

CHRONIC PAIN AND RESILIENCE - PERSISTENT PELVIC PAIN

WOMEN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS | MAY 2025 | [WEBSITE](#)

BY DR. CHRISTINA NEW & ABIGAIL ATTAH AMOAH

Chronic pelvic pain (CPP) is a complex, often misunderstood condition that affects millions of people. For many, it is not simply about physical discomfort, it's a deeply personal journey that impacts mental, emotional, and social well-being. This May- during Pelvic Pain Awareness Month, Mental Health Awareness Month and Women's Health Month- we're focusing on the intersection of CPP and mental health for those impacted, and the resilience it takes to navigate both.

The Emotional and Physical Toll of Persistent Pain

Living with chronic pelvic pain can be an isolating experience. Pelvic pain can stem from a wide range of gynecologic or pelvic conditions, including endometriosis, interstitial cystitis, and vulvodynia. Many patients face long delays in diagnosis and treatment, sometimes years, which can intensify feelings of frustration, anxiety, and hopelessness. In fact, research shows that women with CPP have significantly higher rates of depression and anxiety, with one study reporting up to 25% experiencing moderate to severe depression (Latthe et al., 2006).

The journey is often complicated by how uniquely each person experiences pain. What works for one individual may not work for another. This unpredictability can lead to self-doubt and a sense of being unheard or misunderstood in clinical spaces.

Building Resilience Through Mental Health Support

Managing persistent pelvic pain requires more than physical treatment, it involves addressing the emotional and psychological layers that come with chronic illness. Mental health support plays a vital role in improving quality of life. Evidence-based approaches include:

- **Mindfulness and relaxation techniques** to reduce pain perception and improve emotional regulation.
- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** reframes negative thought patterns related to pain and illness.
- **Support groups and community connections** that help reduce isolation and validate lived experiences.



Women's Behavioral Health and Wellness (WBHW) Integrated Behavioral Health at UCHealth Obstetrics and Gynecology offers a **Persistent Pelvic Pain Therapy Skills Support Group** to support patients in the complex needs associated with pelvic pain. The group is a virtual, 9-week cognitive-behavioral-based group that helps participants build coping skills, learn about pain psychology, and connect with others navigating similar challenges. This group is a valuable resource for patients within our gynecology clinics and is available by referral from a UCHealth OB/GYN provider.



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A Multidisciplinary Approach to Care

Effective treatment for chronic pelvic pain is rarely one-dimensional. We emphasize a **collaborative, team-based model**. This might include:

- **Gynecology and pain specialists**
- **Pelvic floor physical therapists**
- **Urology and gastrointestinal specialists**
- **Acupuncturists and massage therapists**
- **Behavioral health providers**

This approach ensures that patients receive care that is not only medically efficient but also tailored to their physical and emotional needs.



Finding Resources and Community

One of the ongoing challenges for those with CPP is finding specialized providers and supportive communities. While resources can be limited, persistence often leads to the right connections. Here are a few trusted sources of information and support:

- [International Pelvic Pain Society](#)
- [Colorado Women's Health – Pelvic Pain Clinic](#)
- [National Vulvodynia Association](#)
- [Endometriosis Foundation of America](#)
- Book: *Hello Down There: A guide to healing chronic pelvic pain* by Dr. Alexandra Milspaw

You Are Not Alone

Chronic pelvic pain is a long road, but it is not one you have to walk alone. With the right support, medical, psychological, and communal, resilience becomes possible. If you or someone you know is struggling with persistent pelvic pain, talk to your provider about integrated care options and mental health resources that can make a real difference.

Thank you for reading!

CONTACT US	303-724-1646
WEBSITE	WBHW@CUANSCHUTZ.EDU

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