

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

A Descriptive Psychology Account of Patient-Centered Medicine and the Chronic Pain
Patient

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Abstract

This project is a conceptual analysis of Patient-Centered Medicine with a focus on its practical implications for integrating care of the chronic pain patient. Specifically, it utilizes the tools of Descriptive Psychology to describe a conceptual framework for understanding and treating chronic pain patients in a patient-centered way. I argue that the underlying conceptual framework for the Biopsychosocial model is conceptually vague, leading to a fragmented theory and practice of Patient-Centered Medicine. I offer that these specific shortcomings may be emended by utilizing the conceptual framework for a person-centered science supplied by Descriptive Psychology, most especially with the tools of a Paradigm Case Formulation of Patient-Centered Medicine and a Parametric Analysis of the chronic pain patient. This project contributes to the field of psychology, and particularly the field of health psychology, by more precisely locating the relevance of Descriptive Psychology and its conceptual contributions to science and the clinical method for treating patients who present with chronic pain.