

Participant's Guide

Post-Accident Education Program

Vice-présidence à l'indemnisation des accidentés

September 2019

Société de l'assurance
automobile

Québec 

MODULE 1

Introduction and Possible Reactions
Following an Accident

Accident

An unfortunate event, especially one causing physical harm or damage, brought about unintentionally

(Oxford Canadian Dictionary)

After the accident

We can't predict being involved in an accident. However, following an accident, **certain reactions are normal and to be expected.**

- Your reactions are all **normal reactions**, and are common when someone is confronted with an unusual situation (that is, an accident).
- The goal is not to forget the accident in which you were involved, but to gradually think of it less and, above all, not be overwhelmed by painful emotions when you think about it.



COMMON REACTIONS THAT PEOPLE EXPERIENCE AFTER THE INITIAL SHOCK OF A TRAUMATIC EVENT:

- Avoidance of memories, thoughts, or feelings associated with the accident
- Avoidance of people, places, conversations, or activities that evoke memories of the accident

Avoidance



Negative changes to thoughts and moods



- Loss of interest
- Detachment from others
- Forgetting certain aspects of the accident
- Emotional detachment
- Persistent and overly negative beliefs concerning oneself, others, or the world
- Blaming oneself or others
- Persistent inability to feel positive emotions

- Sadness
- Loss of interest or pleasure
- Change in appetite or weight
- Trouble sleeping
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Low self-esteem, guilt
- Difficulty concentrating, indecisiveness
- Thoughts of suicide

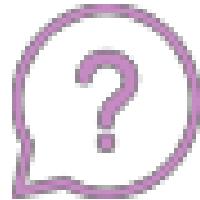
Signs of depression



Signs of anxiety



Questions



- Did you experience one or more of these reactions following your accident? Which ones?
- Do you still experience these reactions? If so, how severe are they?
 - ✓ Mild, moderate, severe?

Building self-awareness



- ✓ Observation of post-traumatic symptoms (nature of the symptoms, frequency and intensity)
- ✓ What do I do when these symptoms appear?

Pain

"An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage."

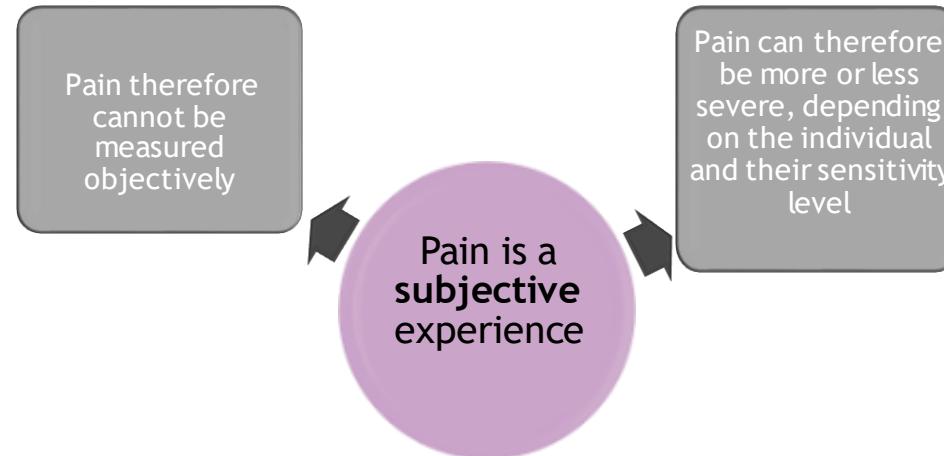
Official definition of the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP)

If you sustained physical injuries in your accident, you likely experienced episodes of **pain**:

- at the time of the accident
- before meeting with medical staff
- before and after surgery, if applicable
- during the recovery period
- during the rehabilitation process



CAN PAIN BE MEASURED ?



Even if pain cannot be measured, it is nevertheless real!

PAIN

Often divided into **two categories** depending on its duration:

Acute pain

Intense, but often
brief

Chronic pain

When pain lasts
longer than three
months and is
recurrent

Acute pain

Intense, but often
brief

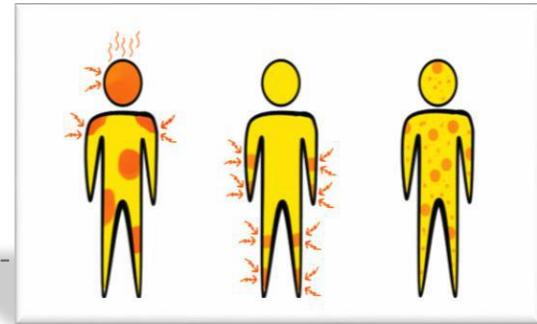
- **A useful pain - a natural, efficient way to protect your body!**
- From 0 to 4 weeks
- A warning sign alerting your body of potential danger so that it can respond in order to survive
- Generally progresses to the point of recovery

