

STV

*Living With Pain –
A New ‘Start’*



Barbara Walker Centre
for Pain Management

What is START?

The Barbara Walker Pain Management Service offers a special, intensive three-week pain management program called START. When selected to join a START program, we ask you to come daily (Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm) to the centre in Fitzroy so we can offer you help to deal with your chronic pain.

Living With Pain – A New ‘Start’

The program is for people who have persistent pain (lasting longer than three months). Perhaps you:

- have not responded to medical or surgical treatments
- have not progressed in rehabilitation due to pain
- are reliant on medication to cope with your pain
- have become distressed due to your pain.

The program is conducted by a team including a psychologist, physiotherapist, nurse and doctor. All team members have expertise in pain management.

Living with pain involves:

- taking an active role in the management of your pain
- developing self-management skills (for pain and distress)
- trying to do more each day, especially daily activities
- not letting pain determine how much activity you do or don't do
- cutting down and stopping pain medications
- no longer needing aids used for pain (like sticks, heat packs, braces)
- improving your mood and willingness to adjust
- returning to work/study (when appropriate)
- feeling you no longer need medical or physiotherapy treatments for your pain.

Reducing the intensity of persistent pain is NOT the focus of START. Your pain and its related sensations may still be there at the end of the program – but the way you deal with the pain may change for the better.

What happens next?

If you are interested in participating, a pre-START interview with the team is held to ensure you understand the nature of the program, have realistic goals and to make sure you are willing to actively participate. This interview takes up to three hours.

We also strongly recommend you read the book 'Manage Your Pain' by Michael Nicholas (ABC Books) before a program.

You may be accepted for the program after we have carefully assessed you as being suitable.

If accepted, the program will offer you:

- a way to develop your skills to self-manage your pain
- education sessions (including on medical issues, medication, sleep management, skills to help you talk with doctors and family)
- relaxation training
- stretching exercises
- new ways to think about pain-related thoughts
- ways of returning to daily living and social activities
- work-related activities when appropriate.

Living With Pain – A New ‘Start’

START has two stages:

Stage one is the three-week intensive period, i.e., Monday to Friday for three weeks from 9am–5pm each day.

Stage two is conducted in your home during the next four weeks. You will continue practising your pain management skills at home and at work. At the end of the home program, you will be asked to attend a two-hour group follow-up session to review the use of your new skills. Clients tell us these group sessions are very useful and provide extra support as time passes.

Follow-ups also occur at six months and after 12 months, each for about two hours.

Reports

Reports regarding your progress and instructions are sent out to your referrer at the end of stages one and two.

What can you expect?

- increased knowledge about persistent pain
- greater physical fitness, strength and endurance
- better mood
- more enjoyment of social activities
- improved ability to manage tasks despite the pain
- increased confidence in your ability to manage persistent pain without medication and aids
- less need to visit other allied health professionals (e.g. physio, acupuncture, osteopath, chiropractor) for treatment of persistent pain
- returning to work and/or study or a new focus on your work/ study options.

Frequently Asked Questions:

I am not local to Melbourne – what should I do?

We can provide you with options for accommodation close to St. Vincent's in Fitzroy. However, you will need to organise this accommodation yourself, directly with the hotel/motel of your choice.

Where can I park at St. Vincent's?

All-day parking (for a fee of about \$15) is available at the hospital. There are other nearby private parks on Nicholson St and Victoria Parade.

Is there a train, bus or tram nearby?

St. Vincent's is surrounded by good public transport options. We are located close to Parliament train station. Trams running past include the numbers 11, 86, 96, 109, 24, 30 and 112. Buses stopping outside include the 340, 350, 402, 305, 308, 301 and 304. Call Metlink for more information on 131 638 or for those with hearing impairment, call (03) 9619 2727.

Living With Pain – A New ‘Start’

How many people are in a group?

On average, there are eight people in a group.

Can my family also attend the program?

We offer a day for family members and friends to come along – during the program. We actively encourage attendance by your family and friends so that they can become aware of the program and how they can best help you to maintain the gains made during the program.

Is there a fee for the program?

If you are attending the centre as a public patient there is no fee. If you are attending the centre as a compensable patient (WorkCover, TAC), a request for funding will be made to your insurer for the program.



St Vincent's

*Continuing the Mission of
the Sisters of Charity*

Further queries:

Please feel free to discuss any of the information on this leaflet with one of the team members, or contact Dr Melissa Siu, Director, START program on 9288 4681.

Mission

*Our health service is based on and driven by our quest for:
Compassion – Justice – Human Dignity – Excellence – Unity*