

# Ease of Movement: Dance for Pain Management

Dr. Meg Chang and Deborah Riley

Presented by Arts for the Aging, Inc. in collaboration with the Aging and Integrative Pain Assessment and Management Initiative (AI-PAMI) at the University of Florida College of Medicine - Jacksonville

# About the Aging and Integrative Pain Assessment and Management Initiative (AI-PAMI)



AI-PAMI is a comprehensive project addressing non-opioid pain management in adults ages 50 and older living in Northeast Florida. The overall goal of AI-PAMI is the advancement of innovative pain education and patient care through the development of provider and patient workshops focused on integrative pain management.

Funding provided by Florida Blue Foundation and the Florida Medical Malpractice Joint Underwriting Association.

Visit [pami.emergency.med.jax.ufl.edu](http://pami.emergency.med.jax.ufl.edu) to learn more.

Contact PAMI at [pami@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:pami@jax.ufl.edu) or 904-244-4986.

Arts for the Aging is a nationally-recognized social service organization that delivers innovative, multidisciplinary arts experiences in community and residential care settings, museums, and cultural institutions in Greater Washington D.C.

Our mission is to engage older adults and caregivers in health improvement and life enhancement through regular participation in the arts. We stimulate minds, bodies, spirits and imaginations.

We are leaders in creative aging and pioneers in arts programming for older adults.

Learn more at:

[www.artsfortheaging.org](http://www.artsfortheaging.org)

## Meg H. Chang, Ed.D. BC-DMT, LCAT, NCC



Meg Chang is a lifelong dancer and practitioner of creativity and bodymind wellness. She currently teaches dance/movement therapy at Lesley University's expressive therapies graduate program in both on-campus and distance learning programs. Her career as a dance/movement therapist and licensed creative arts therapist has encompassed years of private and group work with hospitalized psychiatric patients, housebound elderly, U.N. peacekeepers in Kosovo, and support groups for domestic violence survivors. She is a certified Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) teacher and offers classes remotely through the University of Massachusetts Memorial Health Care Center for Mindfulness.

Dr. Chang co-authored a training manual for improving non-verbal communication between clinical and family caregivers and their clients/loved ones living with dementia. She is currently developing the knowledge base and operational model for Creative Longevity LLC, an organization focused on establishing multigenerational living solutions that would integrate arts therapies, professional wellness programming, and shared community resources.

# Deborah Riley



Arts for the Aging teaching artist Deborah Riley is a life-long dance artist and practitioner of Laban Movement Analysis, the basis for teaching movement arts to people of all ages and abilities. In her capacity as artist-in-residence, faculty member, staff and co-director of Dance Place, she helped nurture the careers of thousands of dance artists, students and arts administrators. She retired as co-director of this legendary institution in 2017.

As a dancer, choreographer, and educator, her career highlights include international touring with Douglas Dunn & Dancers, collaborative choreography with Diane Frank and director of Deborah Riley Dance Projects. Deborah's Moving Affirmations workshops in partnership with community organizations in the Greater Washington D.C. region, helped to facilitate healing and recovery for women. Among many honors and funding awards over the years, she was especially privileged to receive the 2016 Pola Nirenska Award for Lifetime Achievement in Dance.

# Research

- Dancing is a form of creative movement that can be done by oneself or with others. It's a way to develop strength, flexibility, and spirit to face daily life.
- Recreational movement and dance may serve as ways to become more resilient and to have more positive coping strategies.
- In a recent University of California, Los Angeles study, recreational leisure movement was found to be more effective in treating lower back pain and the attendant depression and anxiety than the specific standard back exercises. (Hurwitz, Morgenstern, & Chaio, 2005)



# Research

- Breathing is an essential part of dance and breathing is essential to life. Mindful and intentional breathing can reset the fight or flight reaction in the body.
- Slow breaths can calm the parasympathetic nervous system so that we can rest and restore ourselves.
- Conscious breathing helps to slow the body down and counterbalance the tendency that we have to breathe shallowly and fast and hold the breath when we're in distress or in pain.





