

David Benjamin, LMT, COTA

Letting Go Of Stored Pain

As a long-time practitioner of craniosacral therapy, I am often asked what this treatment is. Because of its name, one might assume that I work only with the head and spine, but in fact I work on every region of the body. To explain and describe this treatment modality, I will revisit the theory and practice to describe what I do, and why and how it works.

The craniosacral system consists of the skull and spinal column and the enclosed and surrounding tissues. The areas within the tissues surrounding these structures are filled with cerebrospinal fluid, or CSF. CSF is continuously extracted from the blood as it flows through the brain, and excess fluid is released back into the bloodstream. Because the rate at which these two processes occur is unequal, there is a start-stop quality to this process which creates the expansion and contraction felt as your cranial rhythm. It is somewhat like a vascular pulse that can be felt as blood pumps through arteries. Because all the fascia in the body are connected to all other fascia, the therapist can access this rhythm at many points of the body from head to feet. Your therapist works using your cranial rhythm to evaluate evenness, strength, and amplitude at various places in the body. An uneven rhythm from one side of the body to the other indicates a restriction. Your therapist then uses gentle pressure to encourage

your body to release this impediment, working with the fascia to restore normal movement.

Craniosacral therapy provides a framework within which to relieve physical impairments resulting from physical or emotional trauma. Such impairments often affect the ability to move freely. They cause one to hold a muscle or group of muscles tightly to protect the wounded area, often long after the initial injury.

Physical harm often leaves scarring, either internal, external, or both. This scarring limits the ability of the tissues to glide freely over surrounding tissues and sometimes results in one layer of tissue becoming stuck to the adjacent layer—an adhesion. Fibromyalgia causes areas within a muscle to stiffen.

Emotional harm can leave much the same damage as physical harm. When someone directs emotional intensity at us, it is necessary for us to process and release this new energy. If we are unable to do so, it can become “stuck” within the body. Symptoms similar to those from a physical injury can later appear as a result of this stuck energy, and we may hold certain muscles tight to keep from stirring up “the wound,” or we may avoid moving the area altogether. Again, movement is limited, unnatural postures become habitual, and pain sets in as a result of limited blood flow to tensed muscles.

Craniosacral therapists use gentle pressure, generally no more than five grams, coupled with an intuitive reading of the client’s body and energy field to dissipate and release dense areas within the energy field and to tease apart adhesions within the soft tissues, particularly in the meninges surrounding the brain and spinal cord, but including all of the connective tissues in the body. As you can imagine, it is much easier to perform than to describe. The results are often very surprising. I have seen some clients experience muscle twitching releases and others with unexplained tears rolling down their cheeks, all as a result of letting go of stored pain.

Each individual will have his/her own unique experience from craniosacral therapy. In general, what most of my clients have reported is a more relaxed way of being. Craniosacral therapy can provide many physical benefits as well, including relief from headaches, tension-related issues such as neck and back stiffness, TMJ, and fatigue. It can also provide relief from long-standing problems associated with fibromyalgia and post-traumatic stress syndrome.

About the author: David Benjamin lives in Upstate New York where he practices craniosacral therapy, therapeutic massage, and orthopedic massage.

© Copyright 2008, Sebastian Kaulitzki | Agency: Dreamstime.com

