

Tai Chi adapted exercise using *VdTMoCA principles* in an Inpatient Mental Health Service

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Learning outcomes

- * Understand what Tai Chi is and how clinicians can use these principles
- * Discover how it has been used in an acute psychiatric hospital with an adult and older adult population, including a PICU environment
- * Explore how Tai Chi can be used across the levels of creative ability (Self-differentiation to Passive Participation)
- * Practice a simple Tai Chi routine

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- * What is tai chi?
 - ✓ Shibashi
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- * Precautions
- * Tai Chi based on VdTMoCA
- * Practice
- * Testimonials
- * Next steps...

Tai Chi at Berrywood Hospital

- * 4 years experience
- * Adults... older adults... PICU...
- * Ward... therapy department... outside spaces...
- * Standing... seated
- * Groups... individual treatments



Initial staff training in 2014

Our training in 2015, further training in 2016

2 department groups a week

Daily ward practice

What is Tai Chi?

- * Low to moderate physical exercise
- * 'Meditation with movement'



- * Slow, gentle, flowing movements
- * Deep, regular breathing
- * Calm, alert mind

Tai chi combines movement with meditation. It involves a series of slowly performed postures that flow into one another.

It supports a healthy mind and body.

Becoming a popular form of exercise in the UK

What is Tai Chi?

* Origins in 13th century China

* **Yin and Yang**



- Black – Yin (dark of the moon)
- White – Yang (light of the sun)
- Finding *balance and harmony* among differences
- Complementary – in the centre of each is a small circle of the opposite
- Expanding/shrinking, opening/closing movements aim to maintain balance

The essential principles of Tai Chi are based on the ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism, which talks of the natural balance in all things and the need for living in harmony with nature – the names of the exercises we use are based on natural imagery, e.g. separating the clouds / gazing at the moon.

The yin yang symbol is a circle divided into two parts; black represents yin (the dark of the moon), and white represents yang (the light of the sun).

The circle itself represents emptiness or stillness — the world before creation.

Together, yin and yang represent the movement and exchange of everything different in the world - male/female, high/low, left/right, hot/cold, night/day... It is about finding unity and harmony among the differences.

In the centre of each is a small circle of the opposite - at the core of yin is a small part of yang, and at the core of yang, a small part of yin. Both sides complement each other, they are equally good and required to maintain harmony.

One way of thinking about this is the idea of water being one of the softest things in the world, but it is also so powerful it can carve out the Grand Canyon.

The movements of tai chi are based on the concept of yin and yang, with gentle

rhythms of expanding and shrinking, opening and closing. They are a way of maintaining balance within our own physical and psychological wellbeing.

What is Tai Chi?

* 'Qi'

The life force (energy) that all living beings have.

Tai chi helps to balance any blockage.

氣

'Qi' is a term used to describe life force or the energy that all living beings have. Philosophy suggests that when an individual becomes unwell, there is a blockage in their qi. Practicing tai chi helps to rebalance this blockage.

Shibashi (adapted tai chi)

- * Modern
- * 18 exercises
- * Repetitions
- * Fluid movement
- * Good posture
- * Controlled breathing
- * Easy to learn and adapt

The training that we undertook is based on a modern style of Chi Kung/Qigong called Shibashi.

(Tai chi also derives from Chi Kung, similar principals but its roots lie more in martial arts)

Shibashi was developed in China in the 1980's by Dr Chan (Khor 1993)

It is a gentle method of simple exercises that is easy to learn. It consists of a sequence of 18 simple movements performed with several repetitions in a fluid, continuous way combined with good posture and controlled breathing. Basic elements include weight shifting and co-ordination of hand and leg movements.

Learning tai chi requires patience and can take several months or years to learn how to do correctly (Khor 2002)

But by using the principles of and adapting exercises the benefits of tai chi can be made accessible to those with moderate to severe mental health problems or disabilities.

Benefits

Physical

- * Gentle, suitable for all fitness levels
- * Based on normal efficient movement
- * Improvements noted in:
 - Proprioception
 - Coordination
 - Balance
 - Flexibility
 - Cardiovascular fitness
 - Energy levels
 - Quality of sleep

(Liu and Frank, 2010; Zheng *et al.*, 2015; Webster *et al.*, 2016; Chan *et al.*, 2016)

The practice of Tai Chi has been used to maintain health for hundreds of years in China.

Tai chi is a gentle, low-intensity exercise which allows participants to participate at their own leisurely pace. Movements are slow. You don't need to be agile or strong. People suffering from chronic mental illness (and at a lower general fitness level) and older adults who may be in poor physical condition can engage in this form of less strenuous (and tailored) exercise.

The evidence base for Tai Chi and Qigong is growing which indicates that it may be effective for a range of physical health conditions

Balance – falls prevention

Benefits (Cont.)

Psychosocial well-being

- * May be effective in:
 - Reducing depression and anxiety
 - Mood stability
 - Stress management
 - Increasing self-esteem
 - Increasing motivation
 - Improving cognitive functioning
 - Reducing the negative symptoms of schizophrenia
 - Re-establishing daily routines
- * Social activity
- * Enjoyment

(Wang 2010; Sprod *et al.*, 2011; Abbott and Lavretsky, 2013; Shah *et al.*, 2015; Zheng, 2015; Ho *et al.*, 2016)

There is a lot of evidence to support the benefits of general exercise with regard to mental health difficulties. However, tai chi exercises specifically include a mindfulness component which may explain why some people report even greater benefits with it.