# Research

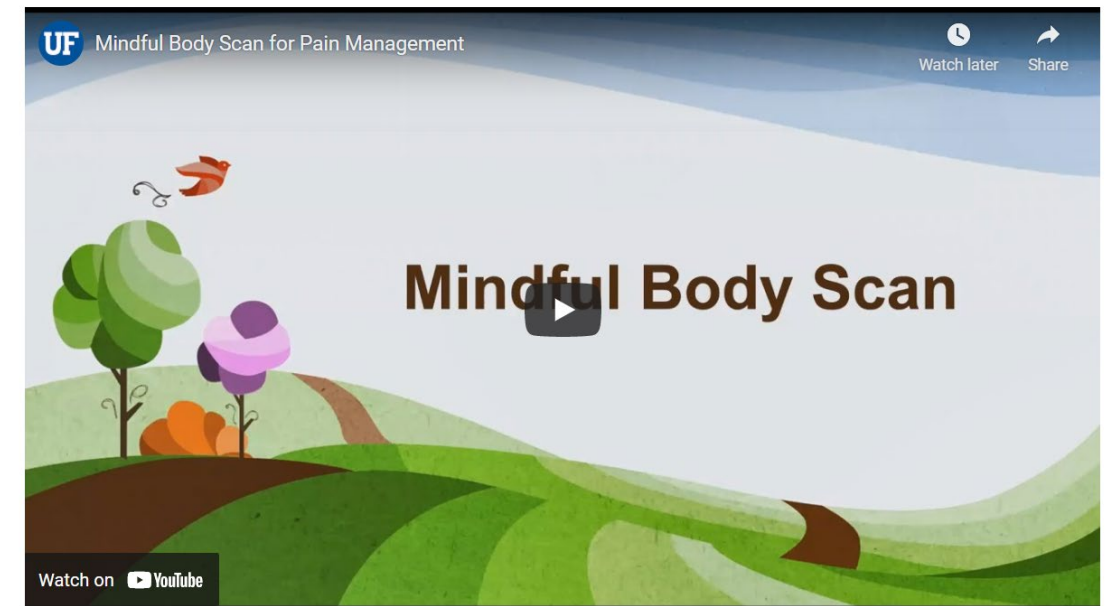
- Breathing practices are found in many traditional and current interventions.
- One of these is mindfulness-based stress reduction or MBSR where there are mindful movement forms such as hatha yoga that are incorporated into the stress reduction program.
- An example of MBSR is the Mindful Body Scan for Pain Management presented by Dr. Kim Holton for AI-PAMI

<https://pami.emergency.med.jax.ufl.edu/2021/07/14/mindful-body-scan-for-pain-management/>

## Mindful Body Scan for Pain Management

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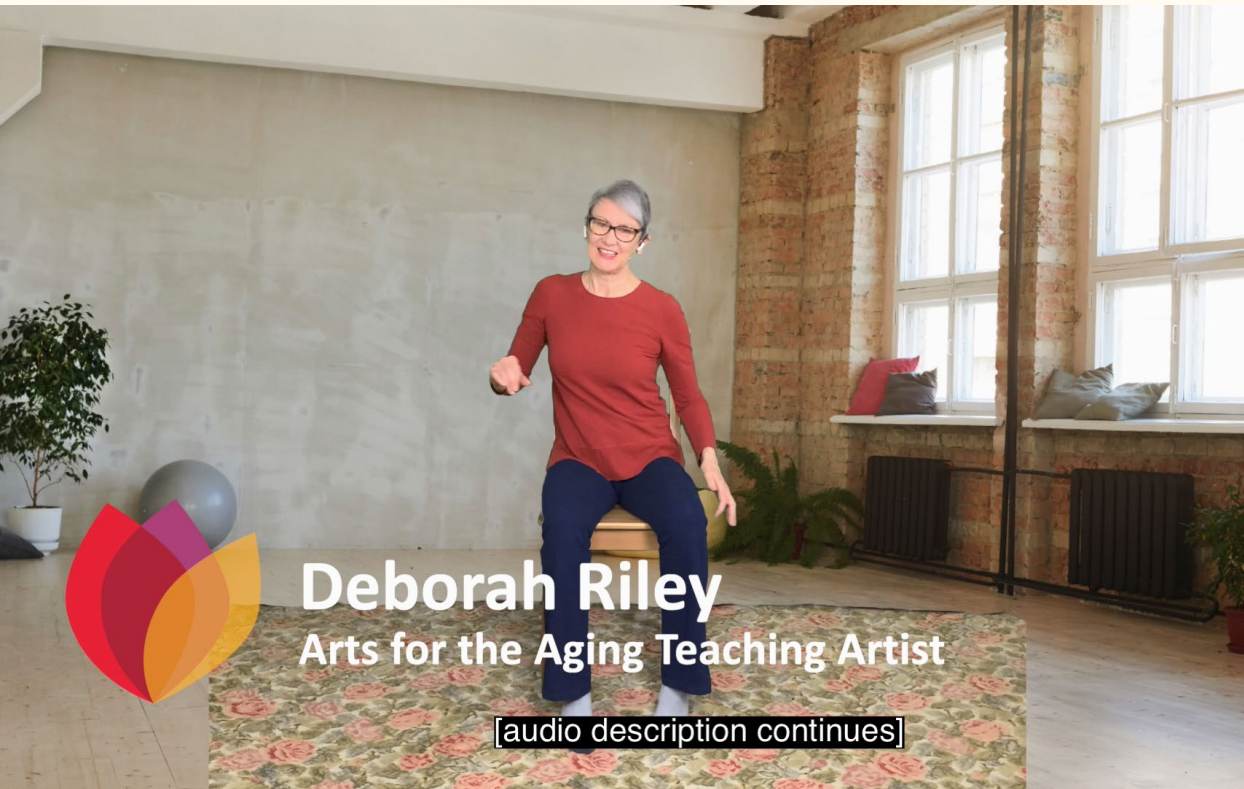
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This AI-PAMI Patient & Caregiver Presentation on “Mindful Body Scan for Pain Management” is presented by [Kim Holton](#).



