

Interdisciplinary ACT for Chronic Pain: Processes and Practice

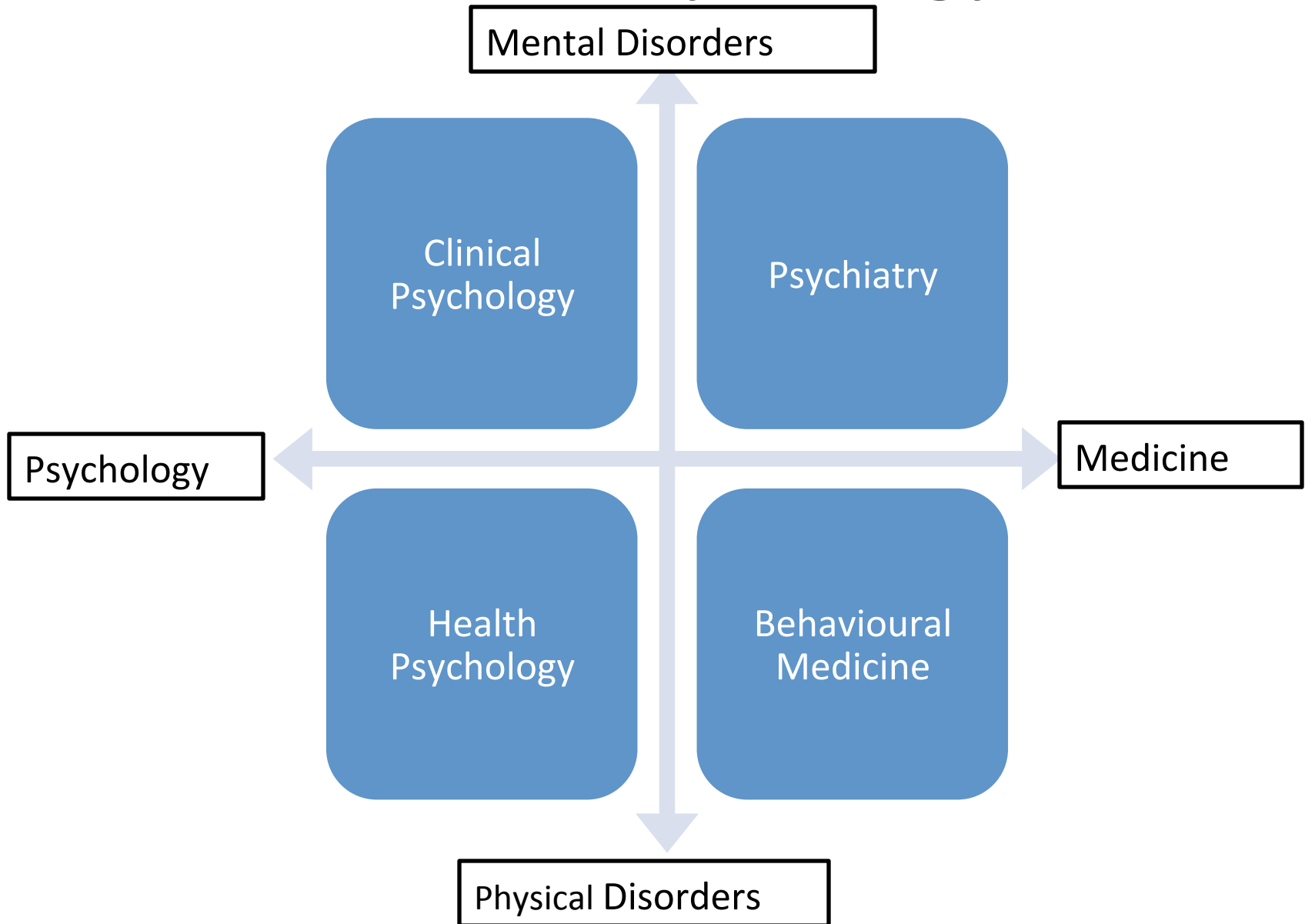
ACCEPTANCE & COMMITMENT THERAPY: AN INTRODUCTION

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Health Psychology



The Biopsychosocial Model

Health Psychology & Chronic Pain

“The experience of pain is the result of a dynamic interaction between physical, psychological and social factors and these shape the individual’s response to the pain”

