in the therapy room.

I have attempted to use the chronic pain workbook, but the client was unwilling to participate as the label of “Chronic Pain” caused her anxiety. The pain questionnaire was new to me. I have a client who struggles with health anxiety due to pain she experiences and has experienced in the past. The pain questionnaire, or Pain Catastrophizing Scale, was helpful in that it helped me, as the therapist, understand some of what the client was experiencing, but it also helped my client understand that much of her suffering was a result of her thoughts about her pain, or the possibility of pain. This resulted in some good discussion and self-reflection in the session, allowing the client to consider the possibility that things were not hopeless.

It was interesting to see how difficult it was for my client even to consider the idea of a positive outcome from therapy due to her persistent and invasive thoughts around her pain weaving themselves into every scenario. It was interesting to see how similar the Chronic Pain Workbook was to the Anxiety Workbook we reviewed earlier in the internship and how life events shape how we perceive and cope with pain, like how we manage our stress and anxiety. It was also interesting to learn that harbouring unhelpful thoughts and emotions plays a significant role in both chronic pain and anxiety maintenance, and working through these to

create a more adaptive and cognitive thought-processing style can play a key role in getting the client to engage in life in a healthy and fulfilling way again.