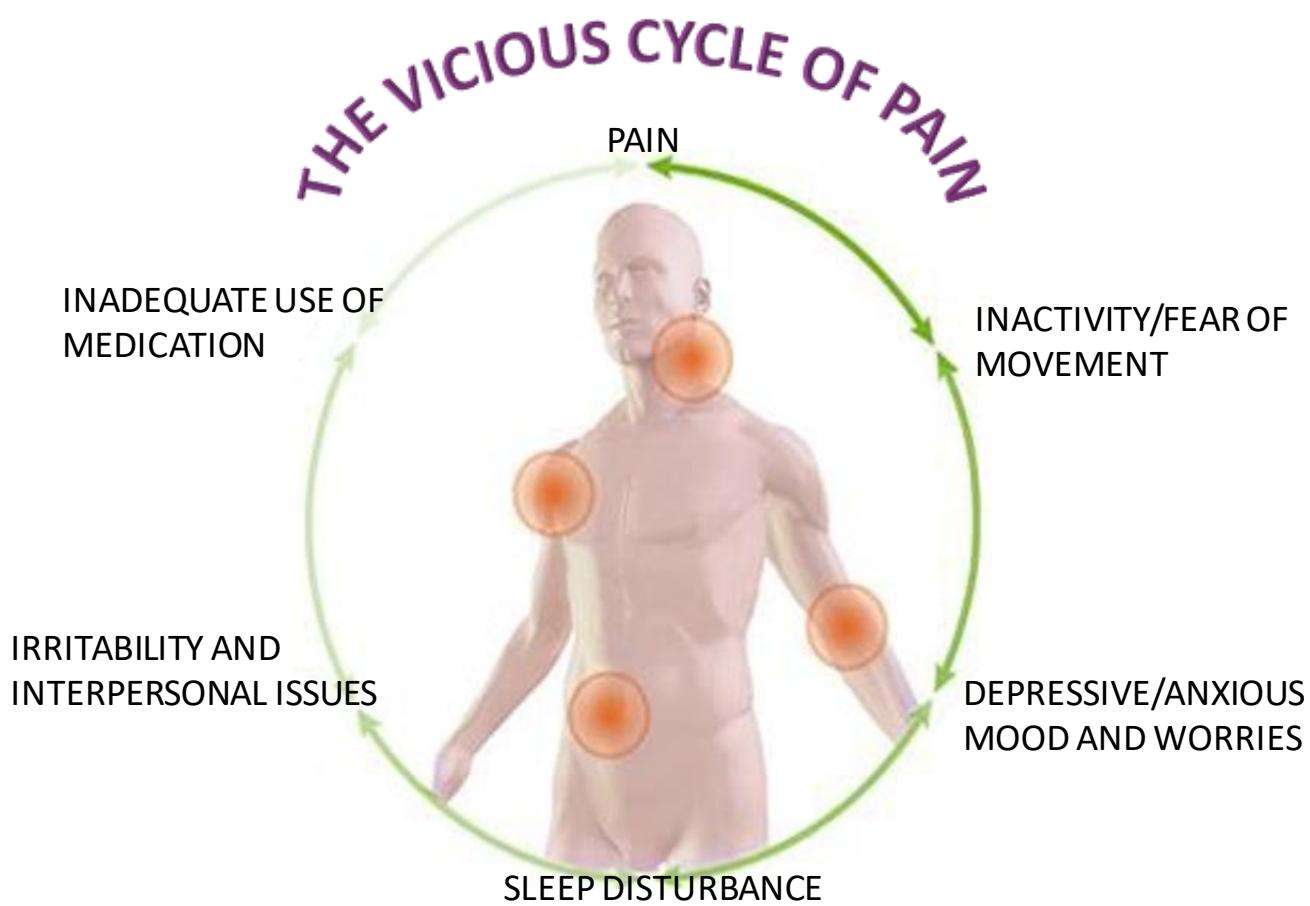


Chronic pain

When pain lasts longer than three months and is recurrent

- Useless pain... the alarm button remains pressed down!
- Pain generally lasts longer than three months.
- The origin and cause are not always clear; the pain persists even if the injury has healed.
- The pain signal remains active in the nerves and sends a false message to the brain; **the pain is nevertheless real.**
- The pain signal remains active for weeks, months, or even years.
- The intensity of the perceived pain is influenced by physical, psychological and social factors.





Adopt good strategies to prevent pain from becoming chronic

- The person experiencing pain has the greatest influence on it (whether positive or negative).

Behaviours that reduce your risk of developing chronic pain

- Remaining active while respecting your condition
- Respecting your limits
- Developing a patient-partner relationship with your healthcare team
- Controlling your pain properly with medication
- Continuing to take part in enjoyable activities
- Learning to properly manage your stress and emotions

But if you are set on developing chronic pain...

TWELVE TIPS TO MAKE YOUR PAIN TRULY UNRULY AND USELESS!

1. Cease all activity (physical and intellectual); wait and do nothing.
2. The moment you feel better, get moving and only stop when the pain becomes unbearable.
3. Always wait until the last minute to take proper medication.
4. Always take as little medication as possible.
5. Believe that doctors *must* be hiding something even more serious!
6. Wish for others to understand, at any cost.
7. Never miss an opportunity to talk about your pain.
8. Continuously change treatments and physicians.
9. Believe that there's nothing you can do and that it's entirely up to your doctors.
10. Deny your pain, tough it out or get upset about it.
11. Only see the negative side of things.
12. Always check to make sure that the pain is still there!



Reference: Boureau, François (2008). *Contrôlez votre douleur : apprendre à faire face à une douleur rebelle*, Paris, Éditions Payot et Rivages.



Questions

- Are you managing your pain in the best way?
 - ✓ If not, what goals can you set for yourself to avoid falling into the vicious cycle of pain?



Building self-awareness

- ✓ Observe fluctuations in pain (frequency and intensity).
- ✓ What do you do when your pain worsens?

MODULE 2

Stress Management

PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST SESSION

Were you:

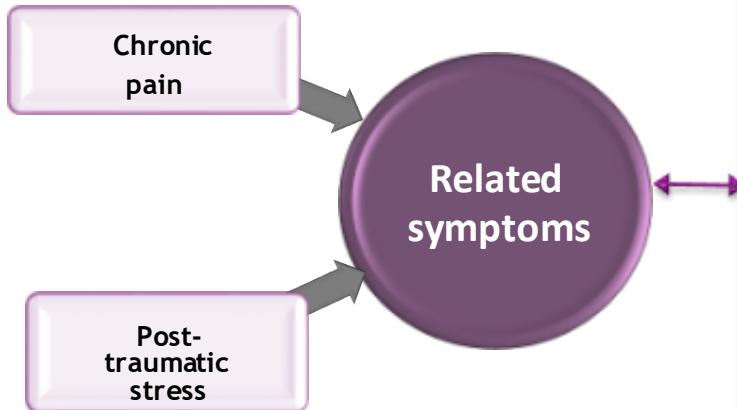
- Able to observe and note your reactions since the last meeting?
- Able to observe and note the frequency and intensity of your pain since the last appointment?
- Attempting to manage your pain in other ways?

