

# A Healing, Caring Circle for Seniors

by Bernardine A. Clarke "Bernie," MS, RN, HTCP/I, FAAN

It's Tuesday afternoon about three-fifteen and we begin to gather in a large room with chairs forming a circle. By three-thirty there are 10 to 20 seniors from our retirement community present plus some Healing Touch people from the wider community and we begin by sharing our current joys and concerns—a new grandchild, a 60th wedding anniversary, an aching knee or shoulder, or an upcoming surgery. As we settle I lower the lights, start meditative music and we begin by balancing the energy field and centers, then extending our hand toward the center of the circle to send healing energy to those named in word or in thought. By this time it is about three-forty-five and we focus on bringing healing energy to our concerns of the day.

Our group is fluid and often we have a new member who comes with a friend or on their own to see what we are about. Emphasis after meditation is focused on energy treatments related to what the individuals bring to the circle. Physical aches and pains usually respond to voice guided Basic Healing Touch Sequence using *Magnetic Clearing*, *Ultrasound*, and/or *Pain Drain*. *Mind Clearing* is often selected if the entire group seems upset by some recent happening such as 9/11 which occurred on a Tuesday morning in 2001. That day we all arrived in great stress, concerned about what was to those happening those involved.



One popular technique is a problem solving measure where the pendulum is used right after meditation to demonstrate the openness and balance of each participant. Then each individual thinks of a serious personal problem and a second pendulum assessment is taken to demonstrate how this affects the energy centers. The nature of the problems is not shared orally unless someone wants to share or the day is one of a broader community nature. As we are thinking of our individual problem a HT technique such as the *Self-Chakra Connection* is voice guided while thinking of the problem and at the end the assessment is repeated, usually demonstrating a return to openness and balance. We discuss the differences of how we felt before and after the intervention and thus begin to learn how to use self-care techniques when we feel out of balance. All are encouraged to try these techniques during the week when feeling overwhelmed.

This hour long weekly circle of caring began about twelve years ago when I moved to Panorama City in Lacey, WA, a not-for-profit retirement community of about 1200 seniors. I was already a certified practitioner and instructor and was trying to find ways to share Healing Touch with my fellow retirees. I first contacted the leader of our Convalescent and Rehab Center (nursing home), but those in charge had difficulties since I was a volunteer who wanted to do more than pour tea. I was allowed to visit friends for HT sessions but could not find a way to make it a part of the ongoing care. I saw individuals in my home and visited in theirs - but felt we could do more.

With the support of some interested friends we decided to hold a weekly clinic -- a healing circle -- and were able to use a room at no charge in the basement of one of our large apartment buildings. A second room, provided for individual sessions and table storage, houses our library. Healing Touch is now sponsored by the Health and Wellness Committee of Panorama's Resident Council of which I am a member and is listed in our community monthly calendar.

In addition to our one hour weekly group circle, we have a yearly *Introduction to Healing Touch* for our retirement community which has reached several hundred seniors over the past 12 years. With the help of Certified Practitioners and HT Apprentices from the broader community where I teach Levels 1 and 2, we offer individual sessions, support those facing surgery, and are often there at the end of life. A brochure states that the cost of individual sessions is by donation to the Healing Touch Worldwide Foundation or to the individual practitioner. Individuals are also referred to practitioners in the community. Several years ago I offered a Level 1 course to the interested seniors at the cost of a certificate and now many of the participants offer HT to family and friends

Over the past 10 years, I have developed a self-care booklet, [Energy Wellness](#), which has HT as the center piece. Janet Mentgen reviewed and approved the first editions, Mary Jo Bulbrook allowed me to use two of her meditations, and I have added other techniques such as Gary Craig's *Emotional Freedom Technique* to later editions. The third revision was approved by Healing Touch Program in 2006 and is available to group participants at the cost of copy, usually around \$5.00. A new edition will soon include Sharon Scandrett-Hibdon's *Energetic First Aid* with permission from Healing Touch Program's [Energy Magazine](#).

This describes our program but perhaps does not reflect what is happening within each of us as we participate. I have found that reflections, dreams, and quiet moments allow me to create Haiku expressing how I feel about our group.

## Reflections

**On Healing Touch/Energetic Healing Group Clinic**

**Held May 2, 2000**

**My Dream the morning of May 3, 2000 was of a yellow rose opening to the light leading me to reflect back to the clinic held the day before.**

Our group, like a rose,  
Opens to the light, sharing  
Stories for healing.

We come together  
And form a circle.  
Opening our hearts to spirit

As we heal ourselves  
Friends are placed in the center  
To receive healing.

After a Blessing  
We leave, knowing each received  
According to need.

- *Bernie Clarke*

## **Circle of Caring & Healing, April 1, 2003**

Our Caring Circle  
gathers each Tuesday to share  
for Healing and Peace.

The energy builds  
as we bring our joys and pain  
into the center.

A caring moment  
brings healing for self and then  
extends to others.

We leave refreshed  
ready to spiral outward  
to community.

- *Bernie Clarke*

My work with Healing, Caring Circles for Seniors has been fostered by my earlier professional life in child development and maternal-child health nursing based on the work of Erik Erickson (1982) and his wife Joan Erickson (1997); the presentation at conference by Jean Watson and her writings on caring (1985); and most recently Dorothea Hover-Kramer's new book related to aging, creativity, and health (2008). At age 80, I feel energized, creative, and full of joy to be able to participate weekly with a group of peers and continue to find new ways to share energy healing.

### About the author:

"Bernie" is a retired university professor, a Healing Touch Certified Practitioner and Instructor who lives and practices in a retirement community in Lacey, WA. For over 20 years she has been involved with the healing practices of acupressure, guided imagery, kinesiology, and touch therapies that complement her professional background. In addition to developing the Healing, Caring Circle for Seniors, described here, she has taught Healing Touch and Energetic Healing, a program developed by Dr. Mary Jo Bulbrook, throughout the United States and Canada. Currently she limits her teaching and community activities to the Pacific Northwest where she lives with her husband, John. You can reach Bernie at [bajrclarke@comcast.net](mailto:bajrclarke@comcast.net)

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