

# Tips & Information concerning “Flare Ups”



## **Haemosexual**

People who experience chronic pain often report that pain episodes can fluctuate in intensity and duration over time. This can manifest in a rapid onset of pain which can result in feelings of fear, depression and despair. It is important to plan ahead and prepare ahead for these occurrences, and can do this by developing an emergency plan pack that includes things that can make your pain more bearable during those times.

Recognising the early signs of an intense chronic pain flare up will help you to cope with those events in a positive manner, and undertaking relaxation strategies that you have practiced could lessen the impact that pain flare ups have on your life.

Your emergency plan pack could consist of names and telephone numbers of people you know will support you during this time. It could be a radio, or tapes that you enjoy listening to, for some people have reported that listening to music or stories has taken their attention away from the pain. Practise relaxation techniques, and if you have a TENS machine and/or icepacks, make sure you know where they are and that you have easy access to them. If you use painkillers to control your pain be careful how you use them, and follow the medical advice you have been given about all your medications. Finally, acknowledge your pain, tell yourself it will subside, be kind to yourself and keep communication channels open with people around you, for talking to others can act as a buffer to the stress that pain can induce.

# Plan of Action

## Emergency plan pack would include:

- Do not isolate yourself; keep communication lines open. Write down phone numbers of family and friends you can call on for support
- Write down a list of coping techniques. Strategies that have worked in the past may not work every time, but have a list ready of probable distraction strategies to use – have your favourite CD, tape or radio to hand
- Note down a relaxation technique that you have practised in the past that you know works
- If you find that a TENS machine and/or ice packs are helpful, keep them with your emergency pack
- Pain killers and other medications, and any instructions or medical advice that go with them
- Be realistic, it won't be possible to eradicate pain from your mind, but it may be possible to take attention away from the pain and therefore limit the effect it has on your life.

When you are experiencing an intense occurrence of pain it is important that you acknowledge your pain, be kind to yourself, rest and try to remain positive that your pain will subside.

### **Note:**

Maybe include, medication regime, emergency phone numbers, addresses etc