# Movement led by Deborah Riley, *Arts for the Aging teaching artist*



# Research

- The arts have been part of healing throughout the ages and dance, like the other arts, is found in every race, every gender, and age group.
- There are few cultures or historical eras without the creative, joyous, and life enhancing aspects of dance.
- We find music and imagery intertwined with dramatic stories, poetic rhythms, and celebrations around the world.
- Even animals dance, such as stork birds at courtship and dancing parrots

# Research

- A study of participants in a six-week class in Argentine tango reported significant reductions in stress levels relative to meditation and waiting list control groups. (Pinnigera et al., 2012)
- This research further supports the additional positive outcomes of dance as a physical activity that counteracts the negative impacts of pain on emotions.
- Another benefit of tango is being able to dance with a partner, which reduces the isolation that so often comes with pain.



# Research



**Dance is a part  
of the social  
fabric that  
brings us  
together.**

*-Dr. Meg Chang*

- For centuries, Indigenous American cultures have had round dances that are done with the whole community in powwows. The circle of community is recreated in the dance with people moving together in synchrony to a common beat.
- Other historical and intercultural links to movement and dance for healing are found in cultures as diverse as in Haiti, Indonesia, the Philippines, Korea and many other cultures.
- Some examples of enlivening social dance forms around the world are salsa, samba, the waltz, jitterbug, and hip hop.



# Movement led by Deborah Riley, *Arts for the Aging teaching artist*



# Research

- Because dance is self-affirming and self-energizing, actions and movements that we use in dance can become tools for daily life.
- One way of experiencing this is through open improvisational movement, which is how kids dance, without a particular dance form.
- Just playing and dancing, we get in touch with creativity, body movement, breath, and social engagement - these are all components of dance.

# Research

- Another example of a recent study of the therapeutic effects of dance movement therapy and managing chronic pain found that taking part in a ten-week dance movement therapy group resulted in the participants feeling more hopeful and in control of their lives. (Shim, Goodill, & Bradt, 2019)
- Participants described feeling a release of tension in both their bodies and their emotions during and after the dance therapy group. Increased freedom of movement in their body also improved feelings of happiness and hopefulness.
- Participants felt more connected to each other and to themselves rather than isolated, and more able to manage their pain. Rather than being tied up and enmeshed with painful sensations, people created dances that allowed them to see the pain as separate and outside of who they were.



**We know that we are more than the pain.**

-Dr. Meg Chang





*"Is there one thing that you would like to take with you that you can practice on your own as you dance on your own? As we close, let's just make one movement. Whatever movement feels right to you. A way of closing, of breathing together. And I want to thank you for sharing this dance."*

- Dr. Meg Chang

*"I hope you found some of our music and movement enjoyable today and found some new ways to find ease in your movement. Remember, put on some music that you like, and move in any way that feels good to you. Let your body sing to the music and have fun. Thanks for joining us today."*

- Deborah Riley





## **Video and Audio Production**

Manny Arciniega, *Arts for the Aging Teaching Artist*

## **Original Music**

Chris Brown, *Arts for the Aging Teaching Artist*

Manny Arciniega, *Arts for the Aging Teaching Artist*

## **Research**

Dr. Meg Chang, *Dance/Movement Therapy Specialization, Expressive Arts Therapy, Lesley University*

## **Original Choreography and Dance Instruction**

Deborah Riley, *Arts for the Aging Teaching Artist*

## **Program and Communications Intern**

Lenique Huggins, *Duke University Biology*

## **Audio Descriptions**

Manny Arciniega, *Arts for the Aging Teaching Artist*

Presented by Arts for the Aging, Inc. in collaboration with the Aging and Integrative Pain Assessment and Management Initiative (AI-PAMI) at the University of Florida College of Medicine - Jacksonville

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