



CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY AND HOW IT RELATES TO EMOTIONAL HEALTH

by Cheryl Lombardi

CranioSacral bodywork is a type of therapy which accesses the unconscious where memories (sometimes in body tissue) are stored. Practitioners take a specific 4-day course called Somato Emotional Therapy to acknowledge the presence of pain and body symptoms as an emotional response. We know that tension is often just trauma that is trapped in the body.

Dr. Upledger, who founded CST, feels that trauma, whether physical, emotional, spiritual, or mental, which cannot be processed at the time gets stored until a time it can properly be processed. Sometimes during a session, emotion may come bubbling up. The reason or story behind that emotion may not always be known or important, just the feeling it produces.

The nature of CST is very gentle touch. Unlike other bodywork, where the practitioner is actively making changes in muscles, ligaments, structure (bone alignment), CST is done with the intention of SUPPORTING the body in making any changes it desires. The defensive system is not being triggered, which allows gentle release of body discomfort. Because people usually fall asleep, it is relaxing as well as therapeutic.

During a session, a CS practitioner is aware of movement, usually very subtle changes that the body is making toward a more balanced way of being. If the movement suddenly stops (which we call a significance detector), we know that either unconsciously or through dialoguing with the client that a mind-body connection has been made. Having a conversation with the client, I can ask what a particular phrase or word that they might have said means to them. Thus a conscious connection to a FEELING can be made, which facilitates change.

Sometimes I use visualization or imagery to help discomfort have a way to be released. Healing emotional trauma can be gentle and move people to an easier, lighter way of being.

There are specific areas of the body we are taught to address and pay special attention to when someone is experiencing depression – it is called the triad. L-5 and the Sacrum, the Sphenoid-Occiput junction in the cranial base, and the Occiput-C-1 area can all be looked at as soft tissue areas that can be supported to release any tension that may be contributing to emotional imbalance.

In CST during the Somato Emotional Therapy course, we are directed in the facilitating of an emotional release. It is not something you or your client can set out to do. It is the “allowing” of someone’s experience to take place. Just being present and allowing the client a chance to process whatever release is appropriate for that time and space without judgment is our goal. We are taught to “listen” to our clients as well as their bodies.

In CST, there are times when work is done intra-orally to assist the working of the bones and tissues. Along with mechanical reasons for misalignment to be there, there are emotional reasons. For example, if as children, we were kept from expressing our thoughts and feelings, the physiological effect can be restraint on structures of the throat and mouth. Using gloves to gently touch the tiny bones of the upper and lower jaw, and relaxing the neck area, much more physical as well as emotional freedom can be achieved.

When some of the cranial bones are experiencing severe tension, whether through stress or something like orthodontics, the effect on the membranes inside the cranium and surrounding the brain can be traumatizing. Personality disorders can be the result of cranial bones not functioning well.