STRESS REACTIONS AND PAIN REACTIONS FOLLOWING AN ACCIDENT

- Related Symptoms -

Symptoms of POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER	Symptoms of CHRONIC PAIN
ANXIETY/HYPERVIGILANCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Distress when exposed to situations evoking trauma	ANXIETY/HYPERVIGILANCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Distress when exposed to an intense episode of pain
HYPERVIGILANCE AND HEIGHTENED SENSITIVITY: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ When exposed to factors recalling trauma	HYPERVIGILANCE AND HEIGHTENED SENSITIVITY: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ When faced with activities that may trigger pain
HYPERAROUSAL: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Insomnia, irritability, impatience, loss of concentration and memory, etc.	HYPERAROUSAL: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Insomnia, irritability, impatience, loss of concentration and memory, etc.
AVOIDANCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Of thoughts related to trauma, or of doing things that can recall it	AVOIDANCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Of activities that worsen pain
EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Detachment, discouragement, loss of interest in daily activities, episodes of anger	EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Mood changes related to depression, anxiety and anger

Taken from the functional rehabilitation program at Hôpital Ste-Anne.



- Studies suggest that 45% to 80% of patients with a PTSD diagnosis suffer from a pain disorder (Sellinger and Kerns, 2008).
- Around 10% to 33% of people registered in a pain clinic suffer from PTSD.
- According to Villano et al. (2007), patients suffering from PTSD and comorbid pain experience:
 - ✓ More acute pain and more severe emotional distress
 - ✓ More interference from their symptoms in their daily lives
 - ✓ A higher perception of being disabled
 - ✓ Higher levels of depression and anger compared to patients that suffered from pain and not PTSD

Taken from the functional rehabilitation program at Hôpital Ste-Anne

IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF TENSION



Physical signs

- Shortness of breath
- Tightness in the throat
- Loss of appetite
- Diarrhea / constipation / stomach pain
- Dry mouth
- Muscle tension and **increased pain**
- Headaches / migraines
- Sweating
- etc.



Psychological signs

- Worries / distrust
- Exaggerated fears
- Discouragement
- Trouble concentrating and paying attention
- Difficulty solving previously simple problems
- **Confusion**
- Obsessive thoughts
- Irritability / impatience
- Fear of losing control, going crazy
- Etc.



Behavioural signs

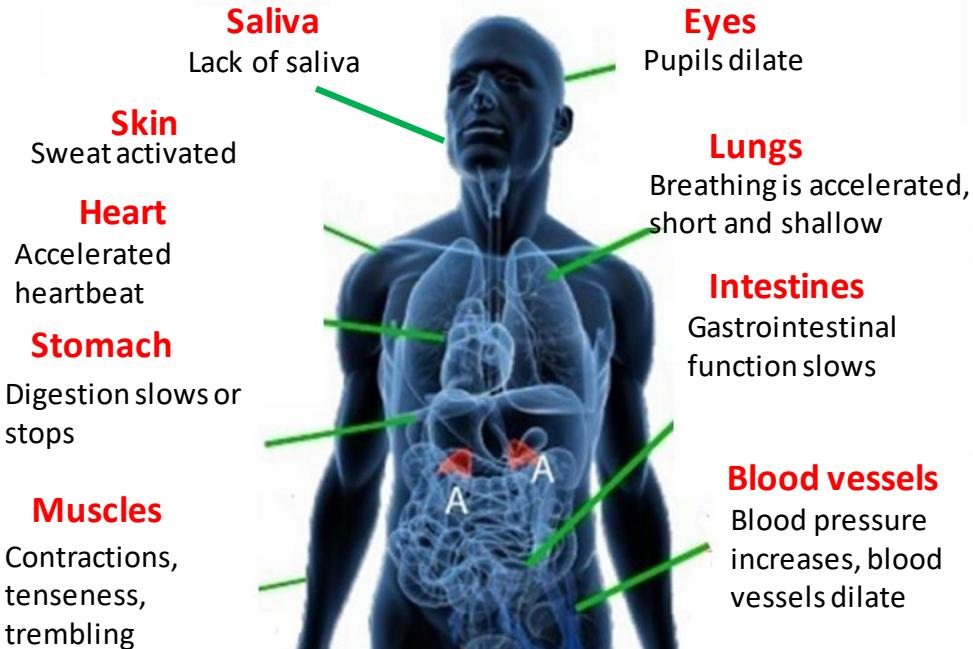
- Startling easily
- Yelling
- Shoving
- Being quiet and withdrawing
- Interrupting others while they are talking
- Avoiding certain places or leaving them quickly
- Smoking more, consuming more substances / alcohol
- Gesticulating
- Always blaming others
- Etc.



Relational signs

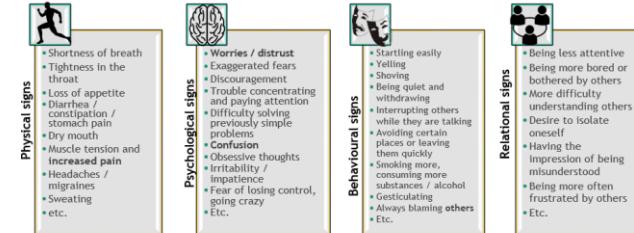
- Being less attentive
- Being more bored or bothered by others
- More difficulty understanding others
- Desire to isolate oneself
- Having the impression of being misunderstood
- Being more often frustrated by others
- Etc.

FIGHT-OR-FLIGHT RESPONSE



ANTI-STRESS TECHNIQUES

- Detect the presence of stress (using the signs)



- Try to change your perception of the stressful situation

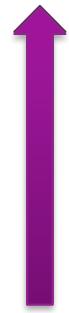
How can I look at this situation?

- Take concrete steps



IF YOU HAVE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION...	IF YOU DON'T HAVE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problem-solve• Apply and test different solutions (act / think differently)• Talk to peers / professionals (ask for help)• Continue exposure to stressors• Relaxation / breathing• Learn to reassure and calm the mind• Return to the present moment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and express emotions• Seek help (personal or professional)• Relaxation / breathing• Maintain good psychological habits (e.g. social contacts, taking part in fun and leisure activities)• Explore the possibility of making sense of the events• Work on the ability to let go

DEFINITION OF RELAXATION



Responses to **STRESS**

Heartbeat

Breathing

Blood pressure

Metabolism

Oxygen consumption

Responses to **RELAXATION**

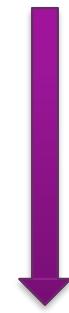
Heartbeat

Breathing

Blood pressure

Metabolism

Oxygen consumption



Benefits of relaxation:

- Improves immune functions
- Decreases stress
- Improves concentration
- Provides energy
- Promotes a state of well-being
- Reduces muscle tension / pain
- Improves sleep
- Decreases blood pressure
- Slows heart rate

Different ways to relax:

- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Muscle relaxation (active or passive)
- Cardiac coherence
- Suggestion (Schultz, self-hypnosis)
- Visualization/imagery
- Mindfulness exercises



DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

- Sit comfortably, leaning slightly forward (or in another comfortable position).
- Place one hand on your stomach and the other on your chest.
- While breathing in, expand your stomach. You don't need to take excessively deep breaths.
- Breathe in, slowly counting to 4.
- Breathe out, slowly counting to 4 or 5. It is very important that you empty your lungs.
- The hand on your stomach should move more than the hand on your chest.
- This kind of breathing will help you during your relaxation exercises. It's a simple tool that becomes more effective with practice.

