

A Car With Four Flat Tires

It's hard to know how to move forward once chronic pain has entered your life. It helps to think of a person with chronic pain as like a car with four flat tires.

Our expectation is that all we need is that one medication or treatment that will take away the pain. But it only puts air in one of our tires; we still have three flat tires and can't move forward. Perhaps the medication or treatment has provided 25 or 30 percent relief. Let's leave that there and ask what else we need to fill our other three tires so that we can resume our life's journey.

For each person the necessary combination of therapies and interventions will be different, based on individual need. Unlike traditional medicine where the "patient" is a passive participant, living a full life with pain requires that we take an active role in the recovery process.

We need to work with our health care providers to find what we need to fill up our other three tires. Biofeedback, physical therapy, counseling, pacing, nutritional counseling, a support group, and a host of medical modalities are a few of the ways we can fill our tires.

Once we have all four tires filled, it is our responsibility to maintain our car. We would not take our car back to the dealer and ask them to fill it up or wash our windshield. That is our responsibility---to take good care of our car. We take it in for inspections and if something goes wrong, we go to a professional. It's the same with our wellness.

You see, pain management is much more than one simple modality. It takes a team effort, with the person with pain taking an active role, to live a full life in spite of chronic pain.