

## **Top Ten Take-Aways from Pain, Mental Health and JM Town Hall**

Cure JM presented a Town Hall, 2-part panel on Pain, Mental Health and JM on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Our medical panel consisted of Tonya Palermo, Ph.D, University of Washington & Seattle Children's Hospital, a researcher with appointments in Pediatrics, Psychiatry and Anesthesiology; Andrew Shulman, MD, Children's Hospital of Orange, a pediatric rheumatologist with interests in pain amplification; and Natoshia Cunningham, Ph.D, Michigan State University, a pediatric pain psychologist whose research focuses on the psychological assessment and treatment of youth with chronic, painful health conditions and the use of CBT as a treatment modality.

Our family panel consisted of Anna Ramsey, a young adult living with JM since adolescence and currently studying for her social work degree; Michelle Best, a NAMI support group counselor and mom to James who has had JM for many years. She also co-facilitates our Cure JM Emotional Support Group; and Rebecca Karsten, a nurse and mom to Ellory who is now 4 but was diagnosed with JM at 2 years old.

### **TOP TEN TAKEAWAYS**

- Kids with chronic pain (lasting more than 3 months) are more likely to have anxiety, & the pain coupled with anxiety can make them feel worse.
- Chronic pain impacts the brain involving multiple networks of emotional, sensory and cognitive regions.
- Your kids are NOT manipulating you when they say they are in pain.
- Pain has a broad impact on both children and families:
  - i) reduced physical activities
  - ii) disturbed sleep
  - iii) increased worry/anxiety, fear, depression
  - iv) disrupted school attendance & performance
  - v) increased parental worry & stress
  - vi) increased financial burden
- Medical treatments can cause both physical and psychological trauma
  - i) needle phobias
  - ii) anticipatory medicine and/or needle-related treatments
- Anxiety and pain have an inverse correlation. The more anxiety, the more possible pain, & more pain might increase anxiety.
- There are a variety of treatments for managing pain:
  - i) Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an evidenced-based treatment approach
  - ii) Relaxation Training
  - iii) Mindfulness Training
  - iv) Goal Setting (depending on age of child)
  - v) Activity Engagement
  - vi) Biofeedback
  - vii) Physical Therapy & Exercise combined with other activities + counseling
- It is recommended by pediatric rheumatologists to avoid pain clinics that only offer narcotics or opiates to treat pain. A pain clinic should focus on the person, not just the pain.
- Many hospitals have multidisciplinary chronic pain clinics.
- There are books and apps to help educate, monitor and treat pain. See our list on the Cure JM [website](#).