Coping with Migraine: Value-Based Living

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Headache is not merely a problem of the body or the mind but rather a biopsychosocial disorder – a physical disorder subject to psychological, social influences, and environmental stressors.

American Headache Society
Headache Toolbox—Behavioral and Other Non-Pharmacological Treatments for Headache

Pain monster – the struggle

What can we do next?

Pain monster – Drop the rope

Pain monster – Engaging in your values

Overview
Coping with Migraine: Value-Based Living

Research shows that non-pharmacological treatments are effective for managing headache and migraine, including:

- Lifestyle modification
- Stress management skills
- Psychotherapy
  - A Values-Based Approach based on ACT
  - Values versus Goals
Coping skills for migraine
A biobehavioral approach

Lifestyle modification
- Sleep hygiene
- Daily exercise
- Eating regularly scheduled meals
- Stay hydrated
- Limit caffeine and alcohol

Biopsychological
- Relaxation training
- Biofeedback
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Social support

Add a “values-based” approach
A Values-Based Approach
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Psychological approach using metaphors and experiential exercises

- **Reduce avoidance** of negative thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations
- Recontextualize and accept these experiences, **clarify personal values**, and commit to **behavior change**

What “acceptance” **doesn’t** mean: giving up, not trying new treatments, letting the pain win

Key components include:

- **Mindfulness** -- observing, curiosity, present moment
- **Actions based on values** – values-congruent living
Values Versus Goals

- Values can never be achieved or completed
- Values provide direction
- Goals can be achieved
- Goals can move us towards or away from values

Example: Value = being a good parent

Neglecting child
Don’t take to doctor

Pick up from school
Change diapers, Make lunch
## Values Versus Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUES</th>
<th>GOALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Spend 5 min/day drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Gentle yoga 10 min/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Call family once/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Update 1 line on resume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Participate in support group</td>
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</tbody>
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[www.migrainecommunitygroups.org](http://www.migrainecommunitygroups.org)
Real Life Example

28 year old woman with fibromyalgia and migraine

Sadness, loss of life passion for horseback riding, isolation, tried many treatments

Values-based approach: community, animal welfare, outdoors, health
Identifying Values
1. **Integration of mind and body:**
   Eastern belief system which allows distress to manifest in mood (psych) and aches, fatigue (physical) symptoms.

2. **Culturally-sanctioned values around expressing emotion:**
   Excessive emotion → weakness, immaturity, lack of control. Suppress → somatic sx

3. **Stigma of mental illness**

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**Valued Living Questionnaire**

Below are areas of life that are valued by some people. We are concerned with your quality of life in each of these areas. One aspect of quality of life involves the importance one puts on different areas of living. Rate the importance of each area (by circling a number) on a scale of 1-10. 1 means that area is not at all important. 10 means that area is very important. Not everyone will value all of these areas, or value all areas the same. Rate each area according to your own personal sense of importance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>not at all important</th>
<th>extremely important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Family (other than marriage or parenting)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Marriage/couples/intimate relations</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Parenting</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Friends/social life</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Work</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Education/training</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Recreation/fun</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Spirituality</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Citizenship/Community Life</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Physical self care</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Opportunity to Practice

This afternoon you have a chance to attend a virtual art therapy session

- What values might this align with?
- Creativity? Arts? Community? ... ?

Challenge

- Make a commitment today to spend 3 minutes:
  - Take 1 minute to take 5 slow breaths
  - Take 1 minute to identify at least 1 value important to you
  - Take 1 minute to list 1 goal that would move you towards that value
ACT Resources
How to learn more about Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Website: https://contextualscience.org/
  - Find an ACT therapist here

App: ACTCoach (free)

Book: Living Beyond Your Pain: Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy to Ease Chronic Pain by JoAnne Dahl PhD

Values card sort activity:
http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org/sites/default/files/valuescardsort_0.pdf
Questions or comments?

Thank you!