CARDIAC COHERENCE AND RELAXATION

Cardiac coherence (practice):

- ✓ 3 times a day
- ✓ 6 breaths per minute
- ✓ 5 minutes each time

iPhone or Android applications

Relaxation:

- ✓ Proceed by individual muscle groups

Website:

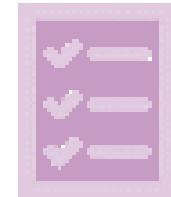
- ✓ <http://www.passeportsante.net/fr/audiovideobalado/Balado.aspx>
(in French only)

Questions



- Do you show signs (physical, psychological, relational, or behavioural) that suggest you are stressed ?
 - ✓ If so, what are they ?
- Are you in control of the source of your stress ?
- What steps should you take to better manage your stress ?

Homework



- Practice diaphragmatic breathing 3 times a day for 5 minutes.
- Try different relaxation techniques and find out which ones work best for you.

MODULE 3

Self-Care

EMOTIONS AND BELIEFS FOLLOWING AN ACCIDENT OR INJURY

- Each person experiences different emotions following a difficult event.
- It's important to stop and identify / express emotions following an accident.
- Anger with oneself or with the person responsible is an emotion frequently reported by accident victims.
- This anger often has to do with the impression of living with the consequences of an injustice.

FEELINGS OF INJUSTICE

- Feelings of injustice are a perception that may be related to the following:
 - ✓ The idea that we don't deserve what happens to us.
 - ✓ The fact that the losses resulting from an accident are significant and even permanent.
 - ✓ The idea that the person responsible for the accident should suffer greater or more significant consequences.
 - ✓ The impression that we are not receiving or did not receive the help we should have (medical, psychological or financial).

PERCEIVED INJUSTICE AND ANGER

- When we perceive an unjust situation, the strongest emotion we feel is often **anger**.
- Anger is a normal emotion that, when it is properly controlled, can provide energy for us to rectify a situation that we believe to be unjust.
- Anger can sometimes impair our healing process:
 - ✓ When we feel overwhelmed by anger (increased muscle tension and pain)
 - ✓ When we are angry about situations we have no control over (e.g. past events)

BENEFITS OF LEARNING TO CONTROL ANGER

- People who perceive injustice and feel intense anger tend to be more depressed and take more medication.
- Learning to properly express anger (e.g. through writing) can help lower tension associated with perceived injustice and intense anger.
- Learning to let go (or to forgive, in some cases) is beneficial for a person's own physical and mental recovery following an accident.
- It is sometimes necessary to consult a professional who can help us apply strategies to control anger.
- In conclusion, anger is a normal emotion. When the intensity of anger doesn't diminish over time, the angry person suffers the most, even if that person was the victim of injustice.

EMOTIONS AND BELIEFS FOLLOWING AN ACCIDENT OR INJURY

- Fear of being involved in another accident
- Anger towards oneself or the person responsible
- Feelings of discouragement or powerlessness
- Worries about the future (health, work, family)
- “Catastrophizing”

SLEEP

- The importance of sleep to better overcome the physical and psychological consequences of an accident
 - ✓ Why sleep?
 - To recover physically
 - To better manage stress
 - To maintain healthy interpersonal relationships
 - ✓ Impact of pain on sleep

IDEAL CONDITIONS FOR RESTORATIVE SLEEP

Comfort

A calm and comfortable room?

Good mattress and pillow?

Proper sleeping position?

Proper bedroom temperature?

Is the room dark at night?

Worried about waking your partner while moving at night?

How can you organize your environment to make sleeping easier?

The bedroom is a reserved space...

The bedroom is used exclusively for sleeping and sex.

Take the television out of the bedroom.

Avoid reading in bed.

A routine to get ready for bed...

Establishing a nighttime routine can promote sleeping.

Carry out the same activities (e.g. brushing teeth) in the same order.

Take a hot bath or drink a warm beverage before going to bed.

Take your (sleep) medication at the same time every night.

Manage thoughts and worries...

Choose to leave doubts and questions until tomorrow.

Keep a notebook on your bedside table to write down your worries and thoughts. In the morning, you'll have the energy to tackle those problems.

Strangely, the harder we try to fall asleep, the less we are able...

Learn to let go.

WHEN INSOMNIA COMES CALLING...

Unable to sleep for the last 20 minutes?

- Leave the bedroom.
- Enter a room with soft lighting.
- Do a quiet, calm activity.
- Write down your worries, if needed.
- Go back to bed ONLY when you start feeling sleepy.
- Don't dramatize insomnia or its consequences.
- Avoid constantly looking at the clock.

THINGS TO AVOID OR LIMIT

- Heavy meals at suppertime:
 - ✓ Eat a light meal or a snack.
- Caffeine-based beverages (e.g. tea, cola, coffee) after 3 p.m., or large quantities of alcohol
- Tobacco:
 - ✓ Reduce your tobacco use in the evening, as tobacco can affect sleep.
- Daytime naps:
 - ✓ If you must take a nap, any naps taken after 3 p.m. should be limited to 20-30 minutes.

TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP

- Only go to bed once you feel tired.
- Exercise regularly:
 - ✓ But NOT before going to bed.
- Use relaxation techniques during the day, and a “quick” version of these techniques at night.
- Wake up and go to sleep at the same time every day.
- Have a bedtime routine.
- Go to bed before midnight.

