



Connections



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PAIN SUPPORT GROUP

SUMMER/FALL 2002

One "thank you" can go a long way

We all must stand up for ourselves as chronic pain survivors. Sometimes that means using precious time and energy to write letters, call legislators, vote for candidates sympathetic to our cause, and argue our point to anyone who will listen. Sometimes it means changing doctors or other health care professionals. Sometimes it means appealing an insurance company's unfair decision to withhold coverage.

All of these actions can help build a foundation of respect for and understand-

ing of chronic pain and its effects on people's lives.

But in our determination to improve conditions for those with chronic pain, it is important to remember the power of the positive.

Several years ago, I visited a friend's young son who was in the hospital being treated for meningitis. Part of his therapy required that he exercise his arms, but he resisted efforts to do so. I began playing "trucks" with him. We moved the toys around in a circle. Then, gradually, I widened the circle, requir-

ing him to reach farther and farther to play the game. His mother smiled as she saw her son perform exercises that he had previously refused to do.

That memory reminded me that all of us—doctors included—take medicine much more willingly when it is accompanied by a spoonful of sugar.

With the frustrations imposed by governmental regulations, insurance restrictions, and difficult cases, it is no wonder health care providers become discouraged and are some-

times curt.

It is important to let those who have helped us along the way know we appreciate their efforts. My doctor told me my thank you note to him made his day. It was a small gesture for a doctor who correctly diagnosed my disease and prescribed medication that allowed me to walk more easily after two years of agonizing pain. There are many who deserve our thanks. And who knows, that just might be the act that keeps a good doctor going. —Sue Gold

Summer/Fall 2002 Schedule Offers Socializing, Speakers, and Support

IT'S TIME TO PARTY!!

Don't miss our eighth annual Summer Cookout Celebration. It will be a fun-filled affair with plenty of GOOD FOOD and LAUGHTER. Everyone is welcome! Bring family and friends, food to grill and/or a dish to share. The cook-out will be held **August 15** at 6 p.m. at the Gold residence, 7 Paul

Avenue, Saco, rain or shine. If you need directions, call Sue at 284-4655. And mark your calendars for our holiday gathering on **Dec. 19**.

Learning new skills

On **Sept. 5** Chris Dunn, a registered clinical exercise physiologist at SMMC will help us set up an exercise plan designed for people

with chronic pain. He will also emphasize how to get motivated to follow the plan.

On **Oct. 17** Chris Cary, M.D., SMMC's assistant chief of anesthesia, will introduce us to the Pain Clinic and discuss its role in the treatment of patients with chronic pain.

Deb Brown, RN a nurse in SMMC's Cardiac Rehab

department, has been teaching qi gong for several years. On **Nov. 7** she will teach us moves from this ancient Chinese practice that is considered meditation in motion.

As always, you can share your struggles and triumphs with chronic pain and get support during our group discussions. Join us!

AUGUST	19 Group Discussion	Clinic at SMMC	Meetings are held at the Hospitality Room, The Pines, Manor St., Ocean Park, 7-8:30 p.m., 1st & 3rd Thursdays. All are welcome! For directions, see our web site at www.desk-toppub.com/support/ or call Susan Gold, 284-4655.
1 Group Discussion	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	
15 Annual Potluck Summer Celebration	3 Group Discussion	7 "Qi Gong"	
SEPTEMBER	17 "Role of Pain Clinic in Treatment of Patients with Chronic Pain"	Speaker: Deb Brown, RN	
5 "Exercise: It's Habit-Forming"	Speaker: Chris Cary, MD, Assistant Chief of Anesthesia, Pain	21 Group Discussion	
Speaker: Chris Dunn, MS, RCEP		DECEMBER	
		5 Group Discussion	
		19 Annual Potluck Holiday Celebration	

RSDHope Conference offers much to help those with chronic pain

"Education Is Power!" the American RSDHope Group's annual conference, will be held Friday and Saturday, Nov. 1 and 2, at the Sheraton Hotel in Portland. RSDHope is a national organization for those with reflex sympathetic dystrophy and their loved ones.

RSD is an extremely painful condition that affects the autonomic nervous system. Those who have the disease endure constant searing pain. The disease can be triggered by an injury, heart problems, infections, surgery, or other trauma.

The conference will feature Keith Orsini, director RSDHope Group, who

will speak on "My Story, 27 Year Survivor" and "Coping with RSD." Also on the agenda is Dr. Robert Schwartz, Piedmont Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, P.A., who will discuss "The Challenge And Choice Method Toward Medical Insight" and "Changing Your Relationship To Life." Dr. Ronald Snyder, director of Medical Rehabilitation Associates, Lewiston, will present "Playing the Cards You Have Been Dealt." Workshops include tips on talking with doctors and coping methods from a panel of spouses.

The event is open to all those with RSD and other chronic pain conditions as well as anyone who wants to

learn more about the disorder. Price is \$50, which includes four workshops, conference, supper, breakfast, snacks, and buffet lunch. For more information, go to RSDHope's web site: www.rsdhope.org or e-mail rsdhope@mail.org or phone (207) 583-4589.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Pain Support Group is to provide a safe place where people with chronic pain can support one another, develop friendships, share ideas and thoughts, obtain information about their condition from professionals and each other, and learn coping skills in a nonjudgmental and caring atmosphere.

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WE'RE IN THE NEWS

The latest issue of the American Chronic Pain Association's newsletter uses several comments from members of our group who contributed their insight for an article dealing with chronic pain myths. Special thanks to Eileen Burnell, who sent a long list of myths via e-mail. A copy of the newsletter, "The ACPA Chronicle," will be available at the group meeting. You can receive your own copy of the newsletter by joining ACPA. This non-profit, worldwide organization is a valuable resource for people with chronic pain. To join, call Penney Cowan at (916) 632-0922 or e-mail ACPA@pacbell.net. The group's web site is at <http://www.theacpa.org>.

ON-LINE INFORMATION & SUPPORT

To join our on-line support list, e-mail custom@desktoppub.com and include a brief message saying you'd like to join the Pain Support Group's e-mail information network. You will receive occasional postings of pertinent information, meeting notices and events, and can e-mail other members. **Our web site address:** <http://www.desktoppub.com/support/> Check it out!

SITE OF THE MONTH

Our web site has earned RSDHope's Award of Excellence, an honor that goes to sites that increase awareness of reflex sympathetic dystrophy, provide comfort and support of RSD patients, provide medical education for and about RSD/chronic pain, seek

to help loved ones of RSD/chronic pain patients to understand the disease better, and/or provide a service that aids chronic pain patients and their families in their daily struggle (*see story above for info on RSDHope*).

WANT A BROCHURE?

Thanks to the Arthritis Foundation and Saco Printing, we now have brochures that tell about our support group and the work we do. To order, please call Sue Gold, 284-4655.

NOTE: The information shared in Arthritis Foundation support groups is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment. The Arthritis Foundation recommends consultation with your doctor or health care professional.