



# The Progressive Goal Attainment Program (PGAP)

**A Cost-Effective Evidence-Based Treatment Program for Reducing Pain-Related Disability**

*Millions of people suffer from persistent pain due to injury or illness. Whether addressed in relation to personal, social or health care costs, persistent pain remains one of the most expensive health problems facing modern society. Although many people with pain conditions will show complete or partial recovery, many will become permanently disabled.*

The Progressive Goal Attainment Program (PGAP) is the first disability prevention program specifically designed to target psychosocial risk factors for pain and disability. Psychosocial factors were chosen as targets of the intervention on the basis of emerging research supporting their relevance to return-to-work outcomes, and their amenability to change through intervention. PGAP is a life-role re-integration program that has been tailored to meet the rehabilitation needs of individuals who are struggling to overcome the challenges associated with a wide range of persistent pain conditions. PGAP is a standardized community-based intervention delivered by frontline rehabilitation professionals such as occupational therapists, physical therapists, kinesiologists, occupational health nurses and rehabilitation counsellors.

PGAP was designed to complement existing clinical services for the treatment of painful health conditions. By adding a psychosocial risk-factor targeted intervention to existing treatment services, the goal is to establish 'virtual' multidisciplinary treatment teams at the level of the community. The website [www.PDP-PGAP.com](http://www.PDP-PGAP.com) provides contact information for hundreds of clinicians who have completed the two-day PGAP training workshop. The development of a large network of service providers ensures that clients can be seen in a timely fashion and in a location within or near their community of residence.

## Essential Features of PGAP

An initial assessment determines whether a client is a suitable candidate for PGAP. During the first session of PGAP, clients are invited to view the PGAP Information Video. This video features interviews with medical and rehabilitation experts on the factors that contribute to successful rehabilitation and recovery. The information content addresses the nature of musculoskeletal conditions, the importance of activity involvement and return to work, and briefly describes the goals of PGAP. The video was conceived as a vehicle for providing important medical/rehabilitation/reassurance information that is often difficult to communicate effectively within the time constraints of typical physician visits. Clients are also provided with a copy of the PGAP Client Workbook. The Client Workbook serves as the platform for the implementation of many of the intervention components of the program and also serves to maximize fidelity to treatment protocol. The client and clinician meet on a weekly basis, for approximately one hour, for a maximum of 10 weeks. Treatment costs can be kept at a minimum as a result of the low number of direct clinical contact hours. The program can be terminated prior to 10 weeks if the client is ready to return to work.

## Impact of PGAP

PGAP has produced positive results for individuals suffering from chronic musculoskeletal conditions, whiplash, fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Recent clinical trials have supported the use of PGAP as a cost effective intervention for reducing disability associated with persistent pain. One recent study showed that participation in PGAP increased the probability of return to work following whiplash injury by more than 50%. (Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation, Vol 15, No.4, Dec 2005; Physical Therapy, Vol 86, Jan 2006). Findings to date, suggest that PGAP can be a cost-effective means of improving function and facilitating return to work in individuals at risk for prolonged pain-related disability.

For more information about PGAP, training workshops, or referrals please contact: [info@PDP-PGAP.com](mailto:info@PDP-PGAP.com) or visit our website at [www.PDP-PGAP.COM](http://www.PDP-PGAP.COM)

### Head Office

5595 Fenwick Street, Suite 314,  
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3H 4M2  
Tel: (902) 471 7864, Fax: (902) 421 1292  
([info@PDP-PGAP.com](mailto:info@PDP-PGAP.com))



Centre universitaire de recherche  
sur la douleur et l'incapacité  
University Centre for Research  
on Pain and Disability



## Reducing Psychosocial Barriers to Rehabilitation Progress

The primary goals of PGAP are to reduce psychosocial barriers to rehabilitation progress, promote re-integration into life-role activities, increase quality of life, and facilitate return-to-work. These goals are achieved through targeted treatment of psychosocial risk factors, structured activity scheduling, graded-activity involvement, goal-setting and problem-solving, and motivational enhancement. In the initial weeks of the program, the focus is on developing a structured activity schedule for the client in order to facilitate resumption of pre-injury activities. Activity goals are established in order to promote resumption of family, social and occupational roles. Different treatment modules are invoked to target specific obstacles to rehabilitation progress (e.g. fear of movement/re-injury, catastrophizing, and perceived disability). In the final stages of the program, the intervention focuses on activities that will facilitate re-integration into the workplace.