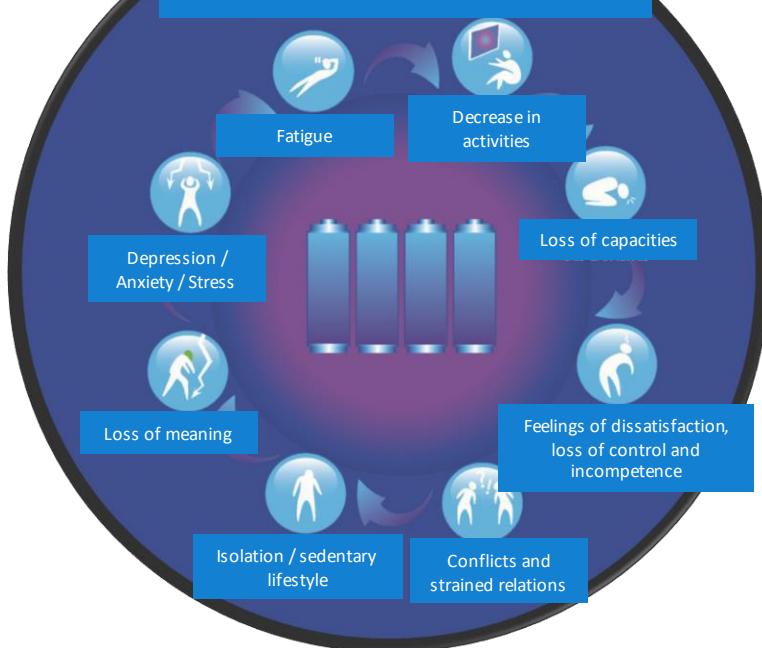
Référence :

Titre: *Vaincre les ennemis du sommeil*
Auteur: Charles Morin
Éditions de l'Homme

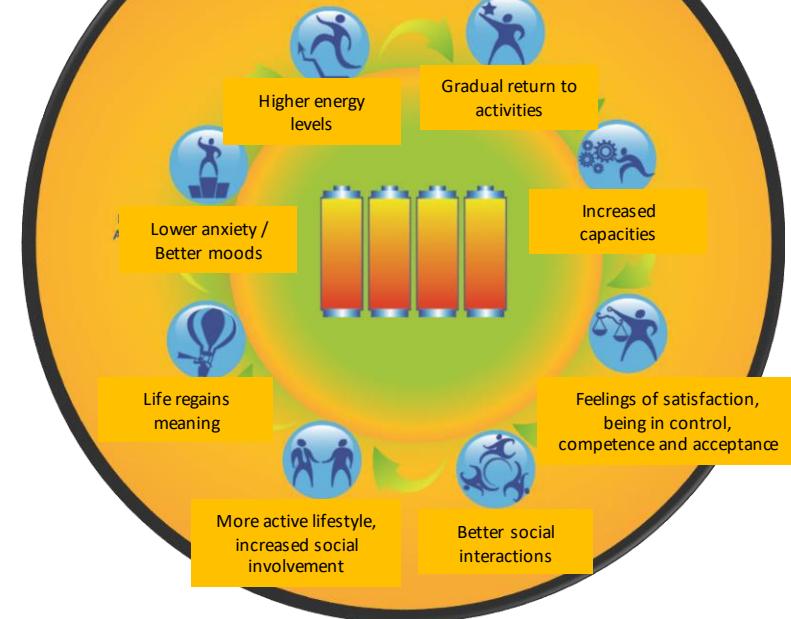
STAY ACTIVE AND TAKE PART IN ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES

- The less we move, the lower our energy level falls.
 - ✓ Our energy expenditure becomes inadequate for proper sleep.
- Sedentary living results in lower moods, lower self-esteem and lack of enthusiasm about life.
- It also can contribute to the development of other health problems.

THE CYCLE OF FATIGUE



THE CYCLE OF ENERGY

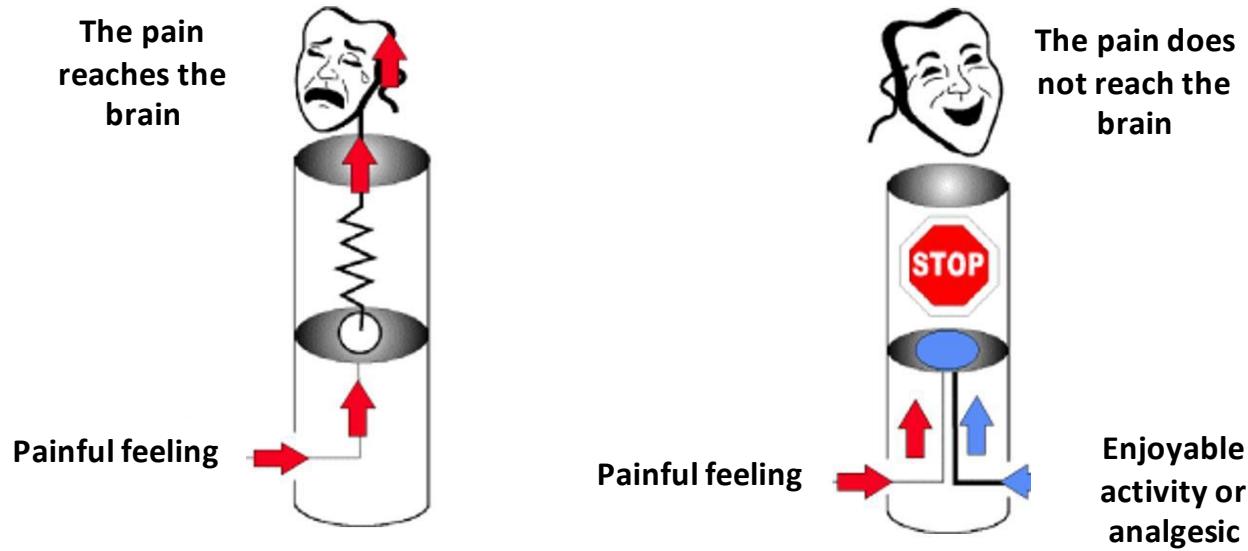


Jennifer Mcfall and Véronique Faguy, occupational therapists, Centre de réadaptation Lucie-Bruneau du CIUSSS Centre-Sud-de-l'Île de Montréal

ENERGY MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

- It's better to do an activity and take several breaks, rather than not do the activity at all because you are unable to do it as well as before the accident.
- It's important to be mindful of and respect your level of pain and energy.
- It's important to learn to plan and manage your time.
- It's important to accept any unforeseen circumstances.

