

Tips to use the My Pain assessment Communication Tool (MPaCT)

As a person who lives with chronic pain, you have probably been asked to describe your pain to many healthcare practitioners over and over again. You have also likely been given a 0 to 10 scale to rate your pain which many people with pain find insufficient to explain their whole pain experience. This process can be complex and exhausting. The My Pain assessment Communication Tool (MPaCT) was co-developed by an international group of people with lived experience of chronic pain. We also acknowledge the researchers, clinicians, and patient organizations who supported its review and refinement. This tool is designed to help you share a clear summary of your complex experience with healthcare providers and loved ones.

How to use MPaCT

This digital tool can be completed online or printed and completed by hand. The first page has an image of the body that you can shade or colour to identify the areas where you have pain. There is also a list of words that you can select to describe the intensity and nature of your pain, with room for you to add your own words. The second page includes three open-ended questions related to the impact of your pain on your life. The answers to these questions, in your words, will help others understand how chronic pain has impacted your life and how it has changed the quality of your life. This information will assist you in advocating for support for lifestyle changes shown to be advantageous and/or treatments that are in line with your values.

How to make use of MPaCT once completed

You can use this tool to summarize what you think is important about your condition and give it to your healthcare practitioners. You could consider sending it to your healthcare practitioner before your appointment; perhaps they will add it to your medical chart. You can also use the tool as a personal diary to track changes in your pain experience throughout the day or year. This tool can also be used to communicate your pain with family, friends, coworkers, etc.

How chronic pain impacts mental health

Chronic pain can negatively impact both a person's physical and mental health. These negative impacts may include thoughts or actions of self-harm or risky activities, or feelings of hopelessness, self-loathing, or self-isolation. If your pain is negatively impacting your mental health, please seek out medical advice from a trusted healthcare practitioner. If you feel an urgent need for your well-being or that of a loved one, please contact your local mental health hotline or health care provider.

Disclaimer: This tool is provided for educational and informational purposes only. It does not represent medical advice. Please contact your healthcare provider if you have questions about your treatment plan.