Abstract #1220

Title: Community-based Alexander technique programming designed and delivered by Parkinson's patient

Category: Living With Parkinson's Disease
Topics: Living Well With Parkinson's
LW P1. Public education or awareness programs

WPC POSTER PRESENTATION INFO
Poster Session 1
Thursday, September 22 @ 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
Exhibit Hall B, Level 1 Poster Board #P38.11

WPC POSTER TOUR INFO
Poster Tour 25
Thursday, September 22 @ 5:15 PM - 6:45 PM

Presenting Author:
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Person with Parkinson's, Ellington CT
Team Member, The Poise Project: Alexander Technique for Parkinson's @ WPC

Objectives: As a person with Parkinson's disease (PD) and an Alexander technique (AT) teacher, to lead community-based workshops for others with PD in applying AT principles in their exercise classes and daily activities. To advise in the design of continuing education courses for medical professionals, such as physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers and neurologists, in how to use the AT principles in their interactions with their PD patients and clients.

Background: I was certified as an AT teacher in 2008, completing a 3-year training program at Alexander Technique School of New England. In 2013, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Living with PD, I had to make a choice about where to put my limited energy. I now raise awareness in my local health care community about the benefits of AT principles for people with PD to increase their ease, efficiency and confidence in exercise programs, rehab sessions and daily activities.

Methods: AT is a method to teach self-management skills and enhanced self-awareness with greater attention on internal organization and improved spatial awareness. People with PD can learn practical strategies to be more aware when they become anxious and tense, to pause long enough to release and return to balance, and to then keep attention on their coordination while they carry out their exercise program or other activity. I will teach AT to people with PD in existing exercise programs in my region, such as the Rock Steady Boxing affiliate program in East Hartford CT, and I will work with The Poise Project to design AT based courses for people with PD and their care partners, and continuing education courses for medical professionals who work with people with PD. The Poise Project is an initiative to increase the reach of the educational principles of AT to preserve natural poise in youth and restore natural poise in adults. As part of their mission, they create programs adapted for specific populations. They use a coordinated team approach uniting AT professionals, individuals who have benefited from AT, and industry experts.

Conclusion: As a person with Parkinson's and an AT teacher, I am in a unique position to advocate for the benefits of AT to my peers and to advise in the design and implementation of AT principle based programs for people with PD and the professionals who serve them. My presentation will show my current efforts in the field of public awareness of AT for PD within my regional community.