GATE CONTROL THEORY



OVERCOME SEDENTARY LIVING FOR A BETTER LIFE

Examples of activities

- Visit new places
- Go out with friends
- Travel and go on outings
- Play sports
- Create art and do crafts
- Carry out work, repairs, and renovations
- Play games
- Clean and organize the house
- Read and write
- Help out and volunteer
- Prepare a good meal; try a new recipe
- Do visualization activities
- Observe, admire, contemplate, take pleasure in simple things
- Maintain spirituality
- Spend time with friends and family
- Learn new skills

AVOID ISOLATION: SOCIAL SUPPORT

Types of social support:

- **Emotional:** The ability to confide in someone, feel understood and accepted, etc.
- **Informational:** Tips and feedback to better understand your reactions
- **Tangible:** Material and financial aid and services
- **Friendship:** Allows you to relax and take your mind off things following a difficult event

The importance of being on the same team as your health professionals:

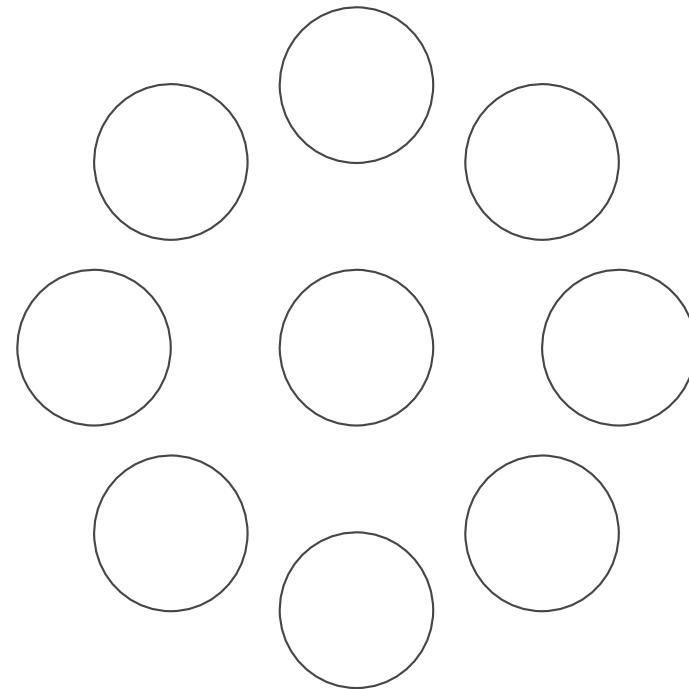
- How well has this need been met? (on a scale of 0 to 10)
- Who else can contribute?

AVOID ISOLATION: SOCIAL SUPPORT (cont'd)

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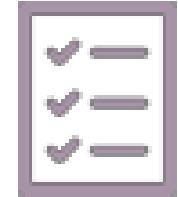
- Write your name in the centre circle.
- Think of people in your life and write down their names in the other circles.
- Link the people in the other circles to you using a solid line (if you are comfortable asking them for help) or a dotted/dashed line (if you are not as comfortable asking them for help or support).
- Write down your relationship to each person (friend, co-worker, neighbour, family member, etc.).
- Identify the type of support this person can offer.

MY SOCIAL SUPPORT



HOMEWORK

- In an agenda, write down the activities you do each day and indicate the level of pleasure and satisfaction you derive from them.
- Use an application to record your everyday activities and the pleasure involved: mood/resuming regular life/current week.
- Continue to integrate relaxation sessions into your daily life.

