

**“Even with pain, I can still do many things I like to do.”
Examining body and illness mindsets in a pediatric pain sample**

Children's chronic pain mindsets are unique constructs that may represent opportunity for intervention.

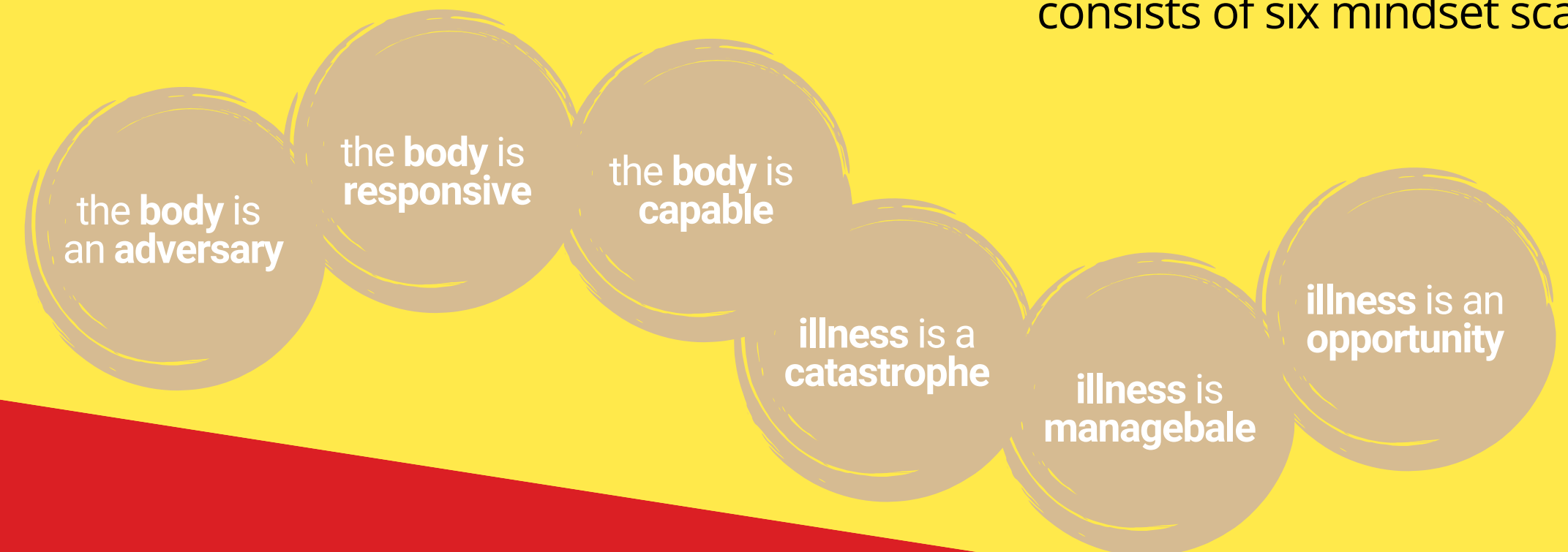
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Background:

Mindsets surrounding stress and chronic illness have increasingly been linked to health outcomes. The current study introduces the **newly developed Illness Mindset Inventory** adapted for chronic pain (IMI-CP). The IMI-CP consists of six mindset scales:



Methods:

1. During initial pain clinic evaluations at Stanford Children's Health, 73 **children with mixed etiology chronic pain** (65.8% female, *Age* 13.7 years) completed a battery of measures, including the Functional Disability Index (FDI), Fear of Pain Questionnaire Child Short Form (FOPQC-SF), Pain Catastrophizing Scale (PCS), and IMI-CP.

2. **Parents** (93.2% mothers) also completed the IMI-CP.

3. **Initial correlational analyses** were run in SPSS between child and parent scores, and between child scores and measures of their pain-related distress and functioning. Each scale was examined for its **distribution** of scores.

Example items Having pain means that my body is letting me down (adversary). My body can heal itself (responsive). My body can handle pain (capable). Having pain ruins everything (catastrophe). Even with pain, I can still do many things I like to do (manageable). Having pain helps me learn and grow (opportunity).



Results:

1. Scores on **all six scales** of both the child and parent IMI-CP were **normally distributed**.

2. Children's "illness is a **catastrophe**" scores were correlated with their **Fear of Pain** scores ($r = .468, p < .001$) as was the "body is an **adversary**" scale ($r = .387, p = .003$)

3. Interestingly, **child and parent** scores were **distinct**, with only "illness is an opportunity" modestly aligning ($r = .287, p = .016$).

Conclusions:

Illness and body mindsets appear to reflect **unique constructs tied to pain-related cognitions** and are not necessarily shared between parent and child. A larger sample is needed to better characterize these mindsets. "Catastrophe" and "adversary" mindsets may be linked to more fear and avoidance, indirectly hindering functioning. Future studies can investigate the effects of **fostering positive mindsets** in clinical or educational contexts.

