

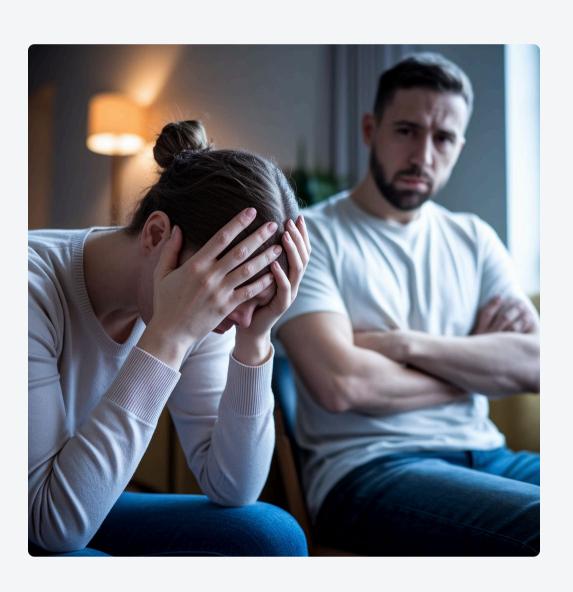


## The Chronic Pain Decoder

What they say. What we hear. What to say instead.

- If you've ever heard "You're still in pain?" or "Just be positive," this one's for you.
- Real talk for partners, friends, teachers, coworkers, and family.
- Share it. Save it. Send it with love. #navigatechronicpain

# "You're still in pain?"



### What they say:

"You're STILL in pain?"

#### What we hear:

"Aren't you better yet?"

The Reality: Chronic pain isn't a flu. It doesn't just go away. It's often lifelong, with ups and downs.

Say this instead:

"I can't imagine how hard this is — I'm proud of you for getting through today."



# "You just need to stay positive!"

### What they say:

"You just need to think positively."

#### What we hear:

"You're doing this to yourself."

### The Reality:

Positive thinking doesn't cure pain. It *can* help — but only when it's paired with compassion and validation.

## Say this instead:

✓ "I believe you. I'm here. And I'll hold hope with you."

# "You were fine yesterday!"

1 What they say:

"But you were fine yesterday!"

What we hear:

"You're faking it today."

The Reality:

Flare-ups can hit out of nowhere. Pain can change by the hour.

4 Say this instead:

✓ "I know things can change quickly. What do you need today?"



# "I get tired too."



## What they say:

"Yeah, I get tired too."



#### What we hear:

"Your exhaustion isn't valid."



### Say this instead:

✓ "Is there anything I can take off your plate right now?"

P The Reality: Fatigue from chronic illness is like walking through quicksand — even after sleeping.



# "Have you tried \_\_\_?"

?

### What they say:

"Have you tried yoga? Keto? A healing crystal from Etsy?"



#### What we hear:

"You're not trying hard enough."



### The Reality:

Most of us have tried *everything* — repeatedly.



## Say this instead:

"I trust you're doing what's best for you. I'd love to learn what actually helps you most."

# "You're just being sensitive."



#### What they say:

"You're overreacting / too sensitive."



#### What we hear:

"You're not allowed to have needs."



### The Reality:

Pain rewires the nervous system. Sensitivity isn't weakness — it's physiology.



## Say this instead:

"Your experience is real. Let's figure out what would make things easier."





# If You've Said These Before — It's OK

#### Learn

→ You didn't mean harm. Most people just don't know what chronic pain *really* is.

The best thing you can do now? <a> Learn more about chronic pain conditions.</a>

#### Listen

✓ Listen to those experiencing chronic pain. Their experiences are valid and real.

#### **Love Better**

Use what you've learned to support those with chronic pain more effectively.

≜ Send this to someone who needs it. Share it with: https://navigatechronicpain.org

# Want to Say the Right Thing Next Time?



### **Conversation scripts**

Learn exactly what to say in difficult situations



#### **Validation tips**

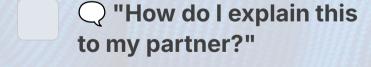
Support loved ones effectively



### **Emotional support**

When you're too tired to explain again

Let Navigate Chronic Pain help. Try asking it:



"What can I say when someone minimises my pain?"



□ "Help me feel less alone right now."

Try Navigate Chronic Pain free at navigatechronicpain.org