

Episode 1_v4

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Welcome to Chronic pain as you've never heard it talked about before, a podcast series developed and produced by a group of teens and young adults on the comfortability peer advisory board. I'm Dr. Rachel Coakley, pediatric pain psychologist at Boston Children's Hospital, and an associate professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School. Some people might say, I'm an expert in treating kids with pain. I've seen 1000s of patients written a book on the topic, and I'm the founder and director of the comfortability program. But my expert knowledge and experience as a provider is not the same as the expert knowledge and experience that comes from a young person who has walked this walk. And that's why we're here.

You're going to get to meet some amazing teens and young adults in just a moment. But so you really understand where these young people are coming from. Let me just give you a little context. Okay, close your eyes for a minute. Now, picture a broken down rusted tricycle with three very flat tires. Imagine this tricycles been sitting out in the yard for a while and it sunk into the mud. So now it's kind of sitting lopsided with a pedal wedged into the earth. Have an image in your mind. A person who has ongoing pain is just like the broken tricycle you imagined with the three very flat tires, they are stuck. To get a broken tricycle moving again, you need to fill the tires, all three tires, fill one or two tires, no luck, you'll just putter or spin in circles, but you won't really move forward. Filling the tires where chronic pain treatments concerned means adding what's called multidisciplinary care. You fill one tire with recommendations from a medical provider, fill one tire with exercise or activity and fill the last tire the most important as far as I'm concerned with the tools and skills that come from psychology. This is how I often explain pain recovery because it's an easy to understand metaphor. But actually getting all the tires filled. That can be challenging. In 2011, I started the comfortability program at Boston Children's Hospital. Its sole mission is to teach kids and teens as well as parents and caregivers, the science backed skills that come from psychology to fill that third essential tire so we can get kids racing back into their full inactive lives. The comfortability program has grown by leaps and bounds, and now runs workshops at dozens of hospitals throughout the United States, Canada and Australia. So what's our ultimate goal for kids with chronic pain? It's simple. Whether kids suffer with headaches, nerve pain, joint pain, abdominal pain, injury related pain, or pain that comes from an underlying disease. We want you to know this, there is hope. With the right combination of skills and support. Kids can and do get going again. The teens and young adults on our advisory board you're about to meet have all gone through this process. And they're here to share their experiences. They've truly all become experts and understanding what they need to live life fully. And since they've figured this out. Hardly anything has stood in their way, but hasn't been easy. Definitely not. When you listen. You'll hear the detours and

setbacks they all faced. Have they been changed by this experience? For sure. Was it all bad? Well, listen, and you can find out for yourself. This is chronic pain, as you've never heard it talked about before. But here at the comfortability program, we hope it changes the way you think about it forever.

Hi, I'm Sophia, and I'm the chair of the comfort abilities peer advisory board at Boston Children's Hospital. Before we begin, I wanted to acknowledge two things. First, as we talk about our stories and our journeys with pain, we try to focus on times we were hopeful or found hope in the thick of our journeys. We do this because it's what we wish someone had told us when our chronic pain was at its worst. We want to emphasize that even though we're focusing primarily on the positive, not every day was perfect. Not every day was easy, and it was difficult to get to where we are now. The next thing we wanted to note was that this using features of voices of for white cisgender females, a group that is not representative of everyone living with chronic pain. With that being said, we hope that our stories will provide comfort, reason and hope for those with chronic pain and those affected by it.

I'm Brooke. I'm 23 and I am a first year graduate student.

I'm Fiona, I'm 25. And I'm a young professional.

I'm Birgit I'm 15. I'm a sophomore in high school.

I'm Sophia. I'm 18 and I'm a senior in high school. So tell me about yourself.

I aspire to become a pediatric pain psychologist. But outside of my work in the psychology sphere, I'm passionate about traveling, I'm passionate about animals, fitness, anything that really involves just getting up moving and seeing the world.

I'm working in healthcare right now on a neurology unit while I'm applying to physician assistant programs, with the idea that hopefully one day I will work in neurology and outside work, things that I really enjoy doing. I do a lot of reading. And I'm really passionate about education in terms of educating the people around me and also educating myself and learning new things as often as I can.

