Psychological Aspects of Chronic Disease Management: Inflammatory Bowel Disease
“Specialised Gut Psychology”

Michael Craig Consulting
Psychologists

Cathy Martin – Personal Background

- Registered Psychologist – 30 years
- South Australian Sports Institute – 17 years
- 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta
- Michael Craig Consulting – 25 years

*Enhancing performance in work, life, health and sport.*
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Role of Psychology

- Chronic disease can be associated with high levels of uncertainty
- Depression or anxiety may be associated with that uncertainty
- People often need to make adjustments to thinking, lifestyle &/or expectations
- Many people display remarkable resilience in the face of life’s challenges

- Psychological therapies can assist in changing unhelpful thoughts and behaviours. It allows individuals to minimise the degree to which they can potentially be defined by their illness/symptoms. It assists in minimising the exacerbation of symptoms through excessive worry or rumination.
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Situation
• Diagnosis of Crohn’s

Thoughts
• What does this mean?
• This is so terrible

Behaviours
• Disengage, avoid
• Symptom monitoring
• Poor sleep

Emotions
• Worry, fear, anxiety
• Excessive rumination
• Low energy

Cognitive Behavioural Therapies
Situation
• Diagnosis of Crohn’s

Thoughts
• There are people and treatments to assist?
• What things can I do to help

Behaviours
• Use your strategies and positive behaviours
• Distract yourself
• Enhance sleep/self care

Emotions
• More in control
• Calmer, less catastrophizing
• ACT with mindfulness

Cognitive Behavioural Therapies
Where is there scope to change?

- Are my thoughts helping or hindering?
- Are my emotions calming or inflaming?
- Are my behaviours constructive or destructive?
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Helpful Psychological Strategies

- Implement positive self-care strategies that help you
- Activate appropriate exercise & healthy eating
- Focus on…… life goals, weekly, daily goals
- Grab on to sleep strategies, relaxation, hypnosis
- Focus on the controllables
- ACT according to your values
- Know your benchmarks (what to pay attention to and what to ignore, when to rest and when to push)
- Ensure you have adequate information
- A significant % of pain can be diminished by implementing muscle relaxation exercises in situations where pain is exacerbated by muscle tension
- Focus less on self and symptoms, challenge yourself
- Avoid “hooking” on to thoughts that won’t help
- Challenge distressing thoughts
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Alleviate distress

- Encourage yourself as you would a friend
- Percentage out of hundred is it really likely that this will happen?
- What’s the worst outcome, what’s the best outcome and what is most realistic outcome?

Enhance your capacity

- Avoid responding to random thoughts or feelings
- Use relaxation, meditation, mindfulness
- Know & strengthen your values, then live by them