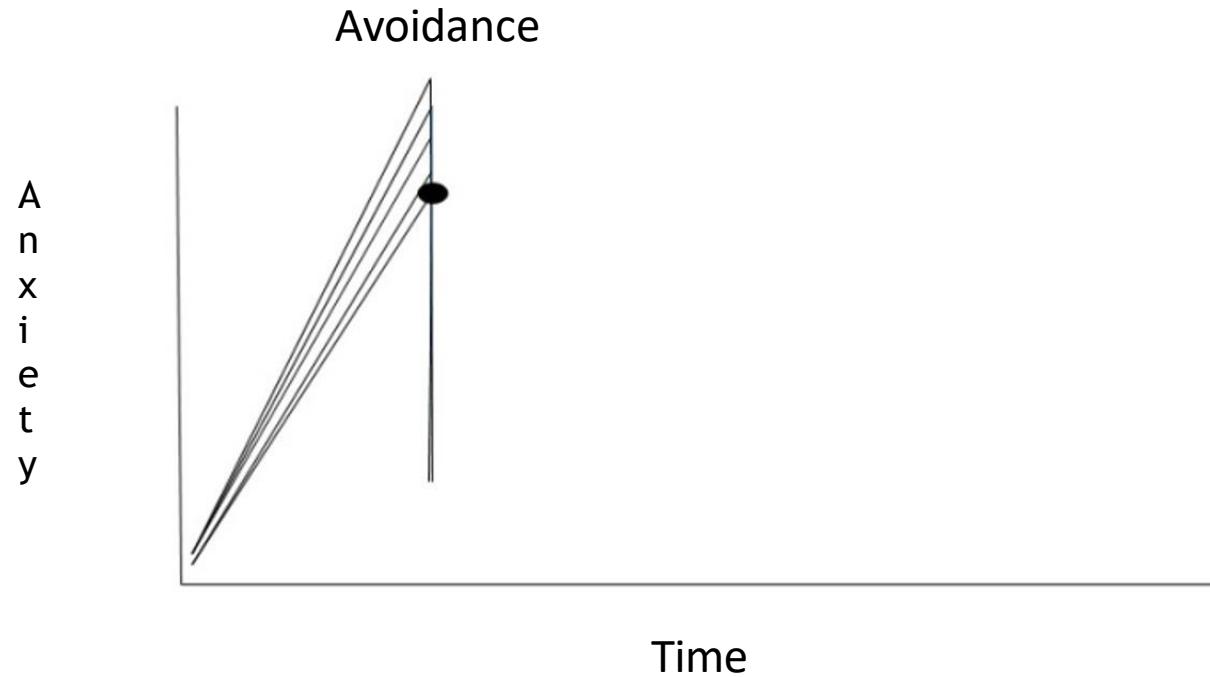


MODULE 4

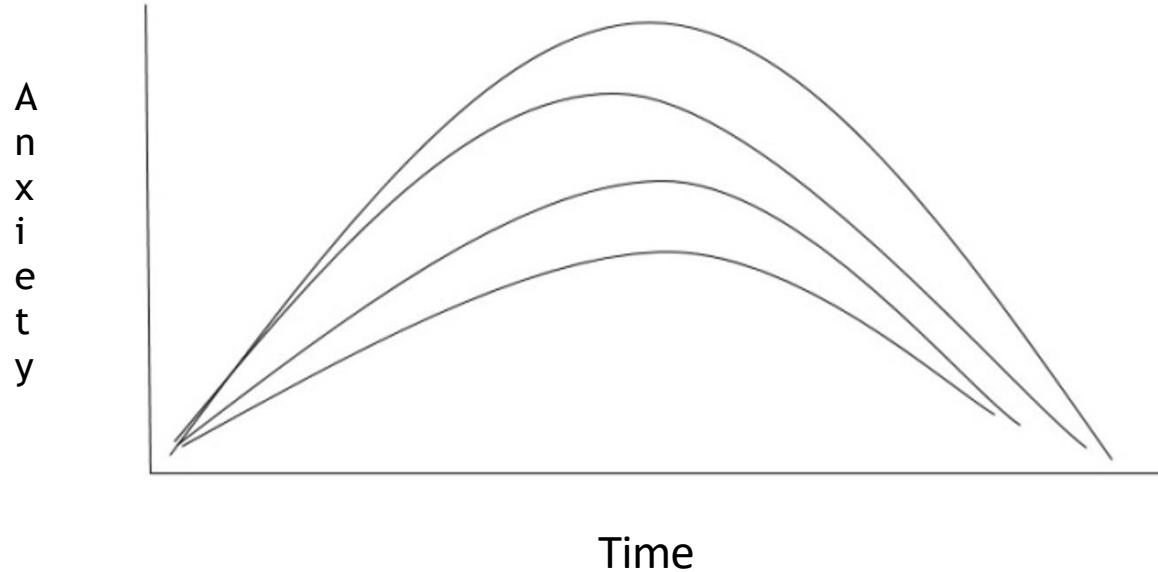
Conquer Your Fears

For this module, it may be appropriate to have your partner/spouse participate.

AVOIDANCE



REDUCING ANXIETY THROUGH EXPOSURE



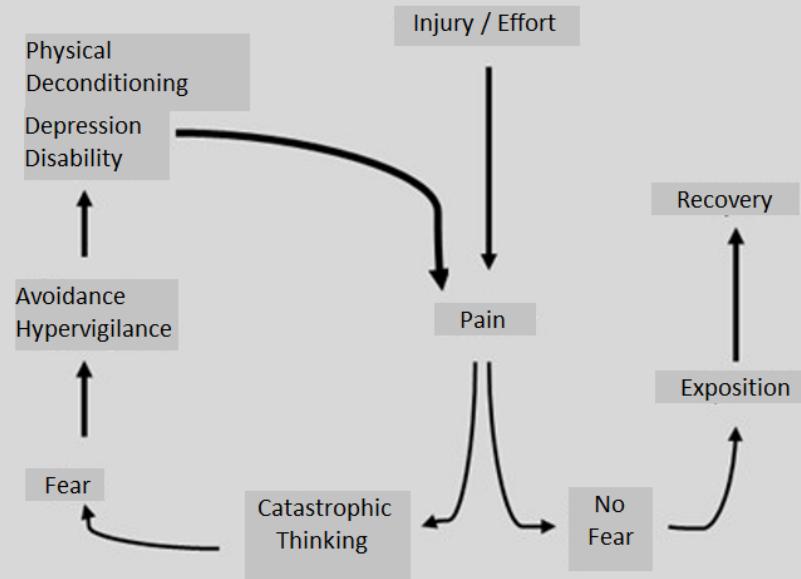
CONQUERING AVOIDANCE: RATING YOUR LEVEL OF ANXIETY/AVOIDANCE

% anxiety	Situation	Avoidance
100	Walking down a busy street	Yes
95	Going grocery shopping in a supermarket	Yes
90	Walking down a busy street during the day	Yes/No
70	Waiting in the lobby of a large store	Yes
60	Going grocery shopping around 5:00 or 6:00 p.m.	Yes
50	Browsing a shelf in a bookstore with lots of people around	Yes
40	Browsing a shelf in a bookstore when it's not busy	Yes/No
30	Walking around in a small town	Yes/No
20	Walking down a busy street during a quiet period, without music	Yes/No
10	Walking down a busy street during a quiet period, while listening to music	No

CONQUERING AVOIDANCE: TRACKING YOUR SUCCESS

Activity	Expected Difficulty (0 – 10)	Completed	Actual Difficulty	Importance Values / Needs	Happiness / Satisfaction
Playing with cats	3	III	2	5	9
Phoning a friend	3	05/03/10	2	7	8
Eating breakfast	3		2	4	7
Getting dressed	4		2	5	8
Waking up at 8:00 a.m.	4		3	4	9
Taking a shower	4		4	6	9
Going to bed at 9:00 p.m.	5		5	4	5
Walking for 20 minutes	5		3	5	9
Phoning to offer volunteer services	7			7	
Going to the store to replace a tool	7			6	

Kinesiophobia (fear-avoidance syndrome)

