



The Centering Song

By

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In our room for Autistic students, we had seven children: three were five years of age and new to the school, one boy was non-verbal, one was albino and required dim lighting and one was a female with repetitive scripting; two were seven years old, the boy was eager to please and compliant, the girl was new to the school and used hitting, kicking, scratching and other inappropriate physical actions to express her frustrations. She also required special dietary considerations, including offering water frequently, and protein every hour. Our classroom was rounded out by two nine year olds, one of whom was able to function independently in inclusion classes. The other boy persevered on space ships, planets and outer-worldly structures.

Much of the time was spent allowing the students calm in the Sensory area, which had one swing, a trampoline, and some bean bags. The students were brushed daily and pressure was applied to arms and legs, sometimes including applying pressure to the head. After being in the room for a few days, it became apparent that our students needed to engage their bodies in movements on a regular basis. Knowing that our brains have a mind and our bodies have a mind, it was imperative that we create a way for the two minds of each of our students begin to work together toward the goal of offering some semblance of calm to these precious little beings.

As you will recognize, cross-patterning, switching, and other Touch for Health correctional moves, influences from Three In One Concepts, advice from our Occupational Therapist, bits and pieces of Cook's position and suggestions from our Physical Education Teacher were joined together to create a fun, energizing, relaxing paradigm which resulted in more minutes of calm than we had experienced before introducing The Centering Song.

Since its creation many of the Special Needs teachers in our school system have incorporated it into their daily plans. I have also used it with athletic teams in preparation for big tournaments. As a presentation opener it sets the tone for receptivity and lightens the heavy mood which is sometimes pervasive in extended presentations. I am working to produce a CD and a flip chart demonstrating each of the positions – not done yet... Hope you enjoy the experience!!!