My Sheykh book and Fiona I, in the future am interested in studying studying within the realm of psychology and neuroscience, and hopefully would like to get my PhD in something surrounding that. I'm currently right now I love playing tennis. Being with my family, I just got my first job at the Tennis Hall of Fame, which is super cool. And I love hanging out with my friends.

So the words tell me about yourself used to scare me a lot. But this fall, as I embarked on the college process, I heard the words tell me about yourself more times than I can count. And each time I got this question I answered somewhat similarly, I'm a senior in high school, I aspire to be a plastic and reconstructive surgery surgeon specifically a pediatric plastic and reconstructive surgeon. And throughout my high school experience, I've spent a lot of time traveling in an attempt to expand my perspective and just like see the world in a new light. And I've also done a lot of volunteering. I love to work with people, and I really love anything collaborative. Anyway, each time I asked, I was asked this question, I never mentioned pain in my answer. However, when I was younger, that would be the only

thing I would say when this question was asked. And as you can see, we're all at very different places in our lives. However, we're all here today. which then brings me to the question, why are you here today? And how did you all get involved in this work?

So if you were to run into me on the street, just let me paint you a picture. This is what you would see. I am a girl in her early 20s with curly brown hair and a beaming smile. I talk way too much about my dog. I talk way too much about the time that I studied abroad in Copenhagen and I'm probably going to tell you that I'm pursuing a PhD in Clinical Psychology, I might mention that I want to become a pain psychologist. But I won't mention that I had pain, pain at one point completely innervated everything in my life. It controlled what I did, it controlled how I thought it controlled how I acted. And once I reclaimed my life back from chronic pain, I really became passionate about advocating for others about really how you can actually reclaim your life and how pain does not have to control you. Yes, it's okay to have bad days. It's okay to have days that are tougher than others. However, that doesn't define you. So in spring of 2020, right after COVID started, I found the comfortability. And I reached out and I said What can I do? How can I help? And I became a part of the peer Advisory Board, which has been one of the most rewarding organizations I've ever been a part of in my entire life. And I'm excited to bring this podcast along with my fellow incredible co board members that we're excited to just all share these incredible tips and stories with you.

Yeah, I'm also so excited to be here. I really liked what you were saying Brooke and kind of relate to the feeling of kind of reclaiming your life after chronic pain. I think I joined the comfortability when the board first started a number of years ago. And for me, it was a really big step in changing the narrative for myself about the role that Chronic pain was playing in my life because I was sort of switching from being maybe on like the patient side and a more passive consumer almost have all of the psychology that we talked about in the comfortability to doing some of the education and being really involved in having something really amazing come out of all of the struggles that come along with having chronic pain. Also, as I was mentioning earlier, health, education and health care are both really important to me. And so this is kind of a joining of two of my, like, things I'm most passionate about. And so I'm excited to get to do all of that with you guys here.

For me. During the comfortability, it was something I wanted to do, since I learned how to manage my pain. I think, like three months after I had my follow up from my pain rehab program with my psychologist, and I was like, How can I help? Like, how can I help other people going through the who went through the same thing that I did? And I remember, like being, like, go into comfortability, and like, feet, I met Fiona. And I was like, How can I do something like that? How can I help people. And that's what kind of got me into the comfortability. And I started and I became a part of it. And I love the idea of helping people get back to managing their pain in a way that is best for them and kind of taking control of their lives again, I use the metaphor a lot, that pain kind of drove the car for my family for a very long time. And after I learned how to manage my pain, it put pain in the backseat. And that's one of what I want to help others do using comfortability as my platform.

That's amazing. Bridgette, I frequently tell people that pain was centerstage for way too long. And I always joke that I started and I went into my pain rehabilitation program, pre med, and I came out wanting to be a clinical pain psychologist. So it's really amazing how I have not only shifted my

everyday life in terms of coping, but I also shifted the entire trajectory of my career, and my life through kind of this whole pain experience.

