

Pain stories

Managing pain is unique to each person. Read about some ways that people in GCT#3 communities manage pain. These are real stories summarized to focus on key points and to protect privacy.



Managing osteoarthritis and severe back pain

I try to learn about herbals and medicines from the bush. I also read on the internet (for example, on Facebook) about what different foods do for your body and health (like berries, pineapple). I have a person that I talk to every month - to get all that stuff out. I also stay active by walking. And I avoid extreme cold - it makes my back spasm. If that happens, I take a hot bath.



Managing arthritis all over the body

Some days I can barely even walk. But I keep on fighting and trying to be strong. I try to smile, I try to make people happy. I do whatever I can to help and advocate for other people and for animals. I use my cane and I use massagers at home. I went to see a medicine man - the medicines and guidance he gave me have helped me out the most.



Managing back injuries after a car accident in their youth

I used to take Tylenol 3s for a long time. But I had to stop using them when I got pregnant and I didn't want to start using them again after... Now I see a physiotherapist and what has helped me the most is exercise, especially stomach exercises to support my back. I also use hot and cold pads, salves like tiger balm, and I drink a lot of teas. I also use a TENS machine when I have a flare up.

So now I only go the natural route. Even when I've gone in for surgeries, I turn down medications they prescribe me. I would just rather not take them. I know that if things get bad, that option is always there, but for now I just stick with what I know.



Managing chronic pain using different Traditional medicines

Going to the sweat lodge is a huge thing for me - it's a cleansing process and it targets everything, every part of you. I do a lot of walking and I do yoga. I use crystals and candles. I smudge. I've tried seeing a massage therapist, acupuncturist, reiki, chiropractor. Even just sitting with someone who knows about Traditional medicines - that's a biggie. I go swimming. I like to be in the sun, in nature, being in the bush and picking medicines. It's such a healing thing.

As soon as I start to get any feelings of sadness, I get up and I move. I make a medicine bag or smudge or sit with my tobacco and release what I'm feeling. I have learned how to honour myself and honour my body.



Managing back injury and trauma from residential school

The Elders helped take care of me and taught me about some of the medicines.

I went to a lot of sweats, ceremonies and healing - that also helped me a lot. For my back pain, I try to stay active and eat healthy - lots of fruits and vegetables and do whatever I can to take care of my body. I quit smoking. I saw a massage therapist. I try to remember what the Elders taught me and try to find a balance. I try to find what feels good for me.



Managing chronic pain and mental health issues

Before I could even deal with my pain, I had to take care of my mental health.

I did a lot of cultural things like going out in the bush, going to the water. Then, when I felt strong enough I started to listen to my body. I knew I had to lose weight. So now I walk every day, for an hour. I've lost 60 pounds already. My walking time is my time - my thinking time, my wellness time. Another thing I tried was talking to my doctor about cannabis use. I've also tried melatonin and turmeric and other anti-inflammatory things. I try different things - it's like an experiment thing for me. And I quit smoking.

