

Information about Craniosacral Therapy (CST) treatments with Andrew Cook

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Introduction

I see people who want help for a very wide range of conditions – some of which are difficult to define and do not have an adequate medical diagnosis, some of which are chronic physical problems, some are more psychological and “trauma”-related, and I also treat a substantial number of new babies and their mothers. Many people come for treatment with conditions that they have had for decades and have not responded to any of the more usual treatments. Others come for remedial work to supplement physiotherapy they are receiving for a recent injury. This information leaflet is meant for *everyone* (!), so is necessarily a very general set of guidelines. If you have any questions that relate to your specific case, please ask. I use the words “usually” and “generally” a lot, for very good reason!

I am happy to answer any questions about treatment directly. You can contact me by telephone 07 806-602-957 or by email through my website or at andrewcookcst@gmx.com

If you appreciate my work then sharing that with friends and/or linking to my website (e.g. on a social network) is always helpful.

A typical CST session & course of treatment

There is no typical course of treatment! Sometimes as little as one treatment is enough, but it takes *an average* of 4 to 6 sessions to achieve substantial effects in the vast range of different circumstances listed above.

CST usually results in a long-term improvement in comfort and health. Although I cannot guarantee

outcomes, well over 90% of patients receive substantial benefit from CST – often far more than they expected to be possible, and usually more quickly than they expect. This is a very high “success” rate for ANY form of medical intervention. Most people come with problems they have had for decades and despite this long history they still often see significant improvements.

Number of treatment sessions : Like all therapies, CST is not a “magic bullet”. It is best to just come initially for one session. This gives you an opportunity to get a feel for how I work, and whether that suits you. It also gives me an opportunity to observe how much effect the treatment has – which is useful for planning a treatment programme, and helps me to assess how many treatments might be necessary. I recommend that you plan to give CST at least 4 sessions to have an effect. It will usually begin to have a noticeable effect more quickly than this, and some people only need one or two sessions to achieve their primary health goal. **I can often give more guidance after the first treatment session**, since this gives me a chance to feel how easily your body responds to treatment. I will review the progress with you every 4-6 sessions so that we both have a clear view of where we are going.

Physical conditions : If the condition is acute (i.e. you are in a lot of pain and need to address it urgently), treatments are usually weekly, progressing to fortnightly or longer intervals as appropriate later in the treatment programme.

Psychological issues : CST is unusual in that it can also be used to work with (what are usually thought of as) psychological issues through the body. I also have a lot of experience helping with PTSD, other kinds of body trauma and “embodiment issues” (e.g. becoming more body-aware, working with embodied emotions or memories that have a strong physical and emotional effect but don't seem to have a memory or a story behind them.) These usually require more continuity between treatments, ideally no more than 1 or 2 weeks between each session. The ground rules for working with trauma are slightly different from that of bodywork. We would also spend a little time deciding on appropriate boundaries, defining your agenda and the basic areas that you want to explore, what kind of timescale you are considering, and deciding how the CST might best be integrated into any other treatment you are receiving.

Andrew Cook MSc RCST

Rowan House, Queens Road, Hethersett ::
Complementary Health Clinic, Exchange Street, Norwich ::
<http://www.hummingbird-one.co.uk/>

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01603 665173

New Client Notes

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So CST treatment programmes may sometimes be less structured than you might find for other kinds of treatment. If I feel there is need for more structure or continuity or more frequent sessions so that you can get the best from the treatment, I will let you know.

Long-term maintenance : In addition to its valuable use to relieve pain, CST can be effectively used as part of a long-term health programme. Preventative treatment sessions (i.e. when you feel healthy!) can improve your sense of wellbeing and directly contribute to your good health through into old age. Maintenance treatments would normally be at monthly to 3-monthly intervals. Please ask for details.

What to expect & other IMPORTANT information

If you read nothing else, please read this!

I treat you as I would wish to be treated myself, and that principle more or less defines all of the following details ...