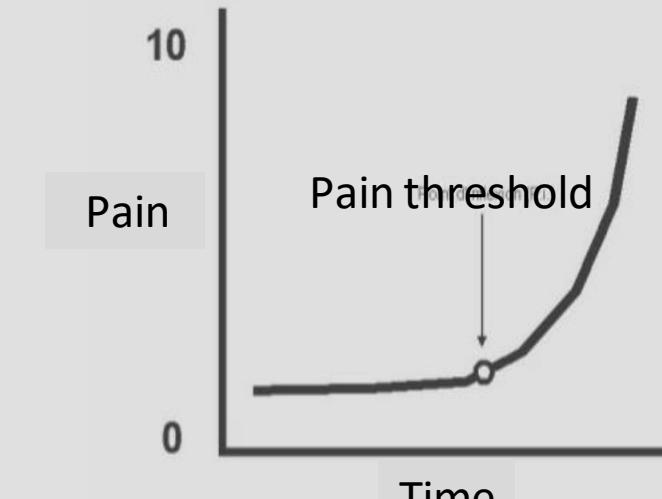


PAIN THRESHOLD

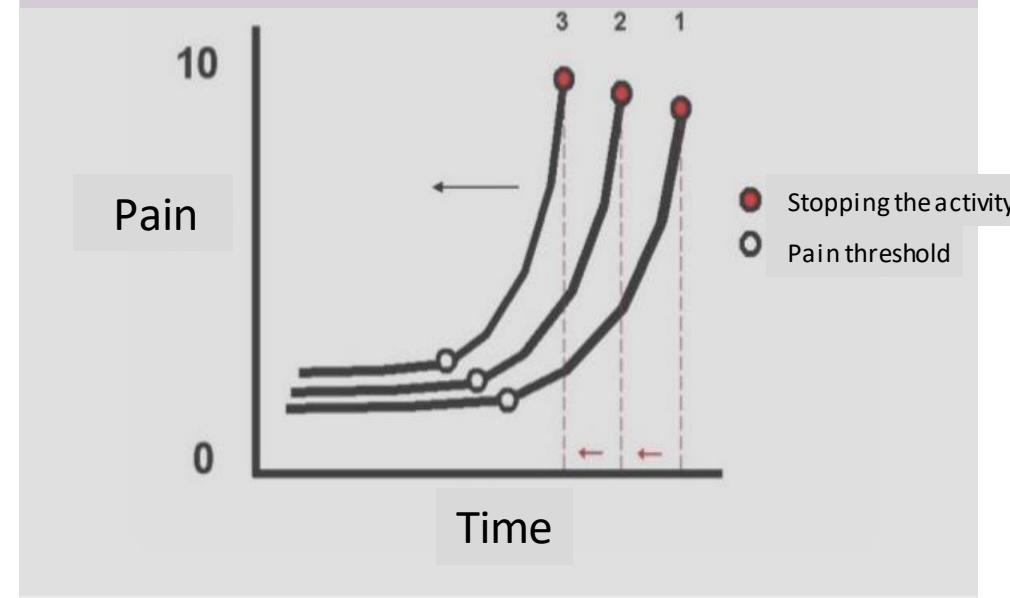
(according to Yvan Campbell, kinesiologist)

- The pain threshold is the point where normal discomfort becomes pain during physical effort.
- It is at this point that your physical activity must be stopped.
- Not respecting your pain threshold will result in increased pain and prolong your fear of moving.
- You can continue the activity later on.
- If, at that moment, you reach your pain threshold at half the time it took when you first tried the activity, stop again and wait at least 24 hours before trying again.

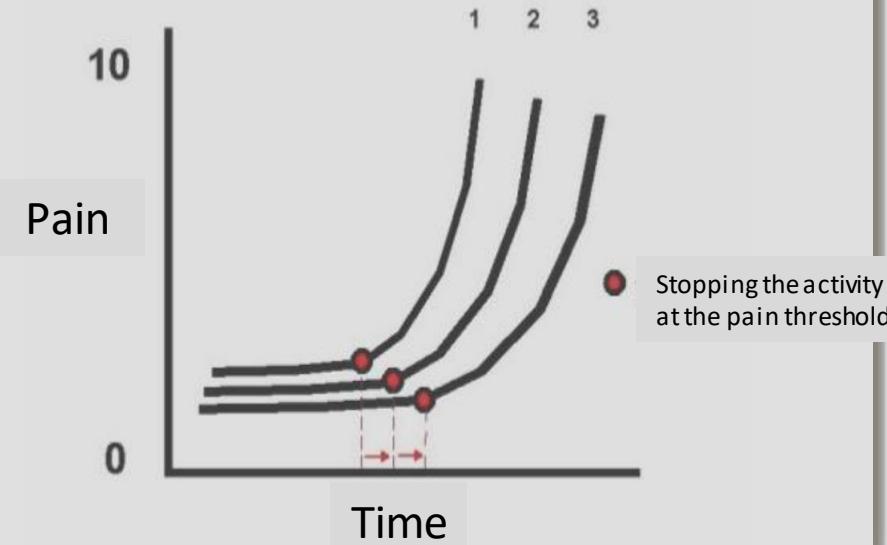
**Effort must be stopped
at the pain threshold**



Otherwise, pain increasingly limits physical effort

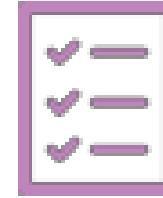


Respecting the pain threshold increases tolerance of the physical effort



HOMEWORK

- Continue to use relaxation techniques.
- Suggestion: Complete your personalized plan for conquering avoidance (to be completed at home).



MODULE 5

Summary and Recommendations

SUMMARY AND REMINDER OF BASIC PRINCIPLES

- What we've covered:
 - ✓ Pain management strategies
 - ✓ Integration of stress management strategies
 - ✓ Application of sleep hygiene principles
 - ✓ Perceived social support
 - ✓ Participation in enjoyable activities
 - ✓ Exposure exercises attempted

POST-PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- Assessment of each participant's condition at the end of the program
- Psychological condition:
 - ✓ Retake the PCL test:
 - View results and discuss for each category of symptoms.
 - ✓ Retake the MPI.
 - ✓ Consumption / addiction:
 - Audit or other: recommendations

ASSESSMENT OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Emotional
- Informational
- Tangible
- Friendship



To what degree is this need satisfied? (0 to 10)

APPENDIX: EMERGENCY PLAN

What is an **emergency**?

- Any situation in which your safety, or the safety of others, is compromised
- Also, any situation in which you feel a loss of control of your emotions and/or behaviours for which you require assistance

Actions to take and/or resources to contact in an emergency:						
Use prescription medication when needed.	Call a person you trust.	Contact the Centre de prévention du suicide 1-866-APPELLE (1-866-277-3553)	Contact the Centre de crise de Québec 418-688-4240	Contact the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention suicideprevention.ca	Go to a hospital emergency room.	Call 911.

In a crisis situation, it is extremely important to take action and follow through with the emergency plan!