

CHRONIC PAIN IRELAND - PRE SCREENING REVIEW - September 12th 2025 - Emailed from Christina Donnelly Executive Director

Warrior is a moving and thought-provoking short film that beautifully captures the casual and persistent invalidation so often experienced by people living with chronic pain. The film skilfully communicates the sense of confusion and isolation that people feel when they experience invalidation from the very people from whom they hoped to receive understanding and support.

Themes of identity, masking, and internalised stigma are handled with great sensitivity as the lead character wrestles with the existential boundaries imposed on her by illness.

The turning point of the film comes when the lead at last receives validation, compassion, and hope at a medical appointment with a new doctor. The transformation that follows is deeply touching - we see her step into the identity of a warrior, recognising that the resilience forged through long years of suffering can lead to post-traumatic growth.

Chronic Pain Ireland hopes viewers don't interpret the film's conclusion as reinforcing a false dichotomy between emotional and physical pain, since all pain is both emotional and sensory. Newer understandings of pain emphasize the biopsychosocial model, which considers biological, psychological, and social factors together. This interconnected approach offers the most accurate understanding of chronic pain and the best framework for treatment. Acknowledging this complexity does not detract from the film's sensitive and accurate depiction of the experience of living with pain.

Overall, Warrior is a powerful and empathetic portrayal of the lived experience of chronic pain. It will resonate deeply with those who have walked this path and will help others glimpse the unseen struggles behind the masks many of us feel compelled to wear.