Communication - CST is primarily a hands-on technique which depends on mutual trust and respect. It is most effective if you are comfortable with the contact being used. This is NOT a “no pain, no gain” approach. Treatment is gentle and there are no sudden movements, crunches or cracks. **If you feel that what I am doing is causing an increase in pain or distress, please tell me immediately rather than thinking this is beneficial.**

Confidentiality & Consent - All treatments are fully confidential (also see Data Protection statement on page 5). I will only communicate with your GP/ specialist/ other therapists with your specific consent.

Children under the age of 16 : a parent or guardian must also be in the room while I am working.

During treatment : Please DON'T meditate or deliberately use any habitual techniques to change how your body is feeling during the treatment session. “*If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got.*” Also, please **do not try to relax** – deliberately trying to suppress discomfort or

tension makes the treatment ineffective (and wastes your money and my time). If in doubt, please ask.

After treatment : It is best to sit on the edge of the couch before standing up, to make sure you are feeling fully awake and alert. Take a short walk and make sure that you are feeling coordinated again before driving a car. As a general rule, most types of movement are beneficial to help the effects of the treatment integrate into your whole body (but maybe not heavy weightlifting or aerobic activity or any other therapy for the next few hours, please!)

How long is a treatment session? : CST works by *helping the body to move itself*, how it wants to, at its own pace. This non-manipulative, non-invasive approach therefore needs longer treatment sessions (usually 40 - 50 minutes). For babies and children, I will book a full hour in the diary, and the treatment may last anywhere between 20 and 50 minutes, depending on how much treatment their system can take.

What should I wear?: is soft, loose-fitting and comfortable. Treatments are usually fully clothed, with shoes, belts, magnets, earrings and necklaces removed, and any tight clothing slightly loosened. It is helpful if you do not wear strong perfume/aftershave.

Skin contact : Most treatment is through clothing. Some work with scar tissue and adhesions, particularly the soft organs in the abdomen, require direct skin contact (e.g. on the soft belly) for best results. Also, some conditions involving the jaw joint and face require work from inside the mouth (for which I always wear medical gloves).

Insurance & Ethics: I am fully insured as a professional CST practitioner, and work according to the code of practice of the CSTA (Craniosacral Therapy Association, UK) <http://www.craniosacral.co.uk>

Appointments, cancellations, Fees: (*All these details correct at time of printing – please check with the clinic reception for any changes*): Appointments are available **9am-7pm : Mon, Tue & Wed in Norwich, and Thurs in Hethersett**. Fees: £50/hour or £30/half hour for adults. For babies & children 16 or younger I charge £45 first session and £35/hour thereafter. Concessions are available by negotiation for anyone on low income (but the first appointment is still charged at the standard rate). Payment can also be made through PayPal via the Contact page on my website.

Cancellations : If you wish to cancel an appointment, I require at least ONE working day (minimum 24 hours) notice, preferably by speaking directly to the receptionist or by email to the clinic or answerphone message. **Late cancellation charges** : I usually simply charge £10 to cover my room hire fees. Exceptions to this are events such as emergency hospital admission and family bereavements, when no cancellation fee is payable (but please phone us and let us know you are OK!) A late cancellation fee may also be waived if the appointment is rebooked for a time within the following 7 days. If repeated last minute cancellations are made, I will charge 100% of the standard appointment fee.

Techniques used : The hands-on treatments are mainly CST. I assume that you wish me to make the best use of all my skills and professional experience, and I generally will apply whatever technique look most likely to produce the fastest and most ecological results for you. Craniosacral Therapy (CST) is the core technique in my practice, and I have studied this under a variety of different CST schools since 1994. I also have over 25 years of experience in many types of complementary therapies, and bring these into the CST framework as needed.

I often also use dialoguing techniques. These are not counselling or psychotherapy, but are just different tools to help you to become more aware of your body in very specific ways. In particular (when they are appropriate to use) these dialoguing techniques also allow you to participate in the treatment (which I think is a good thing), and give you very useful self-help skills that can be applied at home.

Notes for people who don't usually use complementary therapies (CAM)

It is important to recognise that there are substantial differences between the NHS, and complementary medicine.

Is it free? Almost all complementary practitioners are private sector/self-employed. Health insurance may sometimes be reclaimed, at least in part (some insurers now recognise CST even though they do not include it on their schedule). Please let me know if you want a receipt.