(Turk & Flor, 1999)



Burden of CP

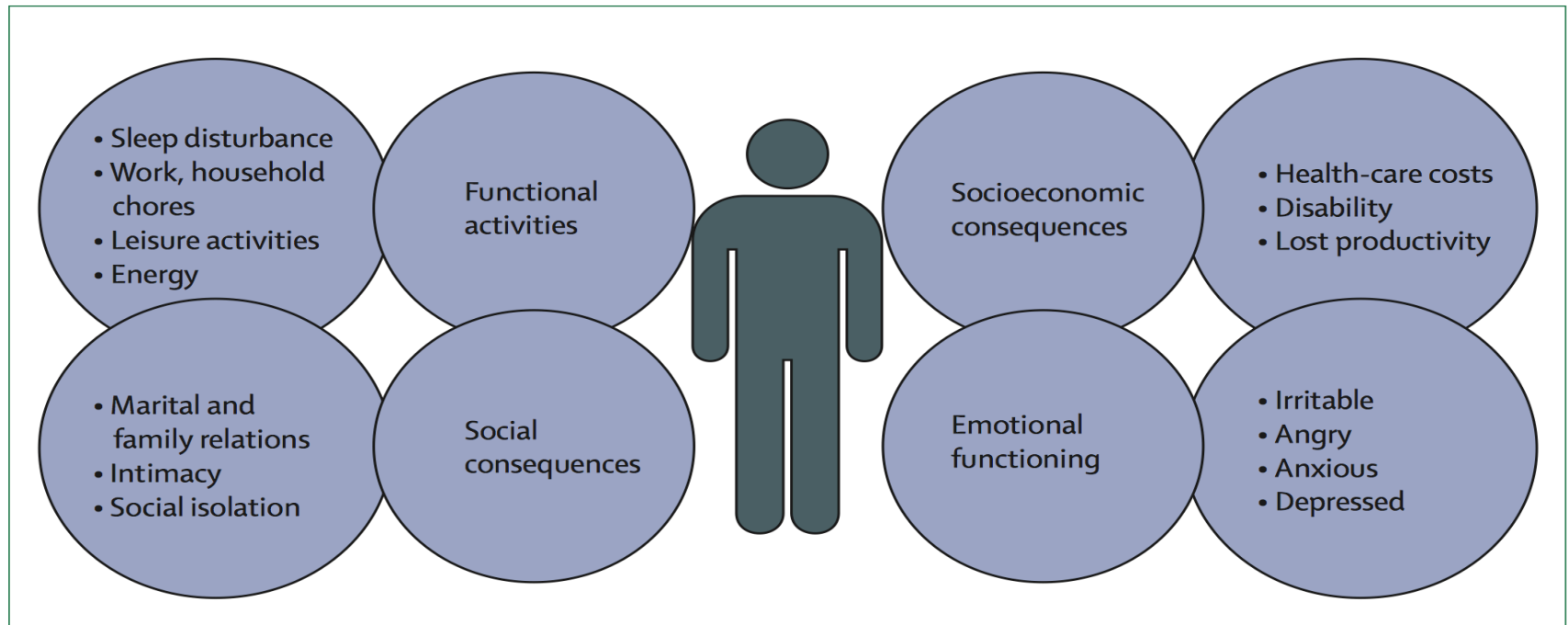


Figure 1: The effect and burden of chronic pain

Chronic pain affects every aspect of a patient's life, contributing to a loss of both physical and emotional function, affecting a patient's levels of activity (ability to work at home and job and engage in social and recreational pursuits); additionally, there are often serious economic consequences as a result of health-care bills and potential loss or decrease in financial income.

