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Healing from your Center

Creating health through the subtle energy shifts in craniosacral work

by Tanya Triber

When we think of the natural rhythms of the human body, the heartbeat and the breath quickly come to mind. But these are not the only regular 'pulses' we share. There is a third and more subtle rhythm, that of the craniosacral system. It includes the bones of the cranium, the bones of the sacrum, the cerebrospinal fluid or CSF (which bathes the Central Nervous System) and the membranes that surround it. The gentle flow of CSF creates a regular pulse that can be felt along the sutures of the skull and, by certified practitioners, throughout the connective tissues of the body.

According to Dave Tomlinson, LMT, CST-D, an instructor for the Upledger Institute in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, the craniosacral system, "is the environment that your nervous system grows up in. Any tightness in it can cause compression in the spinal cord leading to pain in the limbs or even organ dysfunction." Melanie Diamond, CST, and founder of Hands on Heads, a non-profit serving children with autism and ADHD in Berkeley, California, says, "The craniosacral mechanism is the life pulse of the system. It keeps everything else functioning."

Though the craniosacral system has only been scientifically defined in the last four decades (thanks largely to the work of John Upledger, DO), its ancient roots trace

back to the Aesclepiion healers in Egypt, and similar work has also been performed in China for centuries. Its western origins derive from the early twentieth century work of an osteopath, William Sutherland, who began exploring the nature of the bones of the skull. Despite the prevailing wisdom that these bones fuse with age, Sutherland believed they were designed to allow small movements.

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