It's so interesting hearing you guys say all of this, because I feel like when I joined this board, I honestly was still a little bit skeptical about the psychology piece of it, I knew it was something that I needed to believe. And that has helped me but I was almost like reluctant to believe it because like the psychology piece came into like my pain journey so late in the game. So it was just like so much of an afterthought for me. And then like actually opening the conversation and talking about pain. And learning that pain isn't like a swear. And you can talk about it. And you can talk about it in a healthy and helpful way. And I feel like that has been so helpful for me and has also been a driving force in my continuing on the board and guess speaking. And just, I don't know, kind of that pain no longer needs to be in control of my life. And it still is a part of my life. But like you were like you guys were saying it's no longer in the driver's seat. And it's just like, so interesting to see like how far I've progressed, I guess.

For me, I can totally relate to that Sophia, because I too was so skeptical, skeptical about psychology at first I remember because I first started it from my pain when I was in like eighth grade. So I guess I was like 13 years old at that time. And I just remember, like after my first appointment, or first few appointments, I was like crying my parents, I don't want to leave school at 12 o'clock to go to a therapist, like cuz that's what it sounded like. Because from like my point of view, I was like what 13 year old should have to go see a therapist, and I have people ask me questions about leaving school. And that's what made me so skeptical of it. And I really kind of just pushed through it to the first part until I went to Boston Children's. And that's kind of where it really became super important to me because my psychologist at Boston Children's personally was like, my, my hero at the time. She was amazing. One of the reasons I want to now study psychology and I'm very passionate about it. Um, but I think it was definitely something I was so hesitant to do at first I remember just crying about it because I was like, why am I why do I have to do this? I'm only 13 This is something who people like because in my perception it was people who were like really really struggled like like mentally and like that wasn't something I thought that could help me because like all I was feeling his pain. I didn't realize at the time but they like correlated sort of

that ties in so much with one of my favorite questions that I think we've all asked each other which is Um, what is something you learned in your pain journey that you use for something that it has nothing to do with pain? Because like you guys were saying, initially thinking about this, you might be skeptical, skeptical or thinking, Oh, it's for only for people in a really bad situation. But honestly, like a lot of these things that we've learned, are applicable applicable just to everyday life.

Fiona, you stole the words like, right out of my mouth. So now I'm gonna ask you all, obviously, like, as we've established pain brought us all here today and has an impact on our lives both good and bad. But I'm interested, like, what's something that you have learned from pain that you now don't necessarily use for pain, or has been really helpful in a context other than pain?

I think for me, there's a there's this is so multifaceted, I think, really, the overarching theme is really how to be resilient, how to take probably one of the worst things that's ever happened to my life in my entire

life, which was developing chronic pain. And really kind of going through the steps of working to get myself better and to get myself to a place where I can function like a normal human, and without anyone even really knowing. But it's also how to find gratitude in everyday life. And I'm grateful for the days that are able to do things that I never thought I would be able to do, I never thought I would be able to move across the country alone, I never thought I'd be able to move across the world alone, even it was just for a short period of time. So having an experience, like having chronic pain, has really opened my eyes to what it really means to be grateful. And what it really means to have an appreciation for little things in life. I mean, just the other day it brings tears, it genuinely brings tears to my eyes when I speak in groups. I was speaking at a group a couple of weeks ago, and I was speaking to both children and parents. And just to see a little bit of glimmer of hope that they were getting from just hearing that their child could have a life that could look like mine. But it's something that's so unimaginable to them when they're going through this. And that really is just what makes it so worth it.

Yeah, like you said, like, I used to think like pain was like the worst thing to ever happen to me. And now I think I'm like the person I am because of my pain, because it kind of forced me to broaden my perspective. And it's such I've learned so much like how to manage my stress. I never believed in meditation ever. Like I thought that was like, I literally didn't think it works at all. And I was like, I'm not doing that. And it started out, I started using it for pain, and I started using it for sleep. And now I use it all the time. Like when I'm nervous for a test when I'm cramming and I'm like, I just like can't do this anymore. I'm gonna start crying. And then just like go and like take a few minutes to meditate and like calm down. And like, it's been such a useful tool, and I don't even use it really for pain anymore. I mean, when I need to I will. However, that's something that I was so skeptical about and didn't think was would help at all and ended up helping both my pain and just like me be a more calm and like sane person.

