

I wish I'd known...that recovery IS POSSIBLE

'Recovery' isn't necessarily about zero pain. Living a better life with pain is possible; pain can make you more compassionate, resilient and better able to cope with what life throws at you.

Recovery is different for everyone but taking control of your health is a skill for life.



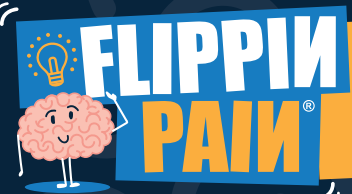
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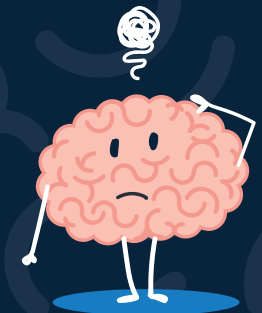
If only I'd known...

This leaflet is written **BY** people living with pain, **FOR** people living with pain



Persistent pain affects up to **30%** of people in the UK

It's a big problem; it can be frightening. **But you can live a full and happy life with pain, and in many cases make a full recovery.** It helps to understand pain better.



Here are some of the things **we wish we'd known earlier** in our persistent pain journeys.

I wish I'd known...how **COMPLEX** pain can be

Pain varies from person to person; my pain experience is unique to me and everything in my life has the potential to affect my pain experience, such as my past experiences, my fears, stress and even my environment. Everything matters: how we feel and think can affect how much pain we experience.

Self-management can be empowering and we can take control: we just need to find the right way.



I wish I'd known...that it's **OK to NOT BE OK**

It's natural to feel upset and angry. Persistent pain can affect your mental and social wellbeing.

You might grieve for your old life and your feelings will fluctuate. But in time and with support you can take control and start to feel better.



I wish I'd known...that pain and damage **AREN'T THE SAME**

Persistent pain is often unrelated to any harm or injury. Pain can linger long after an injury has healed, or get worse without any deterioration of an existing condition.

Learning things like this can help reduce the fear associated with pain: it doesn't always mean we're in danger.



I wish I'd known...that I'm **NOT ALONE**

Pain is now much better understood and there's much more support available. As well as seeking help from healthcare professionals, peer support from fellow sufferers is valuable, as is that from family and friends (but be honest with them!).



I wish I'd known...that there may **NOT** be a magic cure

Medicines and surgery are rarely the answer. Side-effects and other complications can do more harm than good. It's important that you're treated as an equal partner in your care.

Ask questions, learn, be proactive. Not all healthcare professionals understand pain and it's ok to look for those that do. Specialist pain management services may be available.

