

INTRODUCTION
(Goes with Session 1)

IT IS NOT ALL IN YOUR HEAD

As a chronic pain sufferer you may be afraid that other people do not believe that your pain is "real," that they think it is all in your head. Sometimes even your doctors may appear to doubt that you are suffering to the extent that you are. We know that you are in pain and your suffering is real. We also know that in order to experience pain, your brain has to pick up the pain impulse, and there are certain ways of thinking and doing and certain techniques you can use (Coping Skills) that can help you experience less pain and get on with life with or without pain. It is these Coping Skills that you will learn in the next sixteen sessions.

One of the best coping skills you can learn is to:

FOCUS AWAY FROM THE PAIN

In this course we encourage you to find other things to do and think about so that you will suffer less.

THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION

If you think about it, if you lined up ten people with identical backs and identical back problems, they would not suffer equally. Why? Because they are all different people with entirely different life experiences and decisions about life. Some will have better coping skills. They will respond differently to their experience.

"LIFE IS 10% WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU AND 90% HOW YOU TAKE IT."

Your mind can make your body suffer more or less.

THE SPECIFIC GOALS OF THIS PROGRAM:

- 1) To lessen your perception of pain.
- 2) To learn to be happy and fulfilled with or without pain.
- 3) To avoid unnecessary disability.
- 4) To avoid unnecessary medication.

STRESS AGGRAVATES PAIN and so this is a stress course as well as a pain course. We reduce the stress that makes your pain worse by learning to:

- 1) Deal with feelings.
- 2) Be positive instead of negative.
- 3) Do relaxation techniques.
- 4) Raise your self-esteem.

- 5) Exercise properly.
- 6) Use your faith.
- 7) Stay in the here and now (not worry).
- 8) Take responsibility for your own wellness.
- 9) Adjust to life's changes.
- 10) Laugh.