

Craniosacral Therapy For Non-Surgical Treatment Of The Cervical Herniated Disc

Craniosacral therapy is a type of physical therapy that can be used to treat cervical herniated discs. I spoke to Andrea Wolkenberg about exactly what this does in treating these patients.

Craniosacral therapy certainly can be used for any kind of cervical pathology. There are not that many people who do it and there are certainly not that many people who do it well and I would say, it is the purview of osteopathic physicians and some, you know, physical occupational therapists who had been highly trained.

Que 1: Is it a type of therapy as...?

Ans 1: It is a manual therapy in which in a very gentle way you are influencing the cerebrospinal fluid actually. There is a sort of closed system between, you know, the brain and the sacrum, you know, there is a sort of let us call it a tube, and your spine is sort of bathed in this fluid and by applying very gentle pressure to either the sacrum or the back of the head at the cranium, you can create a change in the flow of that fluid.

Que 2: But does that treat a cervical herniated disc or is that just going to make you feel great all over?

Ans 2: It is a little bit of both and, you know, myofascial release is a kind of an offshoot of craniosacral therapy and what that is, is very gentle, again very gentle, I do not want to really say manipulation, but mobilization of tissue to normalize tension, that is what we are really trying to do in the fascial tissue.

Que 3: Almost like a deep massage?

Ans 3: No, it is very hard to explain, but basically you are taking tissue and you are holding it, tissue should move, your skin and your fascia should move and freely and you may have, you can feel restriction and it could be directional. All of the tissue can be bound down and by holding the tissue into its barrier, a kind of forcing _____ just holding it there, you can overcome that barrier, the fascia actually reorganizes, completely reorganizes and you can get through that barrier and restore normal movement.

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Que 4: But if the problem is coming from a disc putting pressure on a nerve, it seems to me that these problems with balance and with fascia and the muscles are almost secondary to what because that nerve being pinched...?

Que 5: What was causing that nerve being pinched?

Ans 5: It is herniated disc.

Que 6: Where is that coming from?

Ans 6: Because the person was mean to the mother.

Okay. So, I would argue the opposite. I would argue that the herniated disc is a symptom of a dysfunctional tissue and that there is strain being put on your neck and you know, some people have said neck, some people have said back, some people say they just have problems, you know, whatever. But you have a strain pattern and that strain plays out in your neck in many people, particularly in New York and in this office. So, that creates constant tension, so if I can, yes, I will agree with you that there is a kind of a loop that once you have pain, then you create more spasm and then you create more pain and all of that, but what is causing that primary injury if it is not traumatic? It is muscle imbalance and tissue imbalance and if we restore the balance to the tissue, we can influence that disc and the fluid around it to change and to recede and to feel better.

Que 7: So, would you think craniosacral therapy, if they had a good craniosacral therapist or osteopath in their neighborhood, for a cervical herniated disc, would you recommend that as an effective treatment?

Ans 7: I would. I would give anything a shot, no offense, but anything before surgery.

I agree. I agree with that.

The bottom line on craniosacral therapy is I think it is good, I do not think it will hurt you. It is certainly worth a try, I would not put it at the top of your list for treatment and I do think it is more dependent on the practitioner. If you have someone who is really an expert at this and passionate about craniosacral therapy, I think there is no harm and it probably will help a bit, but I am not certain how this will help mechanically with a herniated disc that is putting pressure on a nerve. Probably no harm doing it, but probably not at the top of my list on therapies I would do first.

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