

+ coming together collectively to give pain a voice

# Partners in Pain: pilot results from a virtual community engagement and support group for people living with chronic pain in Saskatchewan.

Cassie Jones, Jessica Jack, Michelle Eckhart, Tracy Fichtner, Kelly Kizlyk, Ross McCreery, Jackie Murphy, Hillary Stamatinos, Karen Juckes, Susan Tupper

## BACKGROUND

### Why does this matter?

- 1 in 5 Canadians live with chronic pain and chronic pain in Canada costs \$7.2 billion a year in direct healthcare costs alone.<sup>1</sup>
- People living with chronic pain (PwLE) are at heightened risk of social isolation.<sup>2</sup>
- The COVID-19 pandemic has increased social isolation for PwLE.<sup>3</sup>
- Support groups can be an effective way of decreasing social isolation for PwLE.<sup>4</sup>

## STUDY AIM

### What do we hope to accomplish?

- Improving Pain in SK (IPSK) project Phase 1 interviews (n=152) in three communities (Saskatoon, Regina, Yorkton) resulted in 61 suggested change strategies for improving pain care.

- 1 in 4 participants wanted peer support groups.
- 1 in 7 participants wanted education about chronic pain, self-management and non-drug treatments.

IPSK Phase 2 working group in Yorkton (YWG) chose to develop a virtual support and education group named Partners in Pain.

## METHODS

### Partners in Pain Pilot Project

- 3 x 1-hour interactive virtual community events on Zoom in March 2021. Four components:
  - education from health care professionals (Chronic Pain 101, Treating Chronic Pain, SK Resources for Pain)
  - personal pain story from PwLE
  - facilitated activity (mindful breathing, gentle movement)
  - questions and interactions period

### Evaluation Methods

- During session polling questions
- Next day, session slides emailed along with post-session surveys.

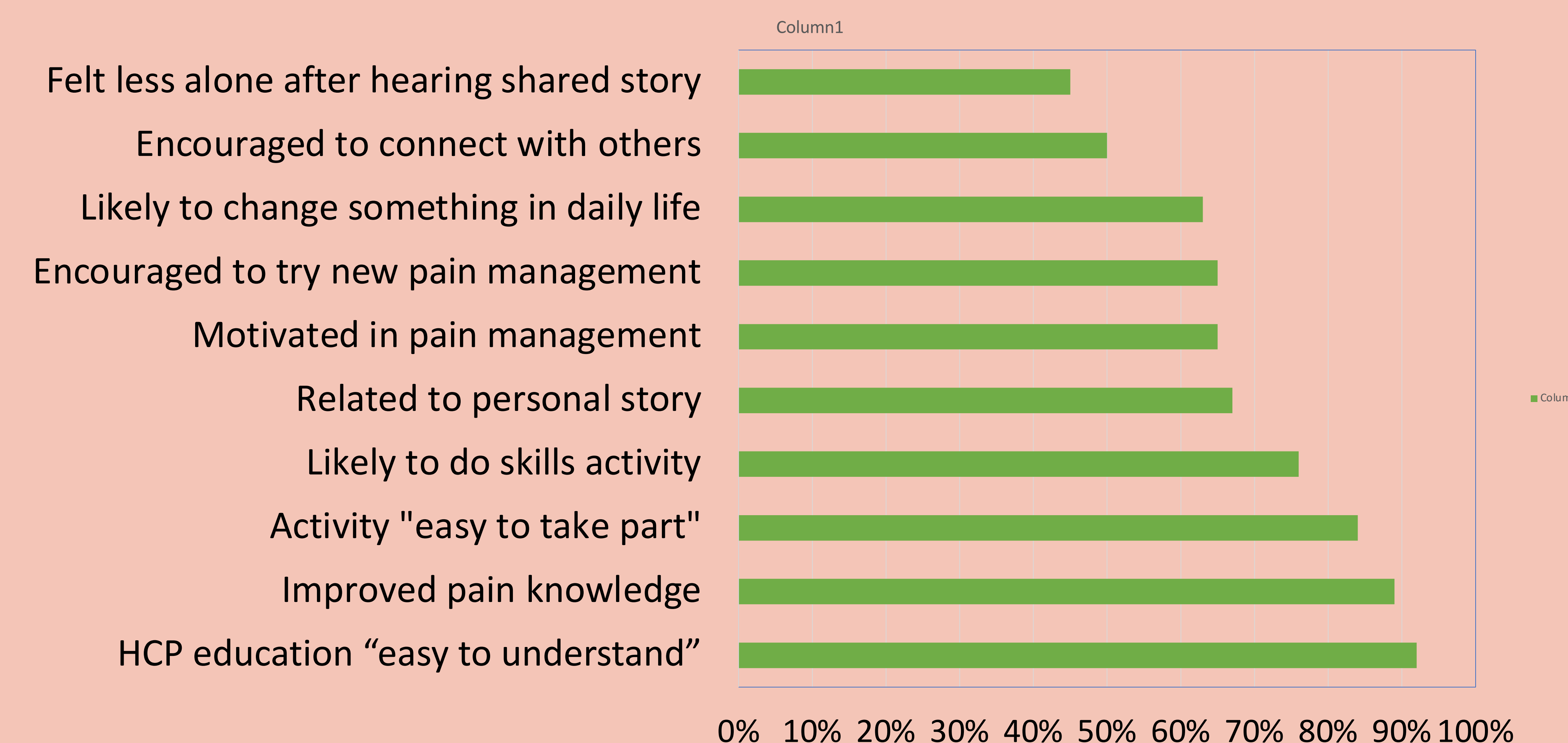
### Questions:

- Informed future session topics
- Pain belief changes from session
- Self-perceived effects of the sessions (learned something, easy to understand, easy to take part, relate to the personal story)
- Intent to use the information (use skill on own, change something in daily life)

## RESULTS

### What did we find from the pilot sessions?

103 participants attended the 3 pilot sessions (mean = 34 per session). Of those who answered the polling & survey questions (range n=10 to n=27):



## FUTURE DIRECTION

- The YWG, in collaboration with SaskPain, obtained a grant from the Community Initiatives Fund to support 20 more PiP events. In addition, the grant funded a podcast called Your Partners in Pain, debuted October 8, 2021.
- PiP events resumed September 21, 2021. Sessions are hosted biweekly on Zoom - Tuesdays 6:30-7:30pm and Wednesdays 2:00-3:00pm.

## References:

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4. Karos, K., McParland, J. L., Bunzli, S., Devan, H., Hirsh, A., Kapos, F. P., Keogh, E., Moore, D., Tracy, L. M., & Ashton-James, C. E. (2020). The social threats of COVID-19 for people with chronic pain. *Pain*, 161(10), 2229–2235. <https://doi.org/10.1097/j.pain.0000000000002004>