What can be helped? For a list of typical problems treated by CST, see my leaflets, or visit <http://www.hummingbird-one.co.uk>. Typically you would say “yes” to at least one of the following :

- You would prefer to use more “natural” or non-invasive treatments wherever possible
- You have some condition which is not well catered for in the NHS system
- You have tried other treatments (including mainstream medicine) and found it has not worked for them
- You have been told that no further help is possible
- You wish to address “problems” before they become serious medical conditions

Complementary therapies work holistically – looking at your whole body rather than just the area that appears to have a “problem”. For example, 85% of all pain symptoms are caused by something happening in a part of the body that is not apparently in pain. I aim to find causes (and so have a long term positive effect) rather than just fireproof symptoms.

My responsibility and your GP... Although I have a duty of care, there are certain areas in which this overlaps your GP’s duty of care. I cannot over-rule your GP or consultant. What I can do (in addition to treatment) is offer you an alternative viewpoint, and help you to reach an informed decision about your health and how best to look after it.

Your responsibility : Unlike the model of “health care” which may have been taught to you through popular culture, the underlying principle in all complementary therapy is that that our health is our own responsibility. This is usually an unstated assumption by anyone using complementary therapies, simply because they have chosen to pay for a treatment of their choice. Whilst I and your GP do our very best to offer you good advice, it is your responsibility to decide what advice you are going to follow & how you are going to look after your body. You must also communicate adequately with your GP and /or Specialist and anyone else who you are receiving treatment from.

Side effects and reactions to treatment...

Occasionally (less than 1 in 20 treatments), CST can produce uncomfortable side effects. These “healing reactions” are a result of your body’s internal changes as it makes repairs. They can take many forms, but often

feel like a return of previous, familiar symptoms; or can include unfamiliar tingling or other sensations; and usually occur within 48 hours of treatment. If you experience these in a way which concerns you, or they last for more than 2 days, it is better to call me and discuss them rather than worry. If you consider the very small amount of physical force applied during a CST treatment it is just not possible to cause damage, so resultant pain must have some other cause. I have been concerned about a “healing reaction” less than five times during over twenty years of therapy practice. So the general rule is – a slight temporary increase in symptoms or return of old symptoms you have not experienced for several years, or a change in symptoms (e.g. moving around instead of static) – are all positive signposts on the road to health.

Working with Babies and Mothers

I can treat babies from 14 days after birth. Generally speaking (for obvious reasons), it is easiest treating babies before they start to crawl. Babies showing symptoms of colic, various other forms of distress, glue ear, restricted movement, mis-shapen skull (plagiocephaly), feeding difficulties or disturbed sleep patterns, etc often show substantial changes with just a small number of CST treatments.

Sore nipple (where the baby is chewing instead of suckling) and other latching or feeding problems can be due to an undetected tongue-tie (which is a job for the hospital) or can be caused by mild compression of the nerves supplying the tongue, which I can usually help relieve, often in a very small number of treatments.

Almost always mothers bring the baby because it is distressed rather than coming for treatment themselves. Giving birth is a huge physical event, and often just 20 minutes CST unwinding of abdominal tissues can have a huge impact on how well you feel. I find that about 1 in 3 baby distress cases are aggravated by the mother being in discomfort! If you are thriving, the baby will sense that and is also more likely to thrive and settle easily – so the first priority is your own wellbeing. Our dog is exactly the same - if my partner is unwell, the dog senses something is wrong, gets disturbed, and then needs a lot more attention. So in the case of distressed

babies, I often treat the mother first, and then the baby is usually a lot easier to help.

For the mother I prefer to work directly on abdominal skin (to help the digestive system move back to where it ought to be and to normalise any abdominal surgery scars). Discomfort due to symphysis pubis misalignment, coccyx fractures or dislocations and perineal tearing/episiotomy can often be helped quite easily, with absolutely no need for genital or internal contact. All of the above treatment is designed to be comfortable, non-invasive and reassuring.

