



Support Group Leader Training – Lesson 3

Subject: What is Facial Pain?

Types of Pain

The sensation of pain involves communication between your nerves, spinal cord, and brain. There are different types of pain, depending on the underlying cause.

Acute or Chronic

Acute pain comes on suddenly, is usually sharp in quality, and has a specific cause. It serves as a warning of disease or a threat to the body. Acute pain will go away when the underlying cause is treated. Examples of acute pain are cuts, burns, bone breaks, and childbirth.

Chronic pain lasts for many months or years, and is not eliminated after an underlying problem is fixed. Chronic pain can be difficult to treat and may require trying various therapies to reduce the pain. The source of ongoing pain can be nociceptive or neuropathic.

Nociceptive or Neuropathic

Nociceptors, pain receptors for tissue injury, exist throughout your body. Nociceptive pain occurs when damage is inflicted on body tissue, often an external injury such as stubbing your toe or getting injured during sports. Nociceptive pain can be acute or chronic.

Neuropathic pain is caused by damage or injury of the nervous system, affecting 7-10% of the general population. This type of pain can occur without an obvious cause. The symptoms of chronic neuropathic pain can be complex, making treatment decisions difficult.

Neuropathies Defined

Neuralgia refers to pain in the part of the body served by a nerve or group of nerves. Nerves can be affected by pressure, heat or cold, or chemical means—and this can cause pain. This pain is called a neuralgia. The neuralgia can be continuous or on-and-off and is characterized by terms such as stabbing, shooting, or sometimes constant burning or tingling. Pain is felt along the route of the nerve in the body.

The term *neuropathic* means there is a lesion or disease within the neural system. The “pathic” part of the word tells us that there’s an abnormality, including injury, tumor, or disease as a causal factor. Neuropathic pains can be sub-classified even further based on their location as being either **central** (located in the brain/spinal cord)

or

peripheral (outside the brain).

A neuropathy is basically thought of as a disturbance in function or pathological change in a nerve.

Facial pain that is not neuropathic

Sometimes, the pain a person experiences is not trigeminal neuropathic pain; rather, the pain stems from other sources, including:

- Dental disease: cavities or gum disease
- Cracked teeth
- TMJ disorders
- Infections, including sinusitis
- Migraine headache
- Immunologic conditions: including multiple sclerosis (MS), Sjogren’s syndrome, and lupus · Lyme disease

Please complete the Knowledge Test – What Is Facial Pain Quiz 3 - before moving to the next training file

Credit to the Facial Pain Organisation Publication 2021 Patient Guide