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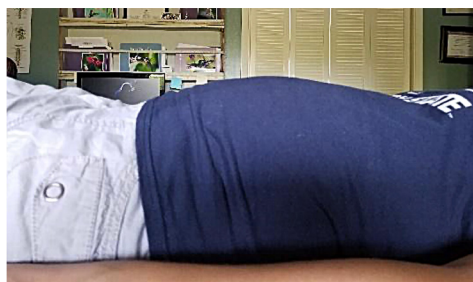
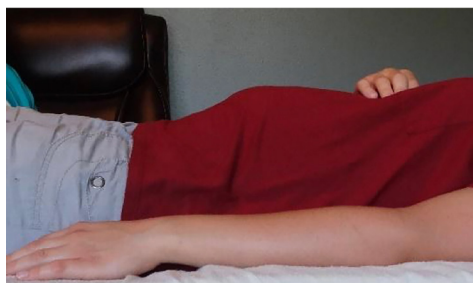
# Introduction of CranioSacral Therapy for Conception, Pregnancy and Birth

CranioSacral Therapy (CST) is a manual therapy that supports and enhances physiological and energetic movement in the human body. Two basic concepts that are foundational for the implementation of this modality are 1) there is an innate self-correcting intelligence in the human body that knows how to heal, and 2) movement is health. Within the Upledger paradigm of CranioSacral Therapy, we call that innate healing ability the Inner Wisdom or Inner Physician, and our goal is to intentionally connect with and follow its guidance as we work with a client. The idea that 'movement is health' includes the movement of tissues, fluids, and energy that may have been restricted through inflammation, injury, or emotional responses to only name a couple of examples.

When we use CranioSacral Therapy in the field of obstetrics, we recognize that as we are working with two individuals who are intimately connected and we still listen to both of their Inner Wisdoms. Mother and Baby are interacting at physiological, emotional, relational, and energetic levels—all of

which would benefit from support to allow conception, pregnancy, and birth to progress optimally. Let's look at each of those areas for a moment.

From a physiological perspective, there are strain patterns, restrictions, or other issues that can create dysfunction or discomfort in any part of the perinatal period. A displaced coccyx can lead to a pull or strain going up the dural membrane all the way to the pituitary gland impacting the hormonal function required for conception to occur. Tight connective or soft tissue around the uterus can limit space for the growing fetus.



The picture on the top shows the fascial and ligamentous restrictions that my client was experiencing in the pelvis at 17 weeks gestation. These pictures were taken one week apart after receiving her first CST session. It is visibly apparent how the picture on the right would allow for more space for the baby to grow. This is just one example of how using CST to enhance tissue mobility could make pregnancy more comfortable for mothers and Babies. After delivery, using CST is very effective for supporting the physical recovery of Mom and Baby from the intense experience of birth. Specifically, CST can mobilize musculoskeletal and fascial restrictions developed throughout pregnancy and birth.

There is no denying that the perinatal period is a time of heightened emotions arising from a multitude of experiences. SomatoEmotional Release (SER) is a modality that facilitates the release of restrictions caused by stuck emotions in our bodies. (*Picincu; 'SomatoEmotional Release*) From everything that both parents have gone through prior to the conception of a child, to the deeply felt reaction to finding out

that pregnancy has occurred to the complex experience of preparing for what is coming next, the gamut of emotional responses is vast. In Upledger CCPB classes, we say, "Baby is swimming in Mom's emotional soup" as a way of acknowledging that Baby is aware of all of the emotions the mother is experiencing. Baby's own stress management set points are established as Baby observes Mother. (Weinstein) We understandably put a lot of focus on the pregnant parent, but the other parent also goes through a huge range of emotional responses. (Landhuis) I worked with one father who came to me for support with every pregnancy to address his concerns/emotions about each child. (McCarty) CST and SER can support the whole family in processing their emotions.

Secure attachment is a topic that is very much in current focus in the mental health field. From the moment of conception, communication between Mother and Baby is happening at a neuro-hormonal level as the blastocyst implants into the uterine lining. From a relational perspective, intentional communication between Mother and Baby can be facilitated using CranioSacral Therapy and SomatoEmotional Release. This supports the beginning of secure attachment as these two beings become a team that is resilient and can work together to navigate whatever happens during pregnancy and birth. I've had multiple clients tell me that having received CST/SER during pregnancies with a younger child improved the way they could communicate with their babies after birth, compared to their experience with their older children. Current nurture science research tells us that the baby is very sentient and capable of communication in utero and that communication during pregnancy and the newborn period begins the process of establishing a healthy, secure attachment between Mother and Baby.

From an energetic perspective, all of us have beliefs or experiences that have taught us to respond in certain ways, whether they are the healthiest responses or not. Holding a belief



such as one gender being more desirable or enduring previous sexual trauma leading to protective guarding of the reproductive space can have a negative impact on parents for sure, but also can affect Baby's view of themselves or the world. Clearing the body and specifically the womb of any energetic residue related to previous occupants, trauma, or non-productive beliefs can support creating a healthier environment for the Baby's growth.

I have found that CranioSacral Therapy and SomatoEmotional Release are valuable tools for supporting the entire perinatal period for parents and Baby at physiological, emotional, relational, and energetic levels. They enhance the experience of this very intense time as well as help establish the foundation of family relationships moving forward. Learning CST and SER adds skills to a therapist's repertoire that can effectively facilitate healing, wellness, and ease for parents and babies at a truly pivotal time.

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