Sophia, that's something I can totally relate to, too. Because like all these strategies, like the big one for me, was just going on walks was huge, because not only at the time when I learned how beneficial the strategy was for me that like at the time it was helping me because I had hurt my foot. That's why I have chronic pain. And it was like getting me to exercise but now I just use it when I'm like, like, I feel like I need to get up and do something. Like I came home from school today. And I was exhausted. It was my first day back from a break. I was so tired. I just lied in bed and I was like to get up I have to do something. So I just went on a walk and I came back and I felt so much better. And I think like that's where these like strategies we've learned really like just come into play. Like whenever you aren't maybe feeling yourself like feeling like yourself or you feel like you could boost your mood a little bit do like such simple things. So I went on like a 1015 minute walk and it just made me feel so much better. And I also use the strategies with like Sofia, like you said like tests, exams, all that stuff, because they can be very stressful. So I remember just like taking a step back a couple weeks ago where I was like, I'm just gonna go back to all my strategies that I've written down and just try to focus My mind on a few things for a little bit instead of putting it all into like studying

this is so funny because I one of my favorite things that I use, not for painting anymore is a is the like, belly breathing technique that I learned at the comfortability. And I use it for stress and like calming down or getting ready to sleep, all these different things. But like you guys, were talking about stress about tests, one of my college professors and physics, but for one of our like big exams had it was like

a, you know, 5075 Person class, definitely a really big class had everyone do basically like the same belly breathing exercise essentially to for everyone to like, kind of center themselves and calm down before starting the test. And so that's just kind of one of my favorite examples of something I use all the time, not for pain. And that's like everyone can really benefit from doing it at any point.

Fiona, like hearing you give that example, I think is so interesting, because it shows how like, these really are strategies that just don't like only apply to pain like that is your college professor and a roomful of students who probably don't have chronic pain. But they're all using this technique just to like, relax. So, and I think that's like, those are just like, I don't want to say we're not ordinary people, but people who don't live with chronic pain. So they're just using these strategies that I used to think were only for pain. And now I'm so open to the fact that they applied to all aspects of my life.

Yeah, thank you. It's really interesting. Because right after I came home, from my pain rehabilitation, I made it a point to go to the gym and work out and make sure I get my 30 minutes of exercise a day and make sure I hit my three days a week of strength training, and make sure I hit my, my goals that I needed to hit to, I guess, avoid kind of slipping back down. But now, I have found forms of movement that I genuinely love. And I don't think about it as managing my pain, for example, but I just think about it as just doing something that I really enjoyed doing. I've kind of switched it up. Throughout the years, I was used to be really into yoga, now I'm really into spinning. So it's just another outlet that I could use to really like de stress from the world.

Yeah, another thing that like pain has taught me that's like, kind of random. And I feel like super essential for everyone to know. But it's taught me like the importance of stepping back. And the importance of like looking at the bigger picture. Like I used to think that pain was my entire world. And for a while. It was like, it was my entire world. It was all I thought about it was all I talked about. It was all it was all that was on my mind. And then like now looking back on it. Like I've had so many situations where I'm like, okay, yes, this is upsetting. Yes, this is frustrating, however, like will it matter in five years? Or also, what are you going to learn from this, like, sometimes it takes the uncomfortable situations to learn, like the most important lessons, and I feel like that's why pain has shaped me so much because I've learned so many incredibly valuable life lessons that were I'm sure would be made apparent to me eventually, however, I learned them from my experience with pain.

