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What I Do: Physical and craniosacral therapist

AMANDA KRAMER

January 8, 2007

Name: Karen Jaeger

Age: 58

Occupation: physical and craniosacral therapist

I was a physical therapist for various schools in Wisconsin over the years. In the 1980s, after about 10 years as a pediatric physical therapist, I realized traditional physical therapy didn't address brain injuries as well as I had hoped. In an attempt to find other types of therapies that focused on the central nervous system, I became interested in craniosacral therapy - or CST - in the early 1990s. I took classes in the therapy. It was gentle and safe and I was seeing good results.

In many of the children, I saw more rapid attainment of physical therapy goals, but teachers also saw increased calm, improved attention and the ability for the kids to engage in school activities. Speech therapists were seeing improved speech articulation. At the same time this was happening, my private practice where I could more freely focus on CST was growing.

What I do now - and since 1994 - is work at Mendota Mental Health Institute two days a week, providing physical therapy. Three days a week, though, I work in my own office where I see patients for CST and physical therapy.

If someone has never had CST, I explain to them that I basically use my hands to help the body focus on its own self-correcting process. It is touch - usually very light touch - that helps find parts of the body that are trying to change, release tension or relax. Using my hands I focus on that change. While they lie on their backs on the treatment table and I sit beside them, I maintain contact with and support a limb, the neck or trunk, but most often the head. What I feel can sometimes be likened to an electrical current moving in, out or through the body. Each session is usually an hour long. People may experience a variety of feelings, but often feel more calm, a sense of well being or even better sleep.

This job is very rewarding because I see this kind of therapy as a missing link in our health-care system. It makes people trust their own

body's abilities to heal. Those abilities are there. Sometimes we just need a little help finding them.

What I Do lets people tell in their own words what they do to make a living. It runs every Tuesday. Contact Kramer.News@gmail.com to suggest someone to feature.

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