Turk et al (2011) Lancet 377: 2226–35

Factors for Pain Severity

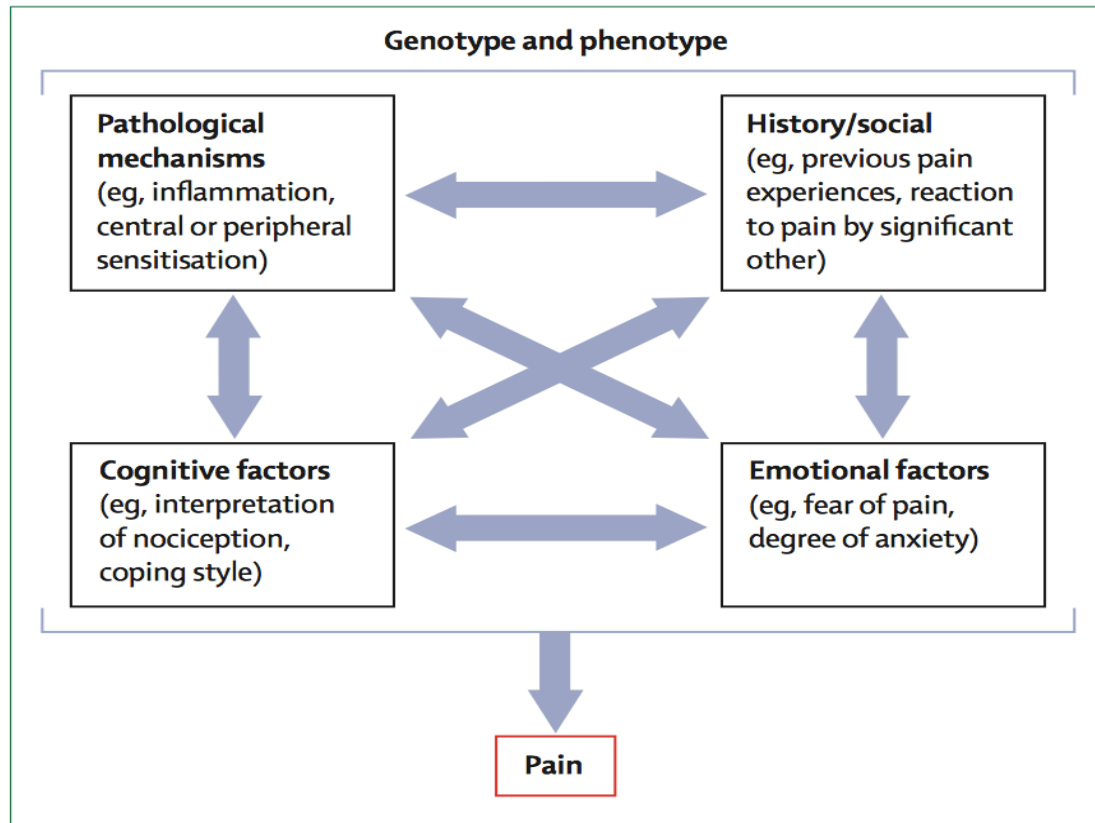


Figure 2: Factors contributing to pain severity

Pain severity is not accounted for solely by degree of physiological pathology, but is the result of a complex interaction among individuals' unique previous histories, any physiological abnormalities, their cognitive perceptions of nociception, emotional factors, their coping styles, and social and financial resources.

Turk et al (2011) Lancet 377: 2226–35

Why focus on Theory & Models?

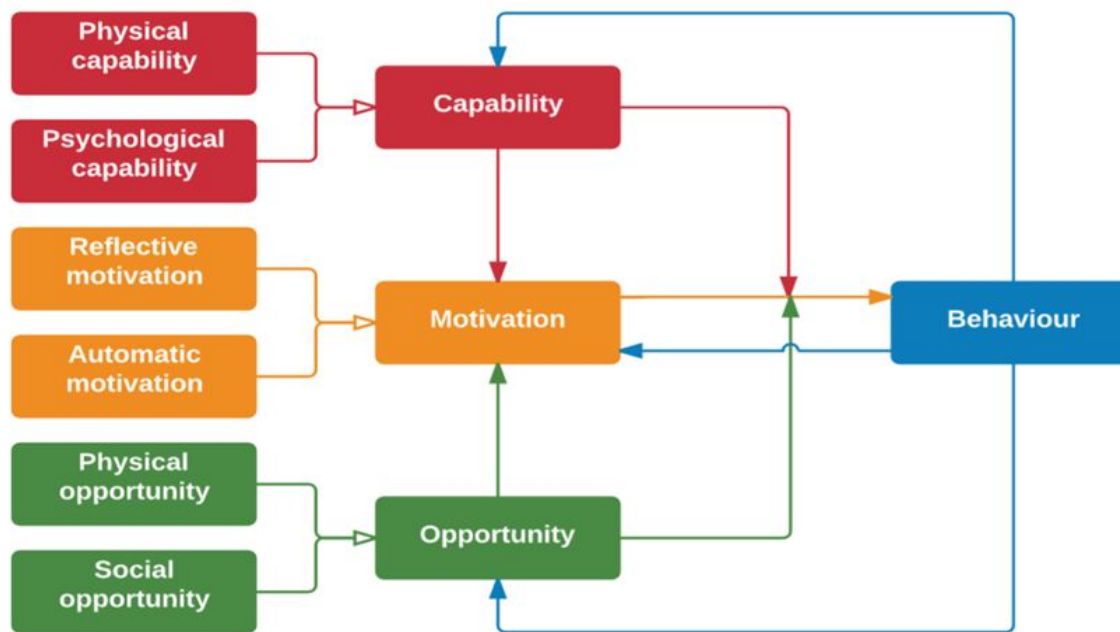
“How a clinician thinks about pain affects the way in which he or she assesses a patient who presents with pain”

