

# Anthroposophic Craniosacral Therapy

**International Anthroposophic Network for CST**  
12 co-workers from Europe, UK, USA, Russia and Australia

*Craniosacral Therapy (CST) - cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)*

## **Introduction:**

The last 50 years has seen a growing appreciation of the therapeutic potential of both Cranial Osteopathy (as practiced by Osteopaths) and Craniosacral Therapy (as practiced by non - Osteopaths). There are now a number of branches and streams of this therapeutic bodywork in the world. A good number of anthroposophic physicians and therapists have been drawn to and trained in this work, which is deeply connected to rhythm and the etheric body. This article describes the connection between Anthroposophic Medicine and cranio-sacral theory and practice.

## **History**

The origin of cranio-sacral research can be traced as far back as 1744, to writings on occult physiology by Emmanuel Swedenborg. In his text "The Brain" Swedenborg describes a

*"...pulsating spirituous fluid animating the cerebrospinal fluid that in turn animates the entire body", 1744*

So one could say that Craniosacral Therapy (CST) has a root in the traditions of European Christian mysticism. In America the two grandfathers of Osteopathy Dr. Andrew Taylor Still (1828-1917) and William Garner Sutherland (1873-1954) developed the therapeutic forms from which this modern practice has evolved. They were both deeply spiritual men who often spoke of the divine realm in metaphors - 'the great architect' and 'the breath of life'.

The movement of the cranial bones was first studied by Sutherland. It is likely that he had read Swedenborg. The work was then developed and held in a small circle emerging out of a spiritual stream of the osteopathic profession around 1930-50. From the 1970s onward Dr John E Upledger started new research into cranial osteopathic techniques and opened up training in CST beyond the boundaries of the osteopathic profession in the USA. As a result of his research and creative approach he also extended the scope of the osteopathic foundations of CST.

CranioSacral Therapy is an open spiritual culture from its origin. Therapists working with this method come from a great variety of spiritual background and interests. It is as though CST finds itself in a neutral position, yet with the founders having a western Christian background. This makes CST well placed to find its extension in an anthroposophic framework, as it comes free from any other spiritual stream and yet open to soul-spiritual references.

## **Rudolf Steiner, the cerebro-spinal fluid and 'inner music'.**

Rudolf Steiner himself pointed many times to the relationship between life and rhythm. He also spoke on different occasions (e.g. Study of Man lecture 1, GA 293) of the relation between the breath and the fluid flow of the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). Steiner goes further and makes the connection to the other bodily sheaths and to human thinking. He gave us

a picture of the nervous system as the 'lyre of Apollo' - the inner musical instrument built out of the astral body, then describes the subtle process where the respiration 'enters' the cerebro-spinal canal and pulsates upward toward the brain in "the most beautiful representation of this inner music" (Anthroposophy, An Introduction, lect. 4, G.A 234).

## **Etheric Forces and Flow**

Like Swedenborg in 1744, and Steiner in 1919, modern authors in CST have described how the rhythmic fluid flow of CSF transmits life forces to the human being. They use Sutherland's words '*potency*', '*intelligence*' and '*breath of life*' in relation to the rhythmic nature of the CSF. From an anthroposophic perspective, these words are descriptions of the etheric forces. Similar to the repeated momentary still point of the blood circulation taking place in the heart chamber, CST recognises the special nature of the occasional 'stillpoint' in the CSF rhythm during therapy sessions. Here, the intuitive connection between the I-organisation of therapist and patient creates receptivity for the healing etheric forces. These are drawn in through the warmth-ether and allow the I-organisation of the patient to enter the etheric flow.

## **Therapeutic directions**

Rhythmic impulses as fluid-like fluctuations in the cranium, spine and fascia and body fluids can be palpated and therapeutically enhanced/balanced by practicing a range of "hands on" movements with very light force and a heightened sense of touch. All the fluids and soft tissues of the body (e.g. muscle/ ligament/ dura, CSF) have a subtle 'inner breathing' or 'inner rhythm' which can be palpated and measured at all points in the body. This palpation is both diagnostic and also the path to therapy.

A central aspect of CST is the balance between polarities:

*Upper man/nerve sense system (**Cranio** -),  
Lower man/ metabolic system (**Sacral**)*

Treatment utilises the mediating role of warmth and activates the rhythmic system. Sessions can focus on one or the other pole depending on the need of the client. The aim is always to support the dynamic/rhythmic balance of the etheric forces and somatic incarnation of the higher members. The session aims to invite the activity of the 'I' which can 'dive in' during moments of stillness. This is usually sensed by the therapist as 'grace' or 'presence' and by the patient as healing on the level at which they are conscious.

From another angle the aim is to support the rhythms and streams of the etheric body by mediating between the opposing natures of the etheric and the astral bodies in the bodily tissues. The client is encouraged to be awake-aware during treatment in a receptive state of heightened somatic perception. Clients usually report a deep relaxation, changes in spatial and proprioceptive body orientation, relief from bodily pain and changes in sleep depth and duration.

*So an anthroposophic perspective extends the understanding and practice of CST within the context of Anthroposophic Medicine including knowledge of the higher members and beings who are in relation to the individual human in body, soul and spirit.*

## Collaborative work of the **International Anthroposophic Network for CST**

### **Founding Group:**

Michael Kokinos - physiotherapist, CST, private practice, Katherine, NT Australia

Birgit Schopper - registered nurse, CST, einreibung teacher, private practice, Zürich, CH

Rozanne Hartmann - eurythmy therapist, registered nurse (anthroposophical), CST, einreibung, private practice, Arlesheim, CH

### **Consultant:**

Dr. Basil Williams – doctor, Anthroposophic Medicine, cranial osteopath, - private practice, Ghent, NY, USA

### **Signators:**

Anette Beisswenger – registered nurse, CST, einreibung teacher – Paracelsus Spital, Richterswil, CH

Daniel Furler - CST student, Berne, CH

Cornelia Massei – CST, einreibung, curative education, private practice, Zürich, CH

Michael Mehta – osteopath, eurythmy therapist – private practice, London, GB

Dr. Rudolf Merkel – cranial osteopath, paediatrician, principal of Cranioschule.ch, private practice, Obfelden; clinic, Brunnen, CH

Jörg Pflaumer – rhythmical masseur, CST, private practice, St Gallen; Stiftung Columban, Ürnäsch, CH

Dr. Marina Roschkova - neurologist, CST, rhythmical massage teacher, chirophoenetics, Rehab Centre, Anthroposophical physiotherapy school, Moscow, Russia

Nicoletta Segaar - osteopath, physiotherapist, CST, chirophoenetics, private practice, Lucerne, CH

Gabor Vajnai - rhythmical massage therapist, CST, nurse, Raphael Medical Centre, GB

Interested people are welcome to join the Network.

Enquiries and correspondence to - [rozanne.hartmann@gmail.com](mailto:rozanne.hartmann@gmail.com)