

# Perceptions of Adolescents with Chronic Pain About Peer Support

## Why did we do this study?

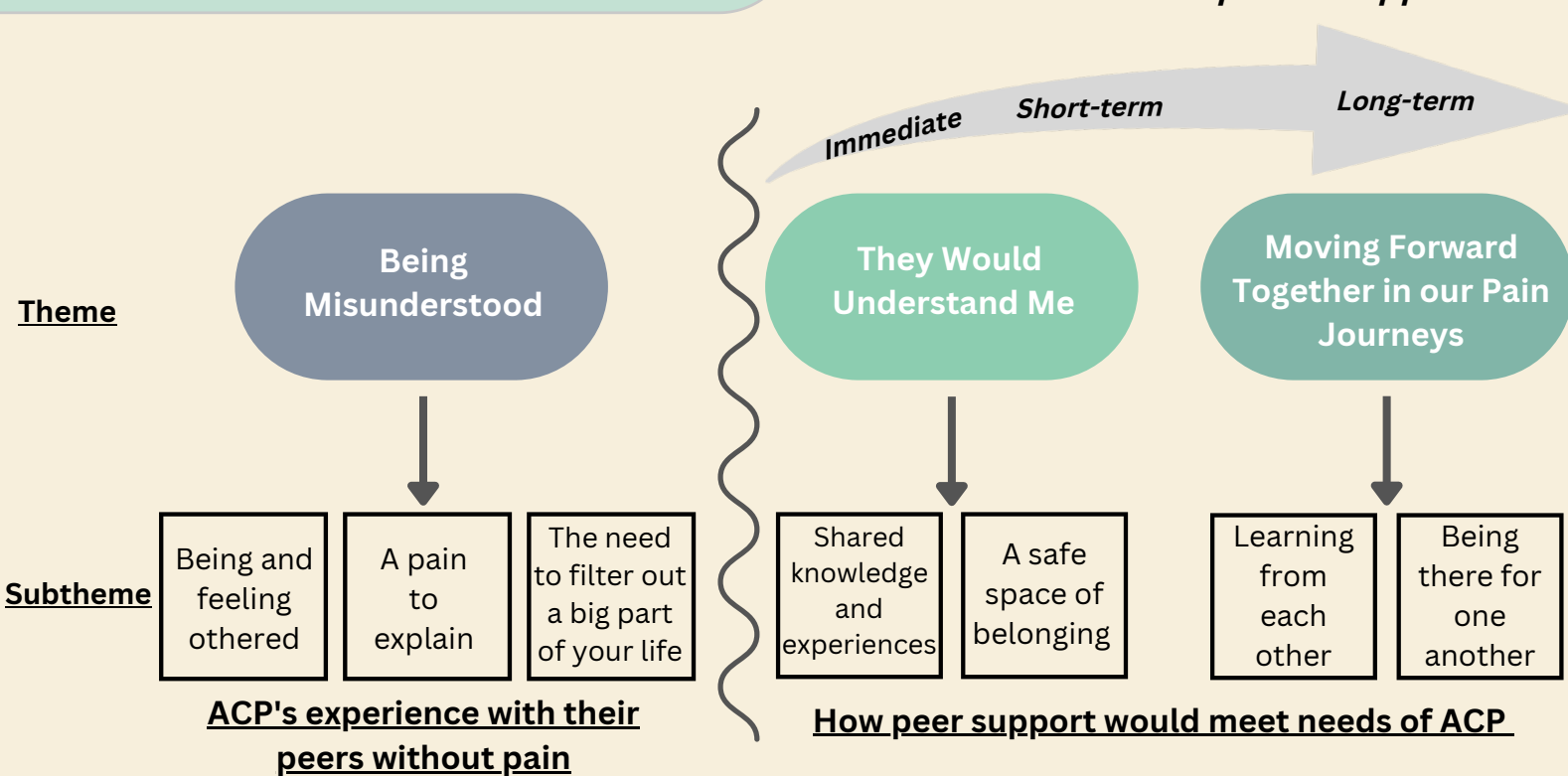
- Adolescents with chronic pain (ACP) can experience loneliness and isolation
- Peer support is when people with a similar condition spend time together and support each other

## How was the study done?

- 14 ACP (12-17 years old) were interviewed about their perceptions of peer support
- ACP's perceptions were organized into themes. Themes are summaries of important, common ideas

## What did we learn?

### Benefits of Group Peer Support



### Theme 1: Being Misunderstood

- ACP's peers without pain don't understand their pain experiences
- ACP feel like they have to repeatedly explain their pain
- ACP feel the need to filter their pain out of conversations with their peers without pain

"They just don't understand how much pain you're actually in. They don't understand what chronic pain even really is. So, they don't understand that you can be in pain constantly. Like the pain ranges in different levels, so they don't know that the pain can be really bad at times, and like how sensitive you are to touch and other stuff." (P11, 16-year old girl)



### Theme 2: They Would Understand Me

- ACP have shared knowledge and experiences
- ACP wouldn't feel judged by other ACP and would feel accepted and like they belong
- Peer support could help make new connections with other ACP

"It would just be nice to talk to [ACP] who understand you because I feel like every conversation you have, because pain relates to everything in your life... anything you're talking about there's always that kinda like one extra thing that people just don't understand." (P8, 17-year-old girl)



### Theme 3: Moving Forward Together in our Pain Journeys

- ACP could learn more about chronic pain from each other
- ACP could ask each other questions and share advice
- ACP could make new friendships that could continue outside of a peer support group

"[Spending time with ACP is] also good for just figuring out how to cope with things or... just being like "hey my doctor suggested this" or "I've been thinking about trying this, how has that- like have any of you tried this? Has it helped any of you?" (P2, 17-year-old questioning ACP)



## Key Takeaways

- ACP have unmet social needs from their peers without pain
- ACP desire peer support and perceive it as being beneficial

**THANK YOU**  
to the ACP who participated in this study!

Have questions?

Email Delane:

dlinkiew@uoguelph.ca

## What's Next?

- Explore what ACP want a peer support group to look like
- Develop & pilot a group peer support intervention for ACP



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