Working with Scar Tissue

One of the treatment areas I have specialised in over the past 10 years is the release of scar tissue and internal adhesions. I worked on the “Big C” complementary health care project for cancer patients, and during that time adapted several CST techniques for working directly with chemotherapy pain (chording, numbness, frozen muscles, etc), and pain and immobility resulting from both radiotherapy and surgical scar tissue. I have expanded these over the past decade to suit scarring and muscle tearing from virtually any form of injury. Adhesions of the soft tissue organs of both the abdomen and chest (resulting from infections or other causes, including surgery) also respond very well to treatment. Pain associated with recent injury (within the past 18 months or so) can sometimes be resolved in just one treatment session. I have also assisted people who have had very extensive scarring for several decades – substantially increasing sensations of comfort, and decreasing discomfort – and this usually also only takes a relatively small number of treatment sessions.

My experience is that scar tissue or adhesions (which may have been present for anything from a few days up to several decades) often create adjacent areas of immobile tissue which can then cause anything from back pain to bladder problems to fibromyalgia to headaches and many other symptoms. If you have scar tissues from an operation or old injury and have developed ANY form of pain syndrome or illness after the incident (anywhere in the body, not just near the scar area), there is a strong possibility that

- a) the scar tissue may be a cause of this, and
- b) it might be very easily treatable using CST techniques

The best way to find out if CST can help is to book just one exploratory treatment – in about 50% of cases, simple scar tissue “problems” respond substantially in just one session, or I will be able to give a fairly good indication of what might be causing the particular issue.

What is Craniosacral Therapy?

Craniosacral Therapy (CST) originated in the USA during 1970's. Dr John Upledger was an Osteopathic Physician (i.e. a GP/surgeon majoring in Osteopathy – the medical system is somewhat different in the USA). He combined key elements from many complementary therapies particularly Cranial Osteopathy (see my website – History of CST). The package of skills allow a highly flexible approach to treatment which is both extremely effective and extremely safe.

The guiding philosophy behind all CST treatment sessions is that the body knows how to heal itself. A CST treatment encourages it and actively assists it to find its own way of doing this. Rather than being someone who “does things” to “cure” a problem, the CST “therapist” is a facilitator who respects this inner body wisdom and works in cooperation with it. All CST techniques are designed to work directly with self-healing systems of the body in a way which is respectful and non-invasive. CST is an approach which seeks to find health rather than dealing directly with illness.

There are self-organising forces in the body which express themselves in several ways – these are encouraged, assisted, strengthened, and “re-membered” – so that the body is operating as an efficient whole unit rather than separate islands of incoherent activity. “Biodynamic” CST schools have followed the path taken by Sutherland in his later life, seeking longer and longer organising rhythms and tides to access more fundamental (embryological) formative patterns of health – sometimes called the “Breath of Life”. I use both Upledger and Biodynamic approaches in my practice.

Not massage or manipulation, but “something else”...

In the practice of CST there is an ideal type of contact. Too much pressure, and the defence systems of the body treat the contact as an external force and resist it; too little contact and the techniques become less efficient in

many ways. There is an ideal balance point, and holding this exact point of pressure/tension allows the body to make its own adjustments – in exactly the order and manner which it “wants” to repair itself – the intelligence of nature is given a chance to express itself. This balance point includes the qualities of stillness and spaciousness.

Of the physiological systems being contacted during a CST treatment, one of the easiest to describe is the “tensegrity” structures of connective tissue

Tensegrity structures were devised by the sculptor Ken Snelson while he was apprenticed to the famous architect Buckminster Fuller. Snelson separated the usual components of compression and tension in engineering structures, and made free-standing dynamic sculptures which appear to hang in mid air with no apparent means of support. Subsequent research has shown that all living things - from a cellular level up to complex musculoskeletal systems act together as intelligent tensegrity structures. So the spine is not a stack of bricks, but rather a dynamic and mobile free-floating structure.

The practical implication of this is - if you have more tension in just one little toe, it can alter tension anywhere else in the body, all the way up to your scalp and ears. So this provides interesting and very useful possibilities for both diagnosis and treatment.

