

BHP Bluegrass Health Psychology, Inc.

JONATHAN D. COLE, PH.D., ABPP | AMANDA W. MERCHANT, PH.D., ABPP
ERICA ADAMS, PH.D. | DONALD CROWE, PH.D. | SUSAN SNYDER, LCSW

Pain Psychology Information Sheet Bluegrass Health Psychology

So you've been referred to a psychologist...

Bluegrass health psychology is a practice made up of psychologists that specialize in treating medical patients. We do not focus on traditional mental health, which is what most people think of when talking about psychology. Our focus is the patient's medical condition and how it is affecting their life.

With chronic pain, we address issues that are common with pain patients such as irritability, sleep, coping with pain, physical limitations and depression.

Do not think that your physician thinks your pain is not real because you were referred to our clinic. In our experience, most every pain patient has a real reason to experience pain. But in order to experience pain, all signals must pass through the brain. Anything affecting the brain (such as anger or stress) could affect the pain perception.

What to expect at your first visit:

Your first visit will be an evaluation. You will meet with one of our doctors and discuss your pain and how it is affecting your life. You will also be given a series of tests. One set of tests may be mailed to you before your appointment. It will address your pain and your reaction to the pain. The next test you will need to complete at our office as part of your evaluation. This test is a general psychological evaluation which will ask you a variety of questions about yourself. It is our version of an MRI as we are checking for many different things. Many questions may not apply to you but just answer them the best you can. **The entire pain evaluation can last from 2-3 hours and you will need to bring your glasses if you wear them to read.**

A full pain evaluation will help guide us in your treatment. It will also assist your referring physician in your treatment planning.

What to expect with treatment:

Pain psychology treatment includes relaxation, activity pacing, increasing pain coping skills, biofeedback, cognitive therapy, and improving sleep. All of these are designed to reduce pain as much as possible and to help cope with the pain that remains. Combined with a multidisciplinary approach (medical and physical therapy), pain psychology has found to be an effective part in treating chronic pain. Sessions last from 25-50 minutes and can occur as frequently as once a week or once every few months. If you have to travel a large distance to see your physician as well as our clinic, we will try to coordinate your appointments so you can see us both on the same day you come to Lexington. Length of treatment is usually brief and lasts on average 3-6 sessions. We see patients longer if needed and make referrals for more in depth mental health treatment if needed.