Standing Like Tree and Moving Like Water
- Applying Tai Chi Chuan, its ideas and methods to promote physical and mental fitness participation for individual living with SPMI

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Learning Objectives
Upon completion of this session, participants will

- Have an understanding of the scientific evidence to support the use of Tai Chi Chuan as an effective intervention for people with physical and mental limitations;
- Be able to have a basic understanding of the major characteristics of the 4-postures of Tai Chi exercise in relation to promote fitness participation and improve psychological wellbeing of people with mental illness;
- Be able to demonstrate the 4-postures of Tai Chi, and understand the general principles of teaching the 4-postures Tai Chi to individuals with physical and mental limitations.

Disclosures: the speaker has no conflict of interest to disclose

Healing through Harmonizing

- Similar to the natural world, human body is also a system
- A healthy state of the body is determined by the ability to follow the way of nature
- Promoting the total body function rather than the function of a specific part of body

Principle Characteristics

- Mind intention commands the body movements
- Movements are slow, gentle, circular, flowing and outwardly graceful
- The requirement of intensive synchronization between a calm mind and relaxed body
- The performing of each movement is synchronized with deep abdominal breathing
- The practice of Tai Chi requires no equipment
- Virtually has no any negative side effect

Tai Chi

- A symbolic and important concept in the…
  - Ancient philosophy
  - Foundation of Traditional healing culture
  - Development of TCM
  - Merging of internal martial arts
- One of the most widely practiced mind & body exercise models in the world

Tai Chi as an Evidenced Based Intervention

- The practice of Tai Chi has been recommended as an adjunct therapy to improve the symptoms of:
  - Stress & Depression
  - Hypertension
  - Fibromyalgia
  - Breast cancer
  - Cardiopulmonary difficulties
  - Low bone density
  - Multiple Sclerosis
  - Insomnia
  - Parkinson's disease
  - The practice of Tai Chi can also offer benefits for stroke recovery and fall prevention
  - Severe Rheumatoid Arthritis
The Applications of Tai Chi Chuan for Healthy Living

- Rehab and health care facilities
- Community based cultural and fitness facilities
- Assisted living facilities
- Senior Centers
- Universities and colleges
- Workplace Wellness Programs

Tai Chi for Rehabilitation

Dancing in the Chair

Photo credit: Zibin Guo

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Tai Chi For Use With The SPMI Population

- Assessment: poor physical conditioning; cognitive, social and emotional changes
- Modification required for the implementation with Severe and Persistently Mentally Ill population

Program Development

- The use of a Tai Chi program modified according to the characteristics and fitness needs of individuals living with SPMI
  - Four simple moves
  - The selected movements would maximize the range of up-body motions without underlining a participant's disability
  - Each move can be practiced in either sitting, standing and walking form

Methodology

- IRB approved, informed consent
- Settings
  - Two groups homes of female residents in the SE
- Intervention
  - From Spring 2012 to Spring 2013
  - Twice weekly
  - Averaging 40 minutes for each session
  - A total of more than 50 sessions were conducted at each of those two homes
- Participants
  - 15 female residents living with SPMI with functional scores below 30
  - Intervention sessions were provided by qualified Tai Chi practitioners who are experienced in working with individuals with disability

Ethnographic Data Collection

- 75 entries of field notes
- Anecdotal observations
- Informal interviews

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The ethnographic data reveal some very consistent observations suggesting that modified Tai Chi program can:

- Promoting fitness participation
- Fostering calm environment
- Facilitating positive association
- Encouraging friendly socialization

Conclusion

- Tai Chi may be one of the ideal form of fitness programs for individuals living with SPMI, participation.
- Low cost
- Accessible (at both physical and emotional levels)
- Low impact
- Safe
- Minimalize the affect of disability
- Address secondary conditions

A program should be developed and implemented according to the characteristics and health need of people living SPMI

Further studies are needed

References