

Australian Pain Education Standards: What they are and why they matter

Living with pain is hard – physically, mentally and emotionally. Getting the correct care from your doctor, nurse or health worker is important.

That's why the Australian pain education standards have been developed with funding from the Australian Government. The standards will help health workers understand pain, and how to help people living with pain.

What are standards?

Standards are rules or guidelines for how things should be done. They keep things safe, consistent and reliable. Standards are all around you – when buildings are constructed to be reliable, when food is prepared to prevent illness or when driving on roads to keep people safe.

Why do pain education standards matter?

Chronic pain is complex, and not all health workers are trained to manage it well. This can lead to poor care or feeling like you're not being listened to or taken seriously.

The Australian Standards for Health Practitioner Pain Management Education aim to change this. They provide a clear plan on what health professionals should learn about pain and how they can best help people who live with pain.

The standards apply to all health workers, including:

Doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, psychologists, dentists, massage therapists and aged care workers.

The standards make sure pain education:

- Puts people at the centre of care.
- Is based on the best available evidence.
- Uses modern and effective ways of teaching and learning.
- Encourages self-awareness and respectful care.
- Builds strong communication skills.
- Promotes health workers to work better together.

What this means for you:

If you – or someone you care about – lives with pain, these standards will help provide more consistent and compassionate care across health care.