That's really amazing that you said that because just recently I was just thinking about how when I was at my pain rehabilitation, and that was over almost six years ago now. And I remember the person who was leading the group that day was saying that your learning skills that are you're going to be leaps and bounds above your peers. And it's true I think that having a situation like chronic pain not only teaches you how like what's important in your life, but also teaches you how to handle all these situations that people the same age might not necessarily have the opportunity to learn about as as young adolescents and young adults just because they haven't encountered it so kind of experiencing a hardship like chronic pain so early has taught me invaluable lessons. I mean, I talked about it in my grad school interviews how it's so important to how I want to shape my life and future and how much this is so important to me this overall mission of really be under like understanding and teaching people about chronic pain and how that they can live life with chronic pain.

Broke that's something I totally understand because like right now I am still only 15 but I feel like I've grown up like very I don't want to say fast but I've I like my mindset is just a lot different from like, my even like some of my best friends I just feel like I think differently I don't know, like my my outlook on everything. It's just different from that of like a regular like a normal 15 year old who like didn't go through something, I guess life changing at such an early age. And one thing I really had to work on because of that is being patient with people because I've just become, I feel like I've become more like efficient with my time and managing my stress. So I've heard I had to learn, especially recently like how to give people like, their time too. But it's something I'm definitely working on. And like, learning these lessons at such an early age is like, helped me to like with school, like with having empathy for others who like, don't get the same opportunities as I do. All the things I'm able to do, like, if I didn't have chronic pain, or if I did like all these opportunities I have because of like, just who I am. So I've really learned to like, empathize with others because of the situation.

So I'm interested, is there anything that you were incredibly skeptical about? Like when you were in the, I don't know, like the thick of your pain journey that ended up really helping you?

Um, yeah, I think the biggest thing that I was most skeptical about was really moderating what I do. And as somebody that has always just been, like, ridiculous overachiever, I, one of the hardest things was going back to my senior year of high school and dropping back a level in all my classes. And that was probably one of the best things I've ever done looking back on it, I was like, There's no way I'm going to get into college, there's no way I'm going to be able to do anything that I want to do if I'm not in the classes that are AP and honors, and I really defined myself for a long time, based on the types of classes that I took, but really kind of forcing myself. And it was with a lot of reluctance that I finally stepped back with classes. It was with a lot of reluctance. And then I realized that, okay, maybe it was like September, October of my senior year, this is actually really great. I get to do so many other things besides study and schoolwork. And I get to do things that actually bring joy into my life because I was dealing with chronic pain for so long. And it was consuming my life that I didn't have much joy or fun anyway. So now I finally got to experience things that I wanted to experience without that added pressure of school. So really kind of listening to the doctors and listening to what they had to say about school. Because I'm sure, like many of you listening, that's something that you're dealing with. Now. So I think that's something that I was very skeptical about, but ended up being one of the most pivotal moments in my pain journey.

Broke. That's something that I think me personally, right now I'm still really working on is because like, I'm like choosing my classes for junior year and stuff like that. And that's where they want you to get like a little bit tougher. That's where I feel personally, like I have to make things tougher on like college just soon, like even though it's two years away. So I made my schedule a few weeks ago, and I have like three APS to honors and I'm like, Whoa, backup even my mom told me she was like you need to like take a step back. And it's something I've really tried to work on. But like, still getting used to I think so I dropped down a level in some of my classes because I was like, I'm not going to have any fun like all I'm going to do is study so and then I'll just feel like miserable and so stressed out 24/7 So like not taking honors Spanish was like even though I got like recommended for I was like I don't need to do that. What and I think it was all about like balancing finding that balance, which is something I'm still working on but definitely have improved upon.

