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Health in your hands

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

“We have our health in our hands, literally,” says Zia Nath, Craniosacral Therapist, BSCT, IABT, ICSB as she unveils the anatomy of a lesser-known, yet globally popular, alternative medical treatment – Craniosacral Therapy. Naressa Coutinho delves into the future of yet another alternative healing methodology and its career potential



What is Craniosacral Therapy (CST)?

Craniosacral Therapy originated in the early 1900s by American Osteopath Dr W G Sutherland DO. It is a modern branch of Cranial Osteopathy and is gaining popularity the world over as a preferred choice for non-invasive complimentary therapy. It is recognised as a paramedical support for a range of health issues and does not require the use of medication. It is a gentle hands-on bodywork support. The touch, unlike massage is a soft and passive contact and practitioners are able to palpate different rhythmic fluctuations as expressed by the body in slow wave like motions.

The premise of this work is the understanding that our body is 80 per cent fluid. The nature of fluids is to flow and circulate. When the body undergoes trauma, shock, illness, or injury, this is expressed in the fluid system as restriction patterns, lesions, compressions and imbalances. Practitioners are skilled at palpating subtle fluid rhythms and use it diagnostically and therapeutically. By supporting the body's fluid system back to its normal balanced circulation, the system is relieved from many deep-seated trauma states and illness patterns that even modern medicine sometimes may not find a cure.

Craniosacral system maintains the health of the central nervous system thereby benefiting all other systems of the body. The proper functioning of this system is vital to overall health. This form of therapy has proven to be effective in all sensory issues, migraines, nervous system disorders, respiratory illnesses, learning difficulties and more.

How did you pioneer the way for Craniosacral therapy in India?

I started my journey with Craniosacral Therapy about 15 years ago. I came across a book that introduced me to this work. In 2001, I opened my clinic Quanta Health Care Solutions in Mumbai. I was the only person in the professional practice at that time. In India, it is not a known practice amongst the medical community. Even though people didn't understand it then, people were happy with the results and I kept getting patients on referral.

Will Craniosacral Therapy take off in a country like India?

In recent years, many people are looking for alternative models for health, options that don't require continuous medication or surgeries or invasive methods, therapies that are safe and have no contraindications. Over the past 20 years, Craniosacral Therapy has evolved to Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy (BCST). Until a couple of years ago, there were only three or four certified practitioners in the country. By next year there will be many more practitioners in Mumbai, India, and Asia. The benefits of this work cannot be ignored, it catches people's attention as patients and families are wowed by its effect. Also it's a great model that co-operates with and complements all other medical and alternate therapies. I work effectively with homeopaths, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, child specialists and this opens a space for integrated system of health and healing.

How does one become a Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapist?

The Diploma training for BCST is a two-year model – part time. It is done in seven seminars with practice and feedback sessions, supervisions, projects and case histories. There is a lot of importance given to the preparation for clinical practice. After successful completion and examination, a Diploma Certificate of 'BCST Practitioner' is acquired, certified by International Institute of Craniosacral Balancing – Switzerland. (www.icsb.ch) and internationally recognized by IABT (International Affiliation of Biodynamic Practitioners – North America).

Students applying for this course need to be a minimum of 21 years of age and graduate in any field. It is not required to have a medical background.



What is the scope of growth of this career?

Many hospitals, clinics, wellness centers in Europe, England and North America offer Craniosacral Therapy amongst many other alternative therapies. Because Craniosacral Therapy originates from Osteopathy, its foundations are based in the study of the human body, an extensive understanding of anatomy and physiology and science of the human health system in response to its environment. This makes it a good choice for many medical practitioners and health centers to include it in their programmes.

Do practitioners of this therapy earn well?

Depending on the practitioner, if they work for an established wellness clinic or on their own, fees are normally obtained on per session basis. The practitioner fees are based on experience and expertise and can be anything from Rs 1,000 upwards. A practitioner can manage to give up to four to eight sessions a day. Thus, one may earn anywhere between Rs 45,000 and Rs 2 lakh a month depending on the number of clients they can handle and fees they charge.

On a parting note...

The most beneficial aspect of this work is that it is preventive health care, an approach even the health industry ought to adopt. There are no contra indications to this work. A lot of integrity, sincerity and honesty is required. One must respect their patients, listen to them; allow them to guide you, trust their instinct. Look for health, don't get lost with the illness!

Also, advance studies in this field is essential to maintain your international license – this entails attending a short seminar every two years in advanced BCST programmes.

Our hands are our best tools and we have them with us everywhere we go. I have worked in hospitals, clinics, homes, villages, trains, airplanes, buses, on the street, wherever it was required. I had everything I needed to give an effective session – with my hands. All we need is a willing patient and a skillful set of hands with a sensitive perception and we have health in our hands.

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Source: http://www.afternoondc.in/education-careers/health-in-your-hands/article_126420