(Turk & Okifuji, 1999 Lancet)



Models/Theories

COM-B model of behaviour change



Michie S et al. (2014)
The Behaviour Change
Wheel: a guide to
designing interventions.
Silverback Publishing

Michie S, M van Stralen, West R
(2011) The behaviour change
wheel: A new method for
characterising and designing
behaviour change interventions.
Implementation Science, 6, 42..

Interventions based on theory

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: influenced by various underlying theories
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Behavioural but based on empirical analysis of human cognition [Relational Frame Theory (RFT); Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, & Roche, 2001 (NUI Maynooth)]
- Contextual Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (McCracken 2005)



Relational Frame Theory



Figure 5. Number of Empirical RFT articles by country of origin.

Cognitive Behavioural Model

Pain & Behavioural Medicine: A Cognitive-Behavioural Perspective

Turk, Meichenbaum & Genest (1983)



Interventions

Focus on Cognitive Change

Focus on Behavioural Change



Practice based evidence...

- Studies showed that cognitive change was not the mechanism by which positive outcomes were achieved
- Behaviour change strategies 'delivered'...i.e. activity scheduling
- CBT originally included the importance of the therapeutic relationship however therapy became manualised



Shift in focus...

The Third Wave

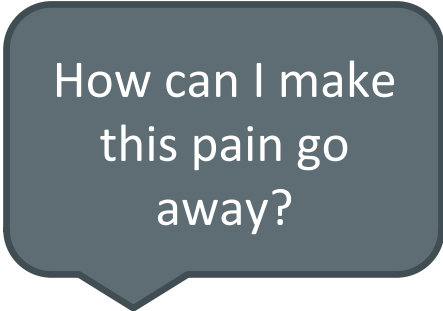
- Approaches attempt to undermine emotional avoidance and increase the capacity for behaviour change [Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, (1999)]
- Acceptance Based vs Avoidance/Distraction
- Emphasis on Collaboration between Health Care Provider & Client



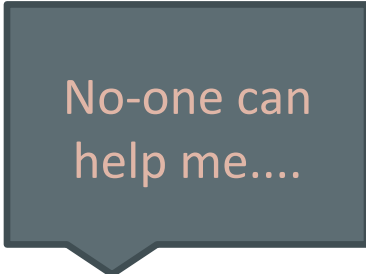
Thoughts about pain

A dark grey thought bubble with a small tail pointing downwards and to the left.


WHAT AM
I GOING
TO DO?

A dark grey speech bubble with a tail pointing downwards and to the left.

How can I make
this pain go
away?

A dark grey speech bubble with a tail pointing downwards and to the left.


No-one can
help me....

A dark grey thought bubble with a small tail pointing downwards and to the left.

- I have to
get rid of
this pain!

A dark grey thought bubble with a small tail pointing downwards and to the left.