As the evidence continues to develop, promising results from multiple RCTs suggest that it is potentially an effective treatment for reducing stress, anxiety, depression, and low mood, as well as for improving self-esteem and general psychosocial well-being.

Focusing on slow regular breathing promotes relaxation

Improving cognitive functioning – tai chi emphasises the learning and practicing of sequential movements, improving concentration and memory

We encourage our service users to practice tai chi in the morning, to help improve their motivation to engage in productive and leisure activities.

Benefits (Cont.)

Healthcare

- * Treats both the mind and body
- * Adaptable
 - All ages
 - Across a range of functional abilities (seated/lying exercises)
 - Can be done in a variety of settings
- * Cost effective
 - No specialist equipment required
 - Group or individual intervention
- * Minimal risk

(Wang, 2014)

Suitable for all levels of fitness, gender, age

hospital ward

outpatient department

gym

home

garden

Park

Minimal risk - non-pharmacologic and non-invasive

Precautions

- * Have an awareness of patients functional capacity.
- * **Cardiac or severe respiratory illness:** Do not hold arms above the head for prolonged periods.
- * **Total hip replacements:** Do not lift the hip beyond 90 degrees or do cross stepping.
- * Do not do any fast **neck exercises** (e.g. backward head rolls or circles of the head) Minimise risks by monitoring patients and adapting exercises
- * Staff must have appropriate tai chi qualifications

(National Osteoporosis Society, 2004, p.25)

At Berrywood our aim is for everyone to have a full physical health check on admission, completed by medical staff. In the meantime we are completing these checks as soon as people indicate they would like to take part in any form of exercise.

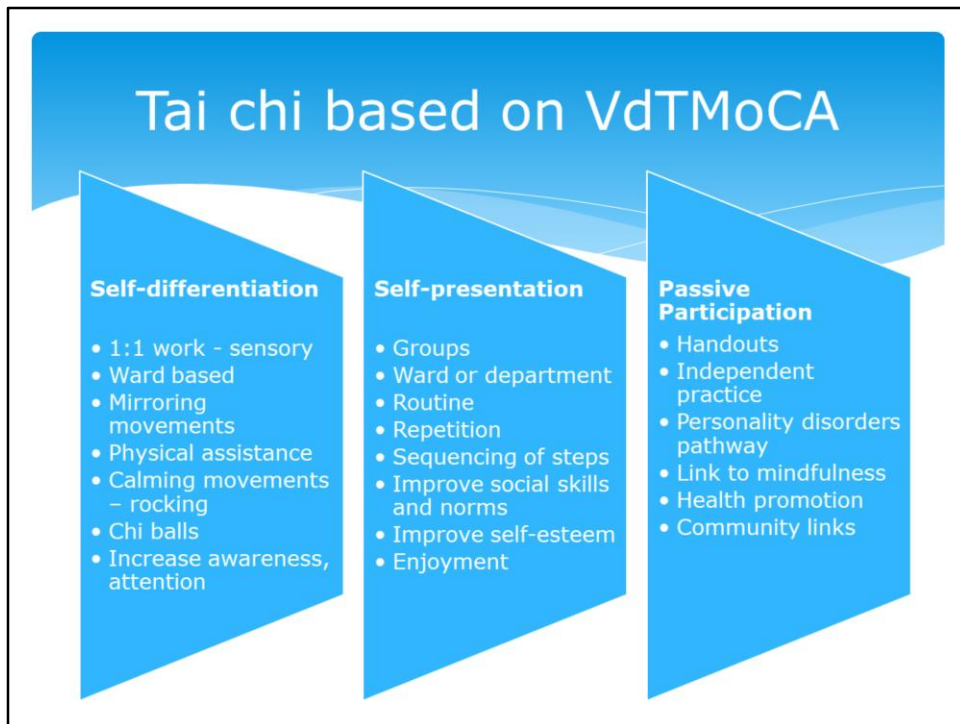
Emphasise at the beginning of class for individuals to work to their own capacity, take breaks when they need to and rehydrate if necessary (have water available)

Instructor to monitor and assess ability levels and guide people where necessary.

All our staff have been trained by Rosalind Smith an advanced tai chi instructor on a one day course.

No licencing body that regulates Tai chi teachers.

Practice style, frequency and duration variable



Discuss range of levels seen at Berrywood

Encourage MDT involvement on the ward – role modelling

Service User Testimonials

- * 'Helps me feel okay. Helps me relax and I enjoy meeting people at the group.'
- * 'The Tai Chi delivered by the OT's at the morning meeting is both refreshing and relaxing and leads one to feel more inclined to take part in the variety of activities offered.'
- * 'I like Tai Chi because it makes you feel relaxed and its peaceful. I like how they use it in other countries as a discipline. It brings communities together.'

Next steps...

Ros Smith offers adapted Tai Chi training for health professionals.

<https://www.taichiexercises.co.uk>

Email: taichiexercises@gmail.com

Or for further information of how it has been used at Berrywood:

Email: jennifer.jenkins@nhft.nhs.uk

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