



## Distraction Techniques in Pain Management

It can be difficult to avoid thinking about physical discomfort or intrusive thoughts. If you are experiencing this, having a toolkit of self-management techniques can help you put strategies in place to reduce distress. Using distraction techniques can be part of this, which involves shifting or moving your attention away. It does not mean that the pain is no longer there, but it does allow your brain to focus on something else and gives you time away from stress or discomfort and helps you to feel calmer.

### When to use distraction techniques:

- Your pain is all you can think about
- Unhelpful thoughts keep demanding your attention and start to interfere with your daily activities
- While undergoing treatments or investigations you find uncomfortable or difficult

### Useful Techniques

Brain activities are one method to re-focus your mind:

- Use the alphabet letters to name things within a category. For example: Category: Fruit A- Apple, B- Banana, C- Cherry. You can choose your own category from animals, vegetables, countries, sports or car names
- Teach yourself the alphabet backwards or try counting, A1, B2, C3 and so on
- Remember a song, particularly one with a catchy chorus
- Mentally put parts of something together, such as a bicycle or a recipe

- Visualise a garden perhaps your own or one you have visited, what plants are there and in which order

### Engage in an Activity or Hobby

Engaging yourself in a meaningful activity is a valuable self-management tool when living with pain. Getting involved in an activity or hobby can be a good distraction technique as it requires your brain to focus and concentrate on a task rather than your pain. Techniques that you use throughout the day may change due to the environment, type of pain and the people that are around you. If you are shopping or waiting for an appointment you might wish to use brain activities that are not so obvious to others. If you are at home you might engage in a meaningful activity, such as singing, woodwork or colouring. If people around you understand that you have pain, then you could involve them. Together you could go for a walk or even start a new hobby together.

### Arthur Rank Group Sessions

Volunteer run group sessions are held in Arthur's Shed at the hospice and are open for all to attend. They provide opportunities for you to learn new hobbies and skills, such as singing, cake decorating, arts and crafts, as well as meet other people. If you wish to find out more, or to book onto a session, please contact us.

All information is correct at time of print and may be subject to change. Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information. If you have any feedback or would like this information in a different format or language, please contact us.