

UNDERSTANDING PAIN

PAIN is “an unpleasant **sensory** and **emotional** experience”.

The **sensory** experience begins when nerves in the area of an “injury” signal that there is tissue damage at the site. The **emotional** experience is added to the sensory input when the initial nerve messages are processed by the brain, our body’s central processor. In the brain the raw data from the nerves is analyzed and compared with our body’s previous experiences with pain and injury. Our perception of the current nerve signals is then influenced by the consequences of our previous experiences and even by the consequences of others’ experiences whose tales of woe we have heard. For example, the anxiety we have regarding our inability to accomplish our work or home responsibilities, and the fear we have of possible chronic disability, and the anger we have at the person who caused us to suffer the injury, all influence the pain we feel when we are inflicted with an injury.

Because of the way our nervous system processes the nerve signals coming from damaged tissues, our pain perception may not be an accurate representation of the damage to our body.

A physiotherapist can objectively assess the damage to your body and help you to understand your injury and to more accurately interpret the “pain’ signals. And a physiotherapist can help you overcome the fear of re-injury and disability by helping with the healing and rehabilitation of your injury and guiding you in your safe return to work and play.