Evolution, Health and Rhythms : As we developed into human beings over millions of years, the pressures of evolution have endowed our bodies with a large spare range of adaptation. This **adaptive capacity** can be used for anything – surviving in extremes of temperature, fighting off illness, being pushed beyond the normal limits of endurance – and many other pressures which we rarely face in the modern world. The experience of CST practitioners is that the strength of this adaptive capacity is reflected in the presence of certain long rhythms in body tissues. All CST practitioners work to improve the strength, symmetry and coherence of these rhythmic tides, based on the experience that this has a huge beneficial effect on the self-regenerative capacity of the body.

Typical conditions treated

Conditions which may respond to CST treatment (and which I have helped in the past) include :

- Back pain, neck pain, Sciatica and Spinal curvatures (e.g. Kyphosis, Scoliosis), whiplash and other neck or spinal injuries
- Chronic fatigue, Exhaustion, Fibromyalgia and ME
- Breathing disorders such as Asthma
- Distressed babies (e.g. Colic)
- Digestive problems
- Drug withdrawal
- Epilepsy
- Insomnia
- Headaches and migraines
- Sinusitis, neuralgia and neuritis
- Post-meningeal syndrome
- Menstrual pain and Hormonal imbalances
- Learning difficulties, including Dyslexia
- Stress-related conditions
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), especially when this is complex and associated with physical injury
- Muscle and joint injuries – including injuries that are not responding well to normal physiotherapy, and frozen shoulder
- Surgical scar tissue problems, and soft tissue trauma on the face or other parts of the body (from car accidents, etc.)
- TMJ / jaw disorders (TMD), dental trauma (e.g. wisdom tooth extractions, facial injuries)
- Many kinds of neurological problems including neuralgias, neuritis and traumatic nerve damage
- PTSD-spectrum problems, hyperarousal, dissociation, Hyperactivity/ADHD

These would, of course, be complementary to (in addition to) mainstream medical interventions.

See my website for more information:

<http://www.hummingbird-one.co.uk/>

CLINIC DETAILS

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

The Complementary Health Care Clinic

34 Exchange Street, Norwich NR2 1AX

01 603 665 173

All appointments and cancellations are to be made through the reception desk (Mon-Sat) www.holistic-care.com

Finding the clinic : If you find the town hall/ market square, Jarrolds department store is on the bottom corner of this, near the Guildhall.

Exchange Street is the one-way street going downhill from Jarrolds towards a set of traffic lights. The clinic is the first building after the cherry trees on the left as you walk downhill. Parking : is available at St Andrews Car Park, Duke Street (1084 spaces); the Pottergate car park (27 spaces) and St Giles car park (330 spaces). All of these are less than 5 minutes walk from the clinic. Buses : There are regular services to Castle Meadow, which is only a short walk to the Market square. Trains : we are about 20 minutes walk from the railway station, or you could get a bus (see above) or taxi. Taxis are available from the Guildhall in the market square.

Thursday

Rowan House Centre, 28 Queens Road,

Hethersett, Norwich, Norfolk, NR9 3DB

01 603 813 982

All appointments and cancellations are to be made through the reception desk (Mon-Sat)

www.rowanhousecentre.co.uk

Finding the clinic : On the East (Norwich) side of Hethersett town. Parking : Lots of parking available off-road. See my website (contact page) for directions.

Data Protection/Usage Statement

All information from the treatment sessions is confidential, and will not be released to a third party without your consent. Information on health is stored on a single (paper) copy. If I do not see you for about 2 years this is archived. If I have not seen you for about 10 years, the file is shredded (I am required by law to keep your information for a minimum of 7 years. Just like any data personal to you kept by anyone - you have the right to ask for a copy of any records I have, and may require amendments to be made to any information if it is not factually correct.

As of June 2018 I am required to ask you to sign a data usage form. This is a simple permission to treat, plus permission to use contact information. Your postal address, telephone and/or email may be used during any course of treatment to contact you for the purposes of that series of treatments. I may also ask for a second usage permission - to receive occasional email circulars about workshops/clinic changes.

Any permissions you give may be withdrawn at any time by contacting me personally by any media (email, telephone, or by letter).

I hire office management services for my practice at the Complementary Health Care Clinic and Rowan House. They also take your contact information independently to operate their services, and have their own data protection policies.