It's so interesting hearing you guys say that because I think I like actually had the opposite experience in the sense where like, when my pain was at its worst, I was really young. I was still in middle school. And like I didn't think I would make it to college. I was like nope, I'm not going to make it to college. I'm not going to make it to high school like it I was like I'm never going to be able to do it and I just like was in this like constant never ending mindset of like, why plan my future when pain is my only future. And then like when I got to the point and like I turned to other things and started thinking okay, are you doing this because you actually like it or are you doing it to get to college, and things like that. So like when I started, like adjusting my mindset, and like going to therapy and thinking about why I was doing things and the motive behind it, I kind of stopped thinking of it for a college oriented schedule, I guess. And it ended up like, my first few years of high school were a little rough. And I wasn't even thinking like, Okay, you need to try and apply yourself to get to college, I was just thinking, like, what's the best for my like pain, and it like, my life still was very encompassed by pain. And now this year, I took like, the hardest classes I could take. And I was taking two AP sciences, I was taking AP Bio on AP Chem, and AP Calc at the same time. And if you had told my 11 year old self, that I'd be doing that and actually learning what I wanted to learn about, and actually, like, educating myself on the sciences, and like what I'm most passionate about, I would have like, literally laughed in your face, because I would have been like, No, I can't even get out of bed in the morning. So you're gonna take like, all of these classes. That's crazy. And so it's so interesting to hear you say this, because I feel like I shifted away from like, I think my life was just like pain, pain, pain, pain, pain, so it wasn't even thinking of the implications of anything that I was doing. And now, like, my classes are hard and challenging, but like, I would have never believed that I would have gotten here. Do you know what I mean? That makes sense.

That makes a lot of sense to me, because I was also in middle school when I first started having pain. And so I was really skeptical of basically everything because I was always in pain. I didn't really know anything different. And I was like, How could anything possibly help. And I was very much also in the feeling like, if I even make it to high school, I'm definitely not going to make it to college. Thinking just that I just won't be able to be one of those people essentially. And thankfully, that's not how it turned out. But that was also it was like a little bit into having chronic pain that I came across the comfortability when they were having like their first workshops. And so that was able to help me change my mindset, like, okay, get yourself in a healthy place. And then you can think about, like, maybe you can't go to college. And, you know, thankfully I did. But I feel like when it all started, I was skeptical about basically every single coping strategy because I was like, how could this possibly help me like how could meditating or thinking about a rabbit in a garden, possibly change the fact that my head feels like it's going to explode right now. And so I just, things have changed a lot for me, obviously, because those things now actually do work for me and help me manage my pain. But I was really skeptical about pretty much everything to do with psychology and managing chronic pain at the beginning.

It's really interesting that you say that just because something that I just thought about was every pain was all I talked about. I mean, my mom, she would come into my room every single morning and say, Alright, Brooke, on a scale of one to 10. How are you feeling? And I see you all smiling now. The past jail? Yep. And now thinking about how not talking about pain in such a negative way. I was like, how am I supposed to not talk about it, if it's like so much in the forefront of my mind all day, every day. I mean,

people need to know I'm in pain, people need to know that I'm not feeling well like, but then something kind of just clicked one day when I was at Pain Rehab that it was just really like, we get it, we don't need to talk about it anymore. And they would actually implement rules that at the program, I went to that we were not allowed to talk about pain or show any what would be considered like pain behaviors. And it's really fascinating to look back on it to really see how the further you get away from it. And the less you talk about pain, the more it suddenly becomes smaller.

And I feel like that ties in so much to the psychology piece about like, how if you're talking about something all the time, it's like, reminding you of it. And I don't know, I I feel like that's something that I was skeptical about too, because it was like if I don't talk about it, you can't see my pain. So if I don't talk about it, how are people going to know? How are people going to believe me? And in reality when I stopped talking about it, or at least I mean, we're talking about it right now, but we're talking about it in a positive manner. So when I stopped talking about it when it was consuming my life, it was so beneficial and it allowed me to like, like I was saying before looking at things in a bigger picture, which I feel like was so crucial to me like adjusting my perspective and What I wanted to consume what media do? Do I want to consume? What like, like thoughts? And like words? Do I want to be putting out what conversations do I want to be having? And at the end of the day, pain was not one of them. Or actually, my doctors were like, No, it is not going to be one of them. So whether that was a choice I made for myself, or someone else made me it definitely was a choice that I was skeptical about, but was so crucial in beginning to adjust my mindset.

