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REALITY OF A TAPER

From Patient to Person

Engaging Patients during an Opioid taper

What is patient engagement ?

“It combines a patients skills, ability and willingness to manage their own care with communications designed to promote positive behaviors”

“Patients want to be engaged in their health care decision- making process and those who are engaged in their tend to be healthier”

Changing the Thought Process

- ⦿ Why I take this so seriously.... A few words from a legacy patient that got a second chance, what pills took away and what a taper gave back.
- ⦿ Tapering is a major life event; like moving, changing career, life and death.
- ⦿ Be trauma informed and central sensitization aware – a poor taper experience can and will trigger the fight or flight response.
 - Remember the brain is on fire analogy. Everything is disturbing – in all ways, always.

Ask Yourself:

- ① What do you believe about chronic pain patients?
- ② Do you believe that your patients can do better?
- ③ What do you believe about the opioid crisis and the chronic pain crisis?

Taper with Compassion

- ⦿ Give the patients a heads up well in advance
 - have tough conversations before starting the taper (i.e. no cure for chronic pain)
 - get a sense of how they may react to the taper conversation.

- ⦿ Review taper schedule, handout, and other instructions with the patient.

Invest Time in Taper Education

- ◎ Two views - Slow torture or fast torture, some patients breeze though some will not.
 - Educate them on the process and why it's happening.
 - Help them by being their partner in the process, not forcing or persuading but walking together in the process.
 - Involve their support systems – they will be your biggest allies.
 - The support systems may need to modify behaviors

Withdrawal Education: Patient FAQs

- ① **Why do these symptoms happen?**
- ② **How will my taper work?**
- ③ **How long will my symptoms last ?**

- ① Moving patients back to people - changing the trajectory of their lives just like the medication and chronic pain changed their lives.
- ① Find out who your patients are and who they want to be