

PainWeek®

Night & Day: The Disabling Power of Sympathy/The Enabling Power of Empathy

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Disclosure

- None

Learning Objectives

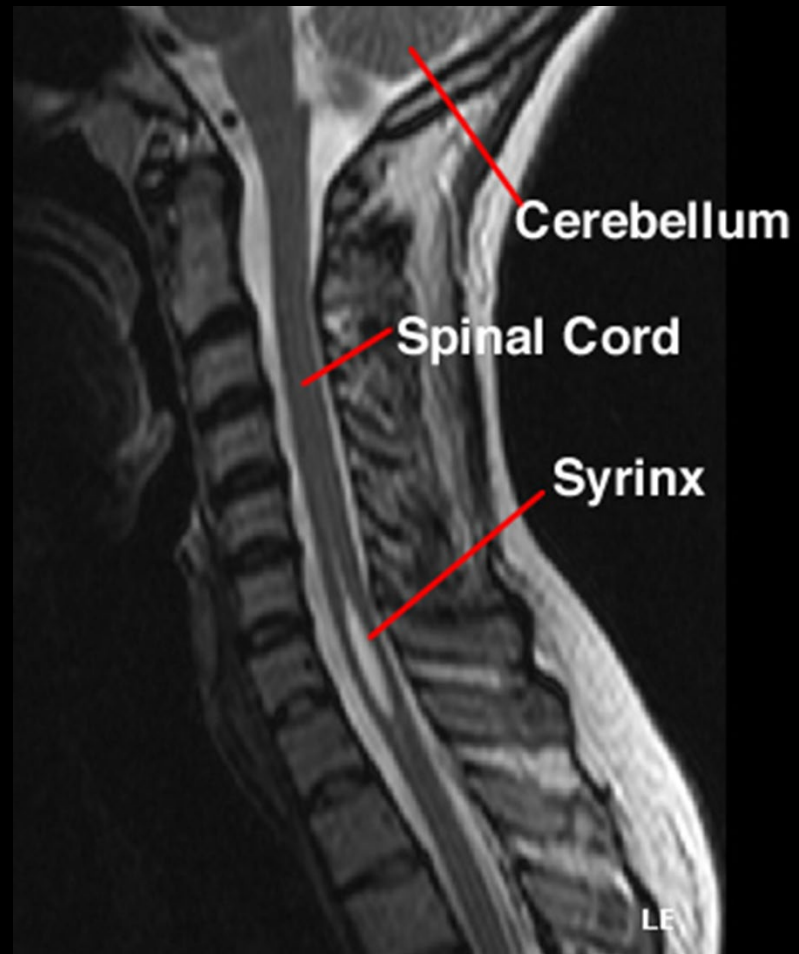
- Identify how empathy and sympathy affect the chronic pain sufferer differently
- Describe the conversational and deep listening skills for working with chronic pain patients
- Explain how to use accurate empathy in order to see the problem from the perspective of the patient in his or her frame of reference













NO!!!!!!



Empathy

Empathy: “There is something in human nature that resists being coerced and told what to do. Ironically, it is acknowledging the others right and freedom not to change that sometimes makes change possible.”

Motivational Interviewing, Stephen Rollnick

The Paradigm Shift

Moving from a passive “Cure me” mentality to realizing there are active things that can be done to manage the experience of pain.

“The longer we have been negative, angry and passive, the more brain change we will need to make. Because of the plasticity in our brain, **everything is reversible**. “In the same way that muscles and joints can be made more healthy and robust, so too can the homunculus arrangements in your brain.”

Explain Pain, Butler, Moseley, NOIgroup Publishing, Australia, 2003, pg 76



Empathy and Oxytocin

“Converging evidence suggests that the hypothalamic neuropeptide oxytocin (OXT) facilitates empathy (Rosenfeld et al., 2011; Striepens et al., 2011; Riem, 2012). Genetic approaches have consistently revealed associations between individual variations in the OXT receptor gene and levels of trait empathy in Caucasian (Rodrigues et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2014) and Chinese populations”
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- Front Neurosci. 2018 Jul 31;12:512 Oxytocin Enhancement of Emotional Empathy: Generalization Across Cultures and Effects on Amygdala Activity, Yayuan Geng,¹ Weihua Zhao,¹ Feng Zhou,¹ Xiaole Ma,¹ Shuxia Yao,¹ Rene Hurlemann,^{2,3} Benjamin Becker,^{1,*} and Keith M. Kendrick^{1,*}

A Few Ways to Increase Oxytocin

- Yoga
- Music
- Massage
- Talking
- Friends
- Meditation
- Listening
- Food
- Sex
- Hugging
- Kindness
- Dogs

<https://www.healthline.com/health/how-to-increase-oxytocin#takeaway>

A Better Way to Communicate

- “Health and Wellness Coaches partner with clients seeking self-directed, lasting changes, aligned with their values, which promote health and wellness and, thereby, enhance well-being. In the course of their work health and wellness coaches display unconditional positive regard for their clients and a belief in their capacity for change and honoring that each client is an expert on his or her life, while ensuring that all interactions are respectful and non-judgmental.”

-National Board for Health and Wellness Coaching
NBHWC

Adult Learning

“...Adults learn best when they are provided with opportunity to discover knowledge and insights for themselves. Coaching rests on this premise of discovery for self, with the client having the expertise and answers.”

Jennifer Britton, Effective Group Coaching, 2010

Chronic Pain

- Behavior influences health outcomes
- Repetition creates new pathways in the brain
- Our repetitive thoughts and actions determine health outcomes
- The brain learns and can “unlearn”
- Sometimes our actions don’t align with our values
- Experiencing empathy helps us reconnect with our values and create neuroplastic changes that serve us

The Empathetic Approach

- Builds a working relationship based on respect for the patient's ability to choose the right path for functionality.
- This style increases self-motivation.
- The patient has a greater sense of ownership.
- Patient will be more likely to start making and continue behavior change.

Gary A. Sforzo, PhD, Miranda P. Kaye, PhD, Irina Todorova, PhD, et al. "Compendium of the Health and Wellness Coaching Literature." American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine. Vol 12 issue 6, pp 436-447. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1559827617708562>. November 1, 2018. Accessed August 23, 2019.

Motivation

Extrinsic

- Motivation driven by someone else (doctor, spouse, parent, insurance adjuster, landlord)
- Impersonal
- Sometimes meaningless to the individual

Intrinsic

- Motivation driven by YOU and your values
- Personal
- Internal
- Meaningful

Yes!!!

- Hiking with my family and friends
- Ability to read, pray, think clearly
- Self-manage instead being a passive patient
- The ability to learn and use other modalities

References

- Empathy in Medicine: What It Is, and How Much We Really Need It
Am J Med. 2020 May;133(5):561-566
- Motivated empathy: a social neuroscience perspective. Curr Opin Psychol. 2018
- Empathy and emotion regulation: An integrative account. Prog Brain Res. 2019;247:273-304
- More than reflections: Empathy in motivational interviewing includes language style synchrony between therapist and client. Behav Ther. 2015 May; 46(3): 296–303.
Published online 2014 Nov 11

