



Pain: I Get It - Chris' Story



Chris, a former farm worker from Lincolnshire, tells us about his experience of how a Pain Management Programme helped to change his life for the better.

My story started back in mid-July 2013 at 11:35am when my life changed forever.

I was working on a farm and at the time was a fit 54-year-old man with two children and a wife who was six months pregnant with our third. That day however, I was involved in an accident that caused damage to my spine, rendering me unable to use my bladder and bowels and causing numbness and loss of control of my lower left leg, ankle and foot. Along with pain, there came worry about how we as a family could manage. I was now living with persistent pain, fatigue and undergoing life changing surgery. This put a huge strain on my family too.

The painkillers seemed like heaven at first,

but after time my body needed more and more and that's when the side effects kicked in for me. **I wasn't prepared for how such a small tablet (the opioids) could have such a strong hold on me.** I was only focused on the pain; my body was in pain and I felt like I needed more and more to ease it.

At night my pain would go into overdrive.

It would keep me awake with wave after wave. I was unaware of my family going through it all with me at this point. Instead, **I felt alone and unable to understand what was happening to me as the pain took over.**

It was increasingly difficult to do the simple things I enjoyed. My wife and I were out of ideas by now and it felt like we were at breaking point.

It was then that I was invited by my local pain service to join an education session. **I was at rock bottom and I really had no interest in more appointments** but I went to it because I remember thinking I didn't have anything to lose. I came away more confused than ever because it felt like professional people talking about how, why and when and nothing about treatment to stop my pain.

Despite being the biggest sceptic ever, I decided to enrol on the Pain Management Programme (PMP) the pain service offered.

At first my expectations were very mixed about the PMP and I didn't know if I wanted to put myself through more appointments and potentially get nothing back but I wanted something to stop my pain. Looking back, at the time I was still definitely looking for a quick fix, but something was telling me I had to give the programme a go.

“ Along with pain, there came worry about how we as a family could manage. ”

I had my first appointment over the phone and was given some information online that felt very alien to me. Within the first week of starting the PMP, I still didn't think it could help me. My mind was all over the place and I remember asking a team member if what I was struggling with was normal. They said it was and encouraged me to take my time. My next phone call **helped me understand more about what the pain education videos meant and by now I could see some of the things I was trying too hard to do.**

“ I was becoming frustrated by expecting all of my pain to go away rather than focusing on what I could do and the things that mean something to me. ”

I no longer let the pain take control and find that if I pace myself and don't set my targets too high, I'm not disappointed and angry with myself when I need help.

The PMP helped me to understand and appreciate the positive things around me. I'm also reducing my morphine very slowly with the Pain Clinic's help. It's not easy and I've had very bad bouts of pain but **the biggest thing I learnt from the PMP was how to relax and unwind and enjoy life again.**

I never thought at the beginning I could get anything out of a pain management programme but how wrong I was...

It took time and patience but now I'm pleased I did it.

I also really related to other peoples' stories on the PMP and this showed me I wasn't on my own.



“ I still live with pain and disability now, seven years after the accident, but pacing and understanding pain is helping me to mentally and physically enjoy life again – and I'm still learning! ”

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