

Group Session Six Guidance Notes

Session six aims to:

1. Discuss coping with flare ups
2. Revisit any issue patients want (refer to original goals on flip chart and homework), or to have a run through of each of the skills they've learned.
3. Say goodbye

1. Review of homework (5-10 mins)

Find out from participants how their relaxation practice went. Problem solve as appropriate.

2. Coping with flare ups (30-45 mins)

Open up a conversation about pain flare-ups. Below is an example dialogue you can use:

"Flare-ups are expected, as this is the nature of persistent pain. The trick is to have plans for the good and bad spells."

You will ask the group to come up with strategies for good and bad phases with their back pain. Ask group: *"What would be an effective plan for good spells?"* Write helpful strategies up on the flipchart using the examples below:

- Progress exercises and goals
- Add new goals
- Reduce medications
- Enjoy yourself
- Plan ahead
- Stay active
- Practice relaxation

Ensure you explore any unhelpful strategies so that participants can understand why they might not be helpful.

Ask group: *"What would be an effective plan during a flare-up?"* Again write on the flipchart using the examples below:

- Carry on
- Review baseline
- Review medication
- Set goals
- Relaxation
- Allow personal time
- If possible identify triggers, learn from it and plan for next time. However, often there is no cause.

3. Review / specific problems (30-45 mins)

Ask the group what they would like to review or if there are any problems they wish to discuss. Write these on the flipchart. If the group has come up with several suggestions then follow this lead, or alternatively run through the skills as below.

Break (10 mins)

As this session is less structured, take a break when you think it is appropriate.

Pacing and goal setting

Ask if patients have made progress towards their goals they wrote down during assessment. Share success stories and troubleshoot problem goals. Also include a discussion on how they are getting on with their feared movements or activities.

Thought challenging

Ask for successes or problems and problem solve.

Progression of exercises

Discuss plans for future progression e.g. joining health clubs.

Review relaxation techniques

Facilitate a discussion regarding the patients' progress with practicing these techniques.

Be prepared to troubleshoot any problem areas.

4. De-brief/Good bye

Congratulate them on their progress. Give them any information on follow-up or contact arrangements for any problems. If you are part of the BeST implementation project then please remind participants that they will be sent questionnaires to fill in.