

Physiotherapy Pain School for Trauma Affected populations (Pain School)

Purpose

Equip trained physiotherapists with knowledge and skills to strengthen people impacted by trauma or other adversities in their abilities to live meaningful and engaged lives despite pain and stress experiences

Briefly about

DIGNITY Physiotherapy Pain School is an evidence-informed scalable group & individual intervention that aims to work alongside people impacted by pain and ongoing stress to strengthen their abilities to live meaningful and engaged lives despite pain and stress experiences.

Pain School consists of ten 90-minute sessions and can be applied in a treatment or community setting. It is centred in a trauma-informed approach, which involves delivering the treatment in a way that reflects an understanding of the impact of trauma and the community-centred practices for healing and functional recovery.

A trauma-informed approach also involves delivering the Pain School Treatment in a manner that actively resists re-traumatization which is the harmful re-experiencing of traumatic events.

Target Groups

Pain school providers: Authorized physiotherapists and or health professionals with similar educational background.

Beneficiaries: Pain School is intended for adults impaired by pain and ongoing stress experiences. It includes persons with disability, long term physical conditions, low intense mental health challenges. Pain School is not suitable for persons with acute pain from injuries or surgery, nor persons with ongoing severe mental or physical illnesses, that prevents them from engaging in conversations, basic physical movements and simple self-management practice.

Outcomes

Trained physiotherapists will experience the following change:

- Enhanced Clinical Competence: Gain proficiency in delivering trauma-informed care, integrating a biopsychosocial-spiritual approach to address persistent pain and stress.
- Improved Patient Engagement: Develop skills to foster therapeutic alliances, encouraging patient participation and adherence to treatment plans.
- Expanded Treatment Repertoire: Learn to incorporate therapeutic movements, interactive education, and self-management techniques tailored to trauma-affected individuals.
- Professional Growth: Engage in ongoing supervision and reflective practices, enhancing personal and professional development.

Beneficiaries receiving Pain School support will likely experience the following change:

- Empowerment Through Education: Understand the nature of pain and stress, leading to reduced fear and increased self-efficacy in managing symptoms.
- Improved Physical Function: Experience enhanced mobility and reduced pain through structured therapeutic movements and exercises
- Enhanced Coping Strategies: Learn and apply self-management techniques, including relaxation and grounding exercises, to better handle stress and pain.
- Psychosocial Benefits: Participate in group sessions that provide social support, reducing feelings of isolation and promoting a sense of community.
- Holistic Well-being: Achieve a better quality of life by addressing physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of health.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Pain School comes with recommendation for pre-post assessment and a standardised in-take-form. The assessment follows a pre-post-test structure.

- Basic demographic information
- Pain intensity, interference & count of pain areas, ex. Brief Pain Inventory
- Emotional distress and/or indication of anxiety, depression and PTSD
- Self-evaluation of functionality & health

The choice of assessment scale is flexible, allowing adaptation.

Key considerations

Implementing the Pain School requires careful adaptation to the local context, with attention to cultural sensitivities and language requirements. Physiotherapists delivering the intervention should have a genuine motivation to support others and must receive appropriate training and supervision.

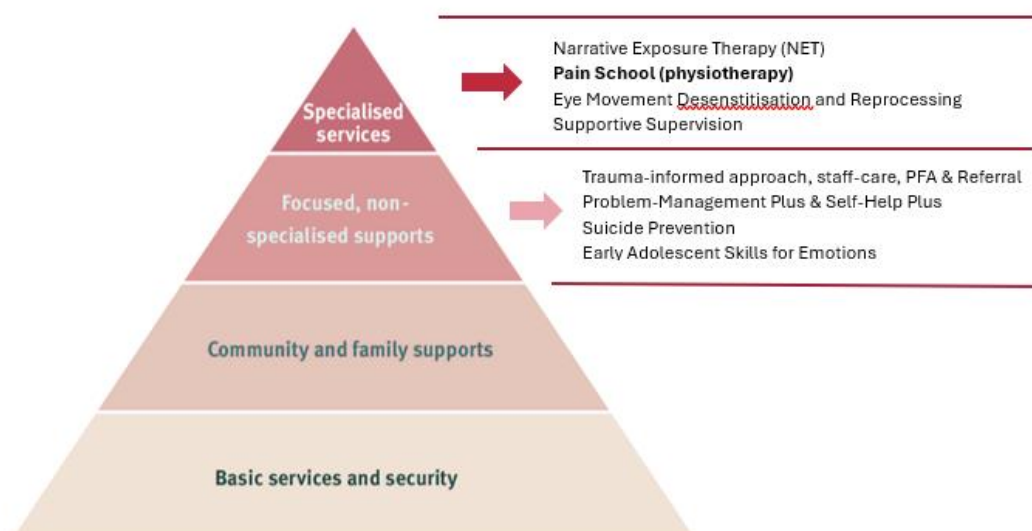
A strong referral system is essential to ensure that participants can access additional services when needed. In settings with limited or no access to physiotherapists, delivering the full Pain School may not be feasible. Instead, with guidance from a trained Pain School facilitator, relevant themes and tools can be integrated into existing health or counselling services that support individuals experiencing persistent pain and distress.

Check questions

- ☐ Does my organisation require a structured, evidence-informed physiotherapy approach to support individuals experiencing persistent pain and trauma-related stress?
- ☐ Are managers in my organisation committed to allocating time and resources for physiotherapists to undergo Pain School training, receive ongoing supervision, and integrate the intervention into existing services?
- ☐ Do we have access to physiotherapists who are willing and able to follow the Pain School methodology, apply the tools, adapt materials to the local context, and participate in monitoring and supervision processes?
- ☐ Can my organisation support the development or strengthening of referral pathways for individuals who may need additional physical, psychological, or social support?

Type of intervention

Pain School is a specialised intervention



Implementation overview: Pain School

