

## Statement for Practitioners

Thank you for agreeing to work with me. I respect your expertise and your skills – that’s why I’m here – and I would also like you to respect my input on this process as well.

The experience I have living with pain may not conform to what you know about my condition or what your training taught you about how pain manifests or how long it may last, but I need you to listen to my direct experience and take that into account.

I live in this body every day. I live with pain every day. I’m willing to cooperate and work with you, but I ask that you give me equal standing here in this room and that you be willing to listen carefully to me and to cooperate and work with me as well.

If my response to treatment seems disappointing or inadequate, if I still need help living with pain after years of treatment, rather than becoming my shame, this may be an opportunity for us to learn something new about how pain behaves.

You are an expert because you have gone to school to learn about these things and you have doubtless worked with many people and learned from each patient you have worked with. But I am an expert too. I am an expert on living with pain and on the experience of living in this body. I am an expert on my particular form of living with my condition.

I am asking you to treat what I report to you and what I experience here in this room as equally as valid as your training or anyone’s studies or expectations. I need you to be willing to listen and respond to what I am telling you about what hurts, what works and what doesn’t work for me. I want you to treat me like a living reference source, a way to learn more about this condition, rather than as an anomaly or perhaps even an untrustworthy source of information.

When you insist that you know more than I do about how I feel, I feel disrespected, I feel unheard. I feel as if my experience is invisible to you, and it adds to my overall sense of being victimized by this pain and this condition I am living with and working through.

I am willing to trust your expertise. I ask you to trust mine.