

# painmanagement

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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“It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself...Serve and thou shall be served.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Dealing with patients in chronic pain can become a huge challenge for the therapist. Many seek to avoid these patients like the plague. Others seek to assist them with their extensive knowledge and data concerning the physical ramifications of what the patient presents. Others feel compassion and care for those who have a chronic illness, especially pain. Still others feel in their spirit that they have had a destiny since birth to touch the lives of hurting people. These approaches are all encompassing, affecting the mind, body, emotions, spirit, and even cultural responses to pain. Each patient is a new experience and never exactly the same. It is with this complex mix that the therapist enters the arena to assist, at times ill prepared, and at times, without other medical specialties to call upon. Sometimes, the therapist can give so much of themselves that they feel drained, and over time, even burned out. This can happen especially if the patient is taking the energy the therapist is giving and the therapist is not aware how to protect against being drained. The therapist is most likely the person in the health care field that will spend the most one on one time with the patient and often will listen more to all the peripheral issues surrounding the person in pain. It is the therapist that will often be the only one to touch the patient with the knowledge of hope, of future life without frustration, of return to function in a new way, a way of coping, feeling care and empathy, and so many more attributes that seem to flow naturally from the therapist involved in pain management. The paramount of these is the genuine love and care for the patient, as well as faith that they can overcome, in many different ways, the obstacles facing them.

As their coach, we must somehow guide the patient through the web of snares that often challenges them, to bring them to a level of higher function, so that the body can begin its self correction, which it does so masterfully with the right support and guidance. It is so important to assist the patient in converting their negativity and their frequent thinking of catastrophic thoughts into positive thoughts. A Stanford University study once showed that people spend 98% of their time thinking about the past or future and only 2% concentrating on the now. Frequently, their minds take over where the pre-existing physical insult left off. Although it is important to have psychological assistance in this process, often the therapist acts as a tremendous

positive catalyst to motivate, guide, direct, share, and empathize with the patient as they walk through the journey of life.

Through this complicated and often fragile tapestry of life, we walk in that very broad specialization of pain management. It is those many gifted therapists that I have come to know, respect, and most of all love, for whom I have the highest gratitude, for all that you have shared to help me grow and become. I feel honored and privileged to know each of you. My patients have taught me so much as I have learned to listen with attentive anticipation and they have given me such joy. As we glean from each patient that we touch, we receive the ultimate gift of life and the highest vibrational energy of the heart. It is only then that we can receive the true fullness that our profession has blessed us with and we can return the gift back to the patient who came to receive.

*“Someday, after man has mastered the winds, the waves, the tides, and gravity...we shall harness all the energies of LOVE, and then for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered FIRE! Theilhard de Chardin*