



The Australian Pain Society

2015
*Distinguished
Member
Award*

Awarded for services to the promotion,
treatment and science of pain management
and lifelong contribution to the
Australian Pain Society.

Helen was raised in Nambour on Queensland's Sunshine Coast hinterland. As a young woman in the 1970s, she developed an interest in meditation and remains as interested today as she was then, in the connection between the mind and the body. She also possessed artistic flair, and it was her passion for all things creative that directed her to tertiary study in visual and fine arts.

This combination of creativity and a yearning to understand and help people led her to undertake further studies in health and wellbeing from a holistic perspective and occupational therapy became her calling. She graduated from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy in 1979 and is a member of Occupational Therapy Australia.

Early in Helen's career she developed an interest in helping people develop strategies for managing persistent pain. At the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service, Helen worked with her multidisciplinary colleagues running pain management programs for injured workers. Helping participants navigate their way back to a productive and healthy lifestyle led Helen to develop an appreciation for the complex nature of persistent pain and the benefit of individualised, multi-modal treatment approaches.



Helen Rowe

B Occ Thpy; M Counselling;
Post Grad Dip Counselling;
Post Grad Cert Clinical Hypnosis

During this time she became keenly interested in assisting people to identify vocational aspirations and engage meaningfully in the workforce and so her parallel career as a rehabilitation counsellor evolved. She continues to be a member of the Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors and the Career Development Association of Australia.

Helen's search for a deeper understanding of the array of management approaches for persistent pain and an opportunity to focus her clinical skills led her to the Multi-disciplinary Pain Centre at Royal Brisbane Hospital where she served as a senior occupational therapist for over a decade. It was here that she worked closely with colleagues who have inspired and mentored her such as Professors Jenny Strong and Tess Cramond, both passionate advocates for the role of occupational therapy in pain management. She considers herself fortunate to have been introduced to the work of Lorimer Moseley during his time at RBWH. Similar to previous work experience, she valued the multidisciplinary environment and the opportunity to learn from both her patients and the multidisciplinary professional team. At the Professor Tess Cramond Multidisciplinary Pain Centre, Helen practiced in both inpatient and outpatient settings, running group and individual

treatment programs, especially focusing on mind-body techniques such as relaxation and mindfulness. During this time, Helen also took up private practice providing occupational therapy, rehabilitation and clinical counselling, and clinical hypnosis services specialising in pain management. She continues to operate her private practice in Brisbane.

Helen relishes the challenge and complexity of assisting people who experience persistent pain to identify and implement a broad range of strategies which will empower them to help themselves. Treatment may include psycho-education in the neurophysiology of chronic pain, practical strategies that assist people to perform roles and activities they value in life and mind-body approaches such as mindfulness based cognitive behavioural therapy, meditation practices and clinical hypnosis. Helen aims to provide a menu of interventions to ensure that clients' functional and emotional needs are discussed and addressed. She is renowned amongst her colleagues for the authenticity that she demonstrates in her clinical interactions and her clients are very aware that she truly cares about their wellbeing.

Her dedication to providing holistic, evidence based pain management is further apparent in her approach to professional development and lifelong learning. Helen is an avid participant in courses and conferences in her fields of expertise and devotes much energy to developing her knowledge and practice so that she can utilise

the most appropriate interventions to help her clients. In 2008, she was awarded a prestigious Churchill Fellowship to study the clinical practice of allied health team members within multi-disciplinary pain centres around the world. During her time overseas Helen observed models of care in Auckland, New Zealand, Calgary, Canada, Maastricht, The Netherlands and Bath, UK. Key learnings from these overseas services have made a significant contribution to the development of persistent pain management services across Queensland.

Helen has consistently supported the progress of multidisciplinary clinicians new to the area of persistent pain management and has nurtured and mentored occupational therapy students and new graduates. She has also championed research in the field, supporting undergraduate as well as Masters and PhD research students. Helen is a devoted and passionate clinician who has tirelessly enabled the development of clients and colleagues alike. We now welcome and honour her with a Distinguished Member Award of the Australian Pain Society, 2015.

