

Abstract No. 2.6 Tuesday 5th September 2017 at 14:15-15:00

Title: Fun Chi: Adapting Tai Chi for Self-Regulation and Relaxation

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Main focus: Mainly practice, Both congenital and acquired deafblindness

Abstract: Tai Chi can be adapted effectively for individuals with deafblindness. As a Tai Chi practitioner for over 12 years, the benefits of Tai Chi for me personally have been enormous, including stress reduction, relaxation, increased energy and improved balance and posture. This overall sense of well-being encouraged me to train to become a Tai Chi Instructor about 9 years ago, which has enhanced my understanding of the benefits and possibilities of adapted Tai Chi.

One day while planning for my students with deafblindness, in my 'real' job as a Deafblind Educator, it suddenly hit me – there are so many aspects of Tai Chi that could be adapted to benefit the children I was working with! Since that revelation I have explored ways that Tai Chi can be adapted for children who are deafblind or have balance issues, eg. CHARGE Syndrome. Self-regulation can be an issue with many children with deafblindness; there are many aspects of Tai Chi that can relate to and assist with self-regulation. Although targeted at children with sensory issues, Fun Chi techniques can be adapted and enjoyed with any child, regardless of abilities or disabilities.

Part of Tai Chi's beauty is that it can be done just about anywhere, can be done alone or with the whole family and requires no special clothes, shoes or equipment. Fun Chi has incorporated elements to make it fun, e.g. Individualising names of moves to reflect personal likes and interests. Depending upon the individual, visualisation and imagination can also be enhanced. Some preliminary research has been done through Central Michigan University, with Tim Hartshorne's students.

More research is required; however, in the meantime, just have FUN with Fun Chi!