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CranioSacral Therapy: Gently allowing the body to heal itself

Oaklawn Hospital

Reader Submitted

Oaklawn Hospital Life Improvement massage therapist, Doreen Hart, has recently become certified as a CranioSacral Therapist through The Upledger Institute, following an extended series of workshops. CranioSacral Therapy (CST) is developing a growing fan base from those patients who cannot tolerate firm skin or muscle massages and prefer a less invasive form of therapy. Patients remain fully clothed and may lie down or sit-up while receiving it. CST can also be performed alone or integrated with other massage techniques.

The craniosacral system is comprised of the bones, nerves, fluids, and connective tissues that run from the skull (cranium) to the base of the spine (sacrum). Since the craniosacral system directly impacts the central nervous system, an imbalance there can cause any number of sensory, motor or neurological problems. These might include chronic pain, motor-coordination impairment, eye difficulties, learning disabilities, and other health challenges.

The pioneer of this therapy is Dr. John Upledger, an osteopathic physician who served as a clinical researcher and Professor of Biomechanics at Michigan State University from 1975-1983. During that time he supervised a team of physiologists and bioengineers who researched the flow of cerebrospinal fluid, which bathes and lubricates the membranes running from the brain to the base of the spine. Dr. Upledger came to believe that anything that blocked the flow of this fluid impeded the central nervous system's ability to self-heal, often causing physical or mental distress.

Through years of study and experimentation, Upledger developed a gentle touch form of therapy that enhances the flow of this cerebrospinal fluid, which has been effective in treating a variety of ailments, including severe headaches, stress, and chronic pain. In 1985, Dr. Upledger founded The Upledger Institute to teach and certify health care professionals worldwide about the value of this effective approach.

Ms. Hart worked for 17 years as a physical therapist assistant prior to coming to Oaklawn Life Improvement Center (OLIC), and has worked the last seven years as a massage therapist at OLIC, the hospital's full-service fitness center.

To learn more about OLIC's massage therapies, or to schedule an appointment with one of their therapists, call 269-781-7585.
