



## 'Explain Pain' – A review by Beth Shelley PT

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*Explain Pain* is written for both patients and medical professionals. It is divided into six chapters and is well referenced with "further reading" books suggested. Chapter one gives multiple examples of incidences where severe trauma did not result in severe pain. These stories help patients to see the complexities of pain. The role of age, gender and culture in pain perception are also discussed. Chapter two discusses the role of pain in protecting the body. The mechanics of sensory nerve activation and neurotransmitters in the central nervous system are described. Detailed descriptions of the areas of the brain that participate in the sensation of pain are outlined.

Chapter three is a good review of pain physiology and anatomy. It discusses inflammation and trauma and how they result in sensory signals. Pain from muscle, disc, skin, soft tissue, bone and joint is reviewed. Chapter four introduces "altered central nervous system alarms". The factors that increase or decrease pain signals and the role of thoughts in the modification of pain perception is well presented. Sympathetic, parasympathetic, endocrine and immune influences are also reviewed.

Chapter five looks at the range of commonly available treatments for pain. Butler and Moseley do a good job at reviewing the common models used by professionals to identify processes that underpin pain (social, beliefs, fear etc). Chapter six gives solid advice for managing pain. They encourage patients to consider that the sensation they have may not be related to "something terribly wrong". Four specific tools include: education and understanding, your hurts won't harm you, pacing and graded exposure, accessing the virtual body (13 ways to change movement patterns including neural gliding).

The amount of research on pain physiology has dramatically increased over the past 5 to 10 years. *Explain Pain* is an excellent, well referenced compilation of this research. I would be very helpful for chronic pain patients to understand the ideas expressed in this book. Therapists can use the examples and explanations to help their patients understand pain better. Unfortunately this book may be too long and complex for the average patient. A short, simpler version would be of great help to patients. I would recommend this book to women's health PTs seeing pain patients.

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