Dealing with Flare Ups

One difficulty commonly faced by persistent pain sufferers is flare ups of pain. These can disrupt daily routine and lead to feelings of helplessness and loss of control. The important thing to remember is that they are a normal part of the persistent pain process.

Flare-ups can sometimes occur for no obvious reason but upon reflection there may have been a sequence of events which has led up to the flare-up occurring. These are often subtle obstacles that might interfere with you practising and applying the skills you have learned from this group e.g. conflict with family, not pacing, illness or recurrent stress.

What are the things that you have either faced in the past or that you can identify now that could lead to a flare-up? These can be called your flare-up risk factors. In identifying your risk factors it may be possible to consider ways of reducing the risk e.g. if driving long distances is a risk factor for you, you could plan regular breaks, share the driving with someone else or look into other modes of transport for that journey.

Use the space below to record your risk factors and what you could do to reduce them.

Risk Factor	Strategies to reduce risk

There will be some risk factors that you are unable to prepare for which will lead to you experiencing a flare up.

There isn’t a ‘best way’ of dealing with flare ups that will work for everyone but by considering different ways of coping with them you can work out a plan that works for you.

There are some basic strategies that can help:

- Try to avoid panicking. The flare up is likely to be temporary and you have no doubt dealt with them before.
- Stop and think what have I been doing, have I been overdoing things? But don't dwell on this if things do not come to mind.
- If you need to rest keep this to a minimum

Making an action plan for dealing with flare ups before they happen can be useful. When your pain is at a more manageable level you will be able to think more clearly and if you write your plan down, when the flare up happens you can just pick up the plan, possibly acting more quickly, which will have a positive affect on the flare up and how you feel about it.

Before writing your plan, consider the following questions:

- What has been unhelpful in the past?

- What has been helpful in the past?

- What have you learned from the course that you will be able to apply during a flare-up?

It is important that when the **pain starts to ease**, you plan how you are going to gradually increase your activity levels again - remembering the pacing principles, recognise what went well and record what helped and review and return to your goals and activities as soon as you can.

Flare-up Action Plan

Your action plan will contain things that **you** will find helpful **during a flare up** it will be individual to you and therefore needs some thought. Use the section below to start an action plan.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____