



## Pain Foundations Program Course Outlines

**General Goals:** Enhance healthcare professionals' knowledge, confidence and skills to improve health outcomes for people living with chronic pain. The Program will improve foundational knowledge of pain science, assessment and management emphasizing the use of compassion, collaborative communication skills and trauma-and violence- informed practice.

**Audience:** Healthcare professionals

**Duration:** Five hours (Basic Modules: 1, 2, and 3)

**Pre-requisites:** No pre-requisites but it is assumed that learners will have completed or are about to complete some post-secondary education in a social services or healthcare area.

### Course Outlines:

By the end of this full program (Basic Modules and Advanced Modules), learners will be able to

- Recognize pain as a complex, subjective experience within the unique individual
- Reflect on people's potential experience of stigma and marginalization (e.g. because of ethnicity, gender identity, socioeconomic status) and apply compassionate, trauma-and violence- informed strategies when supporting them
- Describe the changes that take place in the nervous system when living with chronic pain and apply these concepts when supporting people living with pain
- Practice culturally safe skills required to develop a successful therapeutic relationship with people living with pain
- Collaborate with patients on pain assessments
- Describe and apply total pain management
- Apply the learned skills to assess and create a pain management plan for realistic patient cases

## **MODULE 1: Introduction to Pain Foundations**

### **Unit 1: The Pain Foundations Program**

1. Describe the intentions of Pain Foundations
2. Review the core learning outcomes of this program
3. Identify the purpose of each of the modules

### **Unit 2: Defining Pain**

1. Define the three broad descriptors of pain
2. Contrast the biopsychosocial model and the enactive approach to pain
3. Break down the concept of pain

### **Unit 3: Acute to Chronic Pain**

1. Contrast acute and chronic pain
2. Discuss important factors that may contribute to the transition from acute to chronic pain
3. Recognize the uniqueness and complexity of pain

### **Unit 4: Pain Management in Context**

1. Recognize chronic pain as a diagnosis in its own right
2. Describe the main goals of pain management
3. Recognize the impact of the overdose crisis in North America on pain management practices

### **Unit 5: Practicing Cultural Humility**

1. Describe barriers to chronic pain care focusing on systemic inequalities
2. Compare and contrast cultural humility and cultural safety
3. Practice culturally informed and culturally safe approaches to support people accessing pain management services

## **MODULE 2: Exploring Pain: Beyond and Mind**

### **Unit 1: Pain: It's Real**

1. Describe important non-physical factors associated with the pain experience
2. Apply psychosocial lens when interacting with people living with pain
3. Identify ways to disrupt the Pain Spiral

### **Unit 2: Pain: Body or Mind?**

1. Describe the relationship between the brain and the pain experience
2. Examine the body-self neuromatrix model
3. Correlate neuroplasticity with the pain experience

### **Unit 3: Different Brains Still Feel Pain**

1. Explore the connection between neurodevelopmental disorders and pain
2. Explore the relationship between Traumatic Brain Injury and chronic pain
3. Identify strategies that would be helpful when potentially supporting people with neurological differences

### **Unit 4: Communicating Effectively**

1. Describe the principles of Motivational interviewing (MI)
2. Discuss the foundational communication skills utilized in MI
3. Practice the four stages of MI exploration through case scenarios

## **MODULE 3: Living with Pain**

### **Unit 1: Compassion and the Lived Experience of Pain**

1. Compare and contrast empathy, sympathy, and compassion
2. Identify key characteristics of compassion
3. Use the key characteristics of compassion in a scenario-based exercise.

### **Unit 2: Compassion and its Connection with Pain**

1. Define trauma
2. Identify trauma's relationship to one's past and present
3. Examine the relationship between traumatic experiences and pain
4. Review different responses to trauma

### **Unit 3: Pain and the Self**

1. Examine how living with pain can impact a person's self-identity
2. Describe the impact of pain on a person's cognition and emotions
3. Recognize how fear may impact the chronic pain trajectory

### **Unit 4: Pain and relationships**

1. Recognize that pain affects both people living with chronic pain and the others in their relationships
2. Examine the relationship between chronic pain and social isolation
3. Identify the connection between spirituality and one's framing of pain

### **Unit 5: Pain from a Systemic Perspective**

1. Describe intersectionality in the context of healthcare
2. Connect chronic pain to systemic inequities in Canadian society
3. Identify ways by which marginalization impacts the experience of living with pain and receiving treatment for pain

### **Unit 6: Moving Beyond Stigma**

1. Identify how stigma can show up in a healthcare context
2. Recognize the effects of stigma on people living with chronic pain

3. Identify compassionate responses to individuals living with pain