

The Recovery Quest

A First-of-its-Kind Therapeutic Space for Chronic Pain Recovery

MAY 2026



Chronic pain affects more than 30% of the global population and nearly 40% of Israelis, making it one of the most widespread and under-treated health challenges today. It is closely linked to depression, anxiety, substance dependence, and increased risk of suicide. Because many conditions are invisible, patients often face disbelief, stigma, and delayed care. Yet existing treatments - primarily medications, injections, and surgeries – frequently fail to provide lasting relief and can lead to cycles of escalating drug use. For many, the underlying issue is not ongoing physical damage, but a nervous system locked in a state of persistent alarm.

The aftermath of October 7 has intensified this crisis. Thousands of wounded soldiers and civilians now live with chronic pain and trauma that standard care cannot resolve. Sixty-three percent of combat-wounded soldiers are at risk of long-term pain, while civilians exposed to the attacks face significantly elevated risk.

The Integrative Pain Laboratory (iPainLab) at the University of Haifa is pioneering a new approach: Personalized Danger Signal Reprocessing (PDSR). It shifts the field from pain management toward recovery, restoring function and quality of life while reducing reliance on medication. By integrating neuroscience and advanced clinical practice, PDSR uses mindset and sensory reprocessing to help recalibrate the brain's overactive danger-signaling system, helping participants learn that the threat has passed and recovery is possible. Clinical trials show significant improvement, with over half of participants achieving complete recovery that continued over time.

The Recovery Quest is a first-of-its-kind therapeutic environment designed to deliver full PDSR immersion. It will serve as both a treatment space and a research engine, generating data, publications, and training for psychotherapists and physicians. In partnership with the IDF and the Ministry of Defense, it will launch with wounded soldiers and reservists and expand to civilian populations through referrals from health funds and public agencies.





Leadership

Dr. Pavel Goldstein, Associate Professor at the School of Public Health and the Founding Director of iPainLab, is a leading expert in pain neuroscience and data science. His multidisciplinary team has implemented PDSR with hundreds of patients, including Ukrainian war survivors, and is now advancing its application in Israel in four languages. He holds a BA in Psychology and Statistics, an MSc in Biostatistics, and a PhD in Pain Neuroscience, and completed his postdoc training at the University of Colorado (Boulder).

The Project

PDSR: A New Model for Chronic Pain Recovery

For many people living with chronic pain, there is no ongoing physical damage. The pain is real, but its source has shifted: the brain's danger-signaling system remains in a state of over-protection, generating pain long after the original threat has passed. Recovery requires helping the brain recognize that it is safe.

Validated in clinical trials, PDSR delivers measurable improvements across pain and trauma outcomes.

Clinical Impact of PDSR

Proven results from a 149-patient randomized clinical trial



43%
reduction in
pain intensity



57%
reduction in
PTSD symptoms



62%
reduction in
depression



47%
reduction in
anxiety



Over 50%
achieved full recovery



Validated in a
149-patient randomized
clinical trial

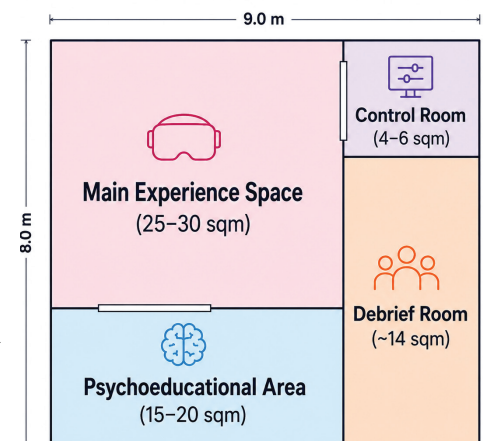
Designed for Immersive Recovery

The Recovery Quest is a purpose-built immersive therapeutic space that brings this science to life

Combining virtual reality, biofeedback, movement, and guided group experience, it is designed to translate PDSR principles into direct, embodied learning – shifting participants from resistance toward safety, and release.

At its center is the Dragon experience, a virtual reality-based intervention where participants encounter a representation of the brain's alarm system and learn, through shared experience, that the threat has passed. This integration of individual immersion and group process allows recovery to begin before formal therapy even starts.

Inside The Recovery Quest



For Your Consideration

The Recovery Quest model is designed for replication across hospitals and treatment centers, addressing the urgent needs of war-affected populations while expanding access to care for the broader chronic pain population.

By combining immersive treatment, research, and specialized training, it offers a scalable solution to transform chronic pain care in Israel and worldwide.



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