Hearing all of you guys talk about this is like, so interesting for me too, because I'm a little bit younger, like, Sophia, you're about to graduate high school, and then all of you will be in college sent me. And, um, it's just like, a big thing I've still taken away from being on this podcast, and on the board right now is like, I'm still learning from all of you guys. And I think we all learn from each other. But it's so nice to see all of you who have gone through high school going, just got accepted to college, got through college and grad school. It's such an inspiration to me too, and because like, I haven't even known you all for that long. And it's been so nice to see how hard you work to and then what you're so passionate about. And it makes me realize, hey, I can do all that stuff, too. Because like, even though I've learned to manage my painful way, there are days where you still have doubts, I think, and I think that happens to all of us. But it's been a real great example for me. And it's like, I've been able to tell myself, like, I can keep going. Because these are people that are older than me who have had similar experiences and had this point in their life to where they felt like, hey, it might not be possible for me to get into the best school, I want to I don't think it'll be hard, too hard to study too hard to put in the work. But like you've done it. And that's something I keep reminding myself, and it's always nice to learn from all of you.

Yes, Bridgette, it's awesome to hear you say that, because I think that is a goal that all of us have for this podcast, is for people listening to sort of hear real voices of people saying like, this is not the end, you will not be in this spot forever, things will get better. So it's so good to hear you say that?

Yeah. Sorry. I think that really, it's it's one thing to read an article about pain on the internet, it's one thing to hear it from a doctor to another thing to hear it from a parent, but it's, it's different when it's somebody who you can feel like that you can identify with and my hope and goal, and really kind of

putting this podcast out into the world is that one is that even if one person can be like, okay, like I can do this, I can really, you know, I've learned something, I feel like these people are doing things that they never thought was were possible, I might be able to do something is really, really powerful. And I would even if one if one person could just really kind of take this whole message away that you could live a very meaningful and fulfilling life with chronic pain.

Yeah, so I guess that brings me to my question for Fiona and Bridget, what are your goals for this podcast?

My goal is to help people who have chronic pain, obviously, but also just like, like I said before, like help put pain in the back seat and because for like me, and my personal experience, it really drove everything it did for like what my family did. And that led to me feeling guilty. Also, I was like, This is my fault. I'm the one who deals with this, I'm the one who like we had to cancel vacation for because they didn't want to bring like the daughter with crutches on the plane like, and then my little sister was upset. And that's just an example of the things that like, ended with my family because of because of me because of the pain I was feeling. And, um, once I really got past that point where I like, worked hard to put in, like the strategies that I had learned to apply them to my life. And I, I slowly saw how pain became like, like in the backseat. And that's something I just want to help everyone with like, like Brooke said, even if it's just one person, learn how to find the strategies that are like best for you that will then like, you can apply them to your whole life. And it'll like make pain so much more manageable, and you will be able to get your life back.

My goal for the podcast, and are one of my goals for the podcast. And one of the things that I'm just really excited about for the podcast is spreading more awareness and education about what chronic pain looks like all the different ways it can look different, what it actually is, and then just having like an audio platform that people can listen to just because when I was in the midst of my chronic pain I couldn't read. And so I love the idea that someone can listen to this and like take in resources that we've made but in a way where they don't have to be reading something. So it's very that part's very specific. But

yeah, no, I agree completely, especially just like I think having this online platform makes it accessible, and allows us to spread awareness on a larger level. And I think my goal is to be part of the conversation, I had never heard about chronic pain prior to being diagnosed, I didn't know what complex regional pain syndrome was, or if that was even, I genuinely didn't know it was a thing. So I think like, part of my goal is to take back the fear that comes with talking about pain, and instead encourage these types of conversations. Because I want to be a candid voice and a voice of reason and a voice of hope for people still in the midst of their chronic pain, and also I think, we have a really unique perspective, we have the lived experience. And I think if I were to be able to talk to myself now I would like literally be in awe, I guess I want to be the person I needed when I was younger.

I think we would all be in awe. If we all knew, if we were all talking to our younger selves, I think there would be I would not believe the person that I am today. And I think even just on a personal and professional level, I never thought that I'd be able to leave my house alone when I was in high school.

So really, to just kind of have this platform out there to really kind of break the stigma and be the person that we wish that we had.

Yeah, I'm excited to learn more about you guys and your chronic pain journeys as we go into the next episodes in the podcast.

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