I am a
burden

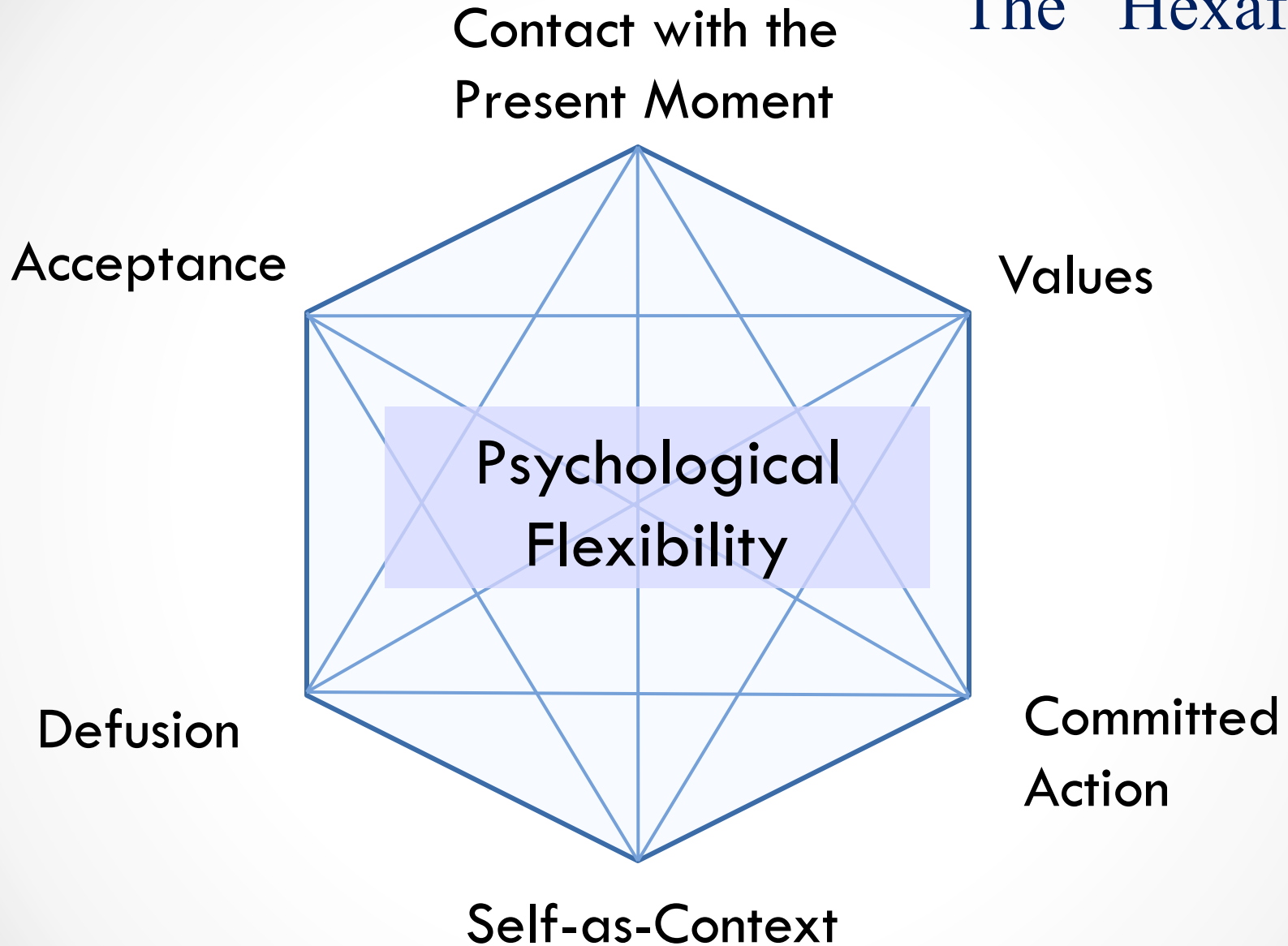
A dark grey speech bubble with a tail pointing downwards and to the left.

Another
day of
stiffness!

A dark grey speech bubble with a tail pointing downwards and to the left.

Nobody
really
cares....

