



WELLNESS AND AGING PROGRAM

Throughout their lives, people with severe physical disabilities must deal with the chronic pain and musculoskeletal stiffness that comes from overusing the functioning parts of their bodies to compensate for those that are impaired. Over time, their limitation of movement increases—and so does their discomfort.

The Cerebral Palsy Center's Wellness and Aging Program is the only program of its kind in the San Francisco Bay Area. It offers a comprehensive, integrative approach that has been highly successful in helping people with disabilities restore or increase mobility and relieve pain. The knowledge and skills acquired in this program empower participants to improve their lives by learning how to care for themselves and, when necessary, how to seek appropriate interventions from others. Equally important, this program provides them with tools they can use for the rest of their lives.

Educational Services

Interpersonal and Coping Skills Development Classes Participants in these classes develop mechanisms for managing everyday situations that are a direct result of having a disability, and explore ways to build a positive self-image. Participants also learn to raise expectations for their wellness and to locate and use wellness resources both at the CP Center and throughout their community. In addition, they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own wellness, to manage pain and increase functional movement by using exercise techniques learned in group sessions.

Healthy Lifestyle Classes A number of classes are offered at the CP Center that teach participants the effects and benefits of healthy life style choices. Topics covered include: nutrition and weight control, substance abuse and medication management, the importance of safe intimate personal relationships, ways to increase physical activity, and the symptoms, effects and ways to manage mental and emotional health.

Direct Services

Adaptive Yoga This technique takes traditional poses and modifies them for individual needs and conditions. Yoga increases flexibility, deepens breathing, relieves pain and tension, and improves balance. Participants typically experiencing frequent and unintentional spasms will see a decrease or cessation of their spasms as a result of practicing yoga at the CP Center. People learn to relax and strengthen muscles, joints, and balance and to expand self-confidence. Over time participants state they are able to incorporate yoga techniques and principles into their daily activities increasing their quality of life. Three sessions of Adaptive Yoga are offered at the CP Center each week.

The Feldenkrais Method® A hands-on, movement-based learning process consisting of individual or group instruction. The effectiveness of the Feldenkrais Method lies in its ability to access the nervous system's innate processes to change and refine functioning. It is of benefit to such diverse groups of people as those with restricted movement, chronic pain, neurological problems, performing artists and athletes. People with disabilities typically adopt postures and movements that create unusual physical stress often resulting in chronic pain. The Feldenkrais Method uses simple, unaccustomed movements to change these habitual patterns. It is recognized for its demonstrated ability to improve posture, flexibility, coordination, and self-image and to alleviate muscular tension and pain. The CP Center uses two versions: Awareness Through Movement (ATM), which consists of verbally directed exercises in a group setting, and Functional Integration (FI), which uses a one-to-one approach of specific skilled manipulation and passive movement. ATM classes are offered three times a week at the CP Center and FI sessions are offered throughout the week on an individual basis.

Massage A massage therapist offers individual massage sessions to participants at the CP Center on a weekly basis. Massage addresses disability symptoms created by interactions among muscular, skeletal, central nervous systems and internal organs. This therapy relaxes and stretches contracted muscles reducing rigidity and increasing range of motion and flexibility. Massage also frees joints, allowing people to move with greater ease, and alleviates the often painful consequences of stiffness and impaired movement.

Jin Shin Jyutsu® Acupressure This Japanese style of acupressure relieves pain by targeting specific areas of the body where tension collects, and uses touch to reduce muscle spasms and cramps. This practice also facilitates comfort, calm and balance. The Wellness Program offers individual acupressure sessions four days a week.

Brain Gym® The 26 targeted activities encompassing this program are enjoyable and develop the brain's neural pathways the way nature does—through physical movement. Each activity is designed to integrate body and mind to enhance learning and performance and bring about rapid and often dramatic improvements in: concentration, memory, reading, writing, organizing, listening, physical coordination, spatial awareness and balance. Brain Gym classes are offered weekly in the CP Center Wellness Program.

Cranio-Sacral Therapy This gentle, non-invasive technique is based on the principle that our bodies know how to heal themselves. The brain produces cerebrospinal fluid that circulates within the head and is pumped up and down the spine. Through palpitation the practitioner is trained to detect the rhythm or pulse of this fluid and detect the presence of any restriction in its flow. The practitioner can introduce movement, which will free up the flow and release these restrictions. This therapy helps to reduce headaches, neck, shoulder and jaw tension, as well as anxiety and physical discomfort and is offered on an individual basis in the CP Center Wellness Program twice a month.