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# Pain Talk

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## Grief and Chronic Pain: Helping You Cope

by Laura Stockdale, PhD, MSN

Usually when people think about the concept of grief, they think about grieving a loved one that has died. So you may ask, what does grief have to do with chronic pain? How can I use what we know about grief to cope more effectively with my pain? Am I grieving because I have chronic pain?

Let's answer that last question first. Have you ever had the following statements cross your mind, or you've maybe even said them out loud: "This is not what I expected my life to be; God, why did this happen to me?; I can't work the job I used to, what do I do now?; Yeah I'm mad, this was not my fault; I'm of no use to my family now." If you ever said any of these out loud or thought them, then you are, or have been, grieving.



So, let's look at what grief has to do with chronic pain. As I said before, most people think of death when they think about grief. But grief is relevant anytime we are talking about a loss of some kind. We lose loved ones to death. We lose marriages to divorce. We lose our youth because we grow old. We lose our health due to cancer or other illness. We lose our job to any number of reasons: downsizing, retirement, an illness, etc. So anytime we suffer a loss of any kind, we have to grieve. When I am interviewing pain patients and ask them "What can you not do now, that you used to do before you had pain? And what do you wish you could do again?" The answers are as variable as the individuals I meet. Some of these answers include simple, everyday things like mopping the kitchen floor, changing the oil in the car, playing with my grandchildren, hiking in the Smokies, playing bridge because I can't sit long. All of these are activities for which we grieve. And just like grief of a loved one, loss of these things doesn't mean our whole life is not worth living, we just need to work through the losses of our activities, self-concept, and self-esteem, etc. The key idea is not to get stuck in the grief that is associated with our pain.

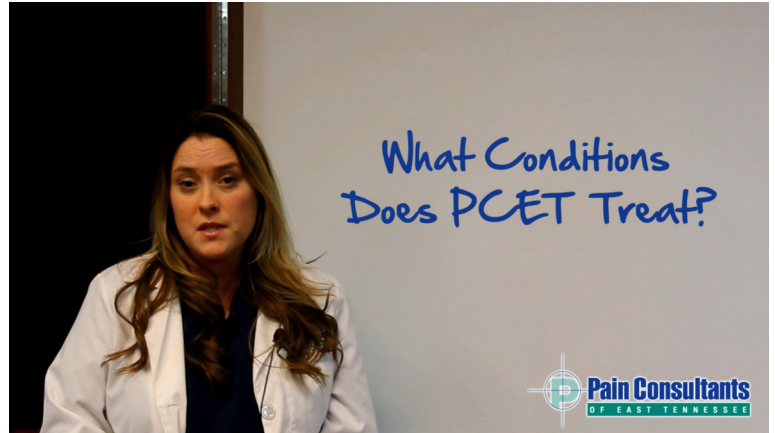
Read the remainder of Dr. Stockdale's blog post about grief and chronic pain, including advice on how to deal with these issues by visiting our blog page at [www.painconsultants.com/blog](http://www.painconsultants.com/blog).

# PCET Launches “PainTalks” Video Series

You ask, we answer! Welcome to our new video series, “PainTalks”! Every three to four weeks, we’ll be answering often asked questions about issues related to pain management. We’ll post these videos to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for our fans to watch.

PainTalks are also hosted on our website and can be viewed at [www.painconsultants.com/paintalks](http://www.painconsultants.com/paintalks)

**SUBMIT YOUR QUESTION!** Do you have a question you’d like to be answered by one of our physicians, clinicians, psychologists, or PT/OT professionals? Email your question to [painconsultantsofeasttn@gmail.com](mailto:painconsultantsofeasttn@gmail.com) and we just may respond via video!



# PCET Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Pain Consultants of East Tennessee celebrated its 20th anniversary on Thursday, January 4th.

Employees were treated to a celebration during lunch where they were served refreshments and watched a slide show of images from the past 20 years.

Congratulations to each of our employees for making our practice what it has become today and a special thank you to our patients for your continued trust in the services we provide!



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