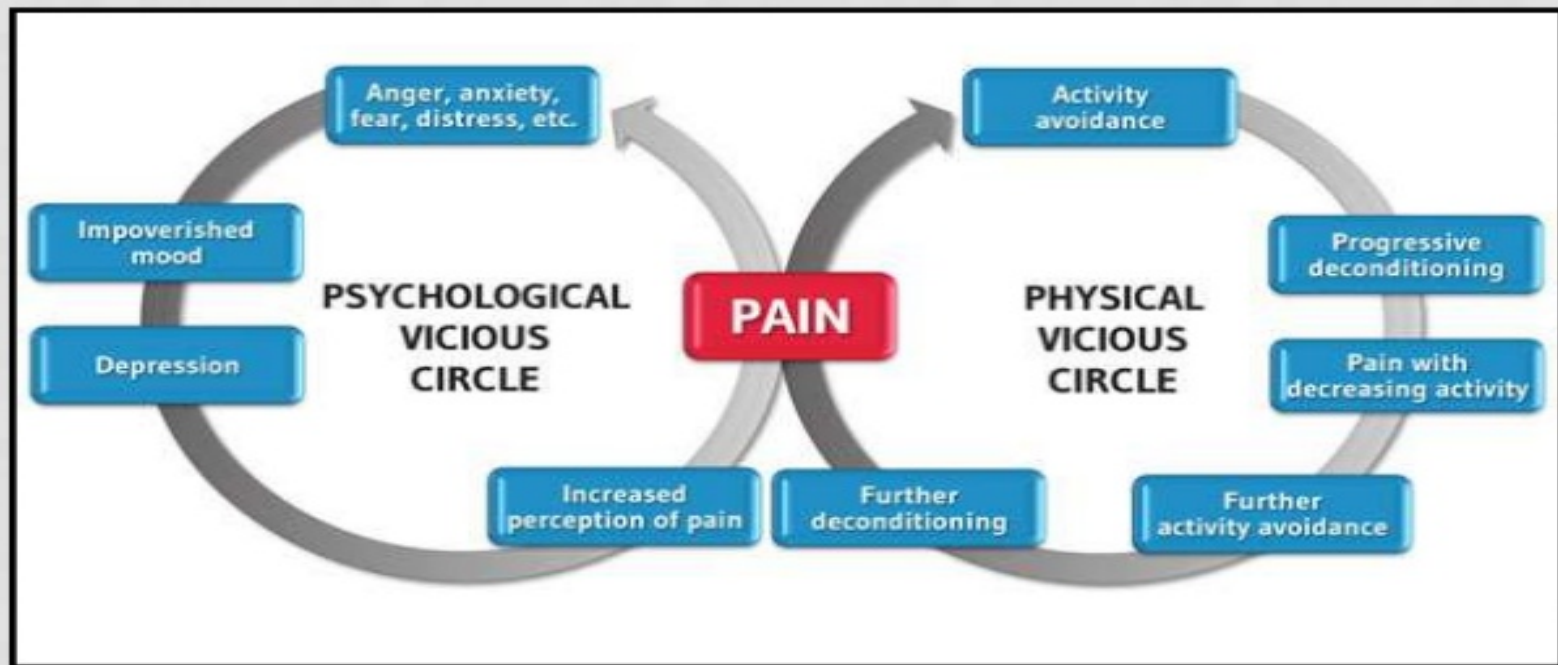
The “Hexaflex”



Self as Context



Combined Physical and Psychological Intervention (MDT)



The Evidence: ACT for PP

A Systematic Review of 14 Randomized Controlled Trials of ACT for adults with PP concluded...

- ACT is efficacious for enhancing physical functioning and reducing distress in comparison to inactive treatment comparisons (Hann & McCracken 2014)
- Process research explaining ACT outcomes found unusually rapid decrease in the believability of unhelpful thoughts (Bach & Hayes, 2002)



Current Research

- Examining processes of PF previously unexamined
- Including Self Compassion
- In the context of Rheumatology (homogenous group)
- Attempts to determine whether larger improvements in the processes of PF will produce better patient outcomes



Process Research

- Scott, W., Hann, K.E.J. & McCracken, L.M. (2016)
- A Comprehensive Examination of Changes in Psychological Flexibility Following Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Chronic Pain
- Examine changes in processes of psychological flexibility after ACT treatment for CP
- Examine change in these processes in relation to improvements in patient functioning



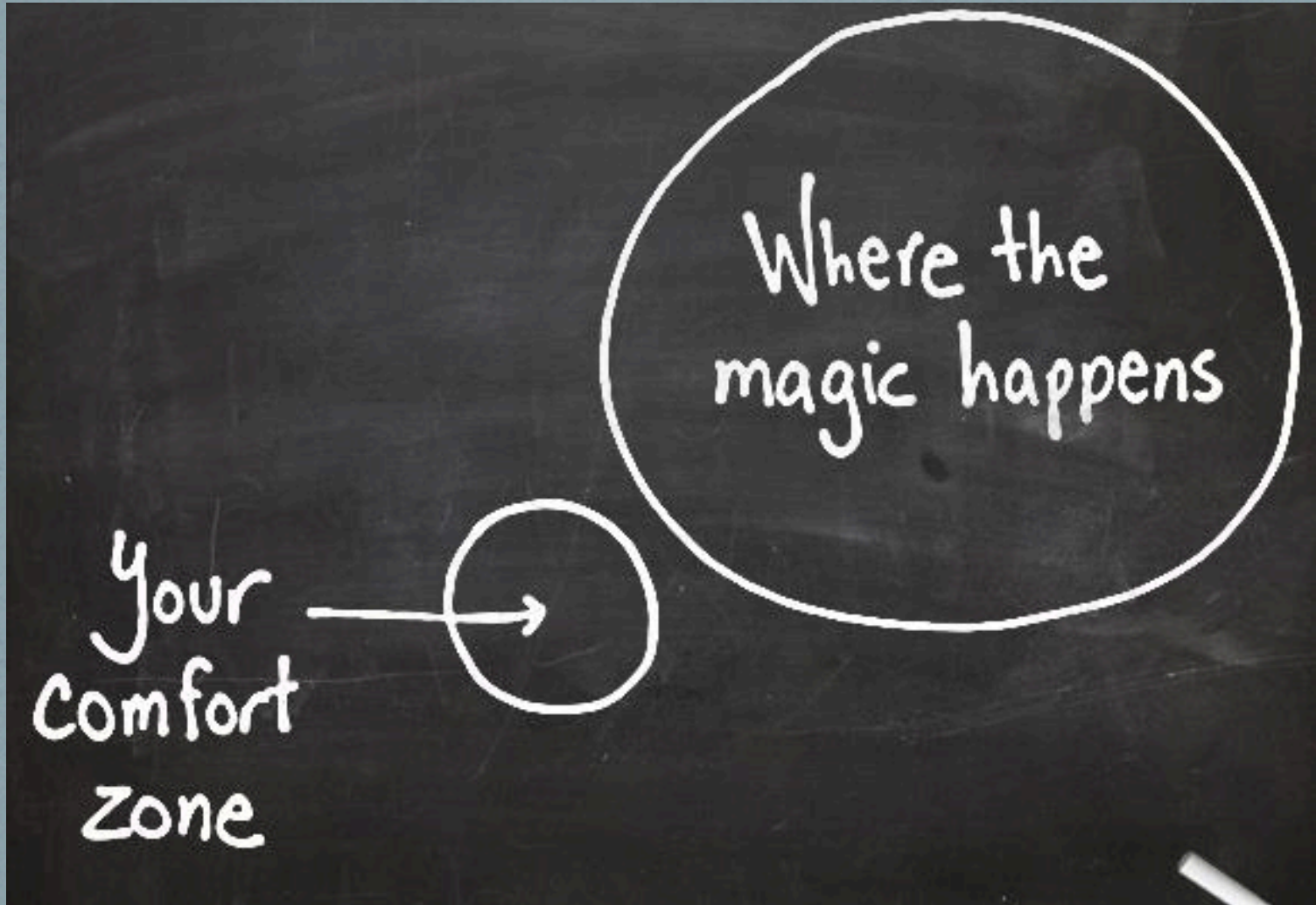
Findings

Significant improvements: pre to post and pre treatment to follow up on all treatment outcome and process variables

Regression analyses indicated that change in psychological flexibility processes cumulatively explained 6-27% of the variance in changes in functioning and depression over both assessment periods even when controlling for changes in pain intensity



Moving outside of comfort zone



Self Care



Psychological Interventions for Persistent Pain: CBT...

- **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy**

Developed in 1980s by Hayes, Wilson and Strosahl

Evidence-based therapeutic approach for Chronic Pain



Hayes, S.C., Strosahl, K.D., & Wilson, K.G. (1999) *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An Experiential Approach to Behavior Change.*



Summary & Questions?

- Development from CBT-ACT Interventions for CP
- Importance of underlying Models and Theories
- Importance of Contextual features in ACT for CP
- Focus on therapeutic relationship
- 6 Processes: Psychological Flexibility
- Current focus: Process Research

