When stressors are too great, too patterned or ongoing, a person can end up severely depleted in body, mind and spirit.

Now, on a systemic level, practitioners have to learn new skill sets for working with chronic depletions. Cranial骶therapy, with its philosophy and core beliefs of a person having the inner resources, or inner wisdom, necessary for healing, as well as a chosen value of using the least amount of influence necessary to get the job done, is a perfect approach to both conceptualize and work with the problem of chronic depletions.

To begin with, depletions or resilience are understood at the gap between stressors and the capacity for compensation. Potty easy, really. If a person’s stressors are greater than her ability to compensate, she is in a depletion phase. If the opposite is true, then she would be gaining resilience.

It’s natural in the course of life for us to flow from resilience to depletion and back as we adjust accordingly. When stressors are too great, too patterned or ongoing, however, sometimes a person can end up severely depleted in body, mind and spirit. Eventually, a system becomes so severely depleted that any new stressor basically causes a new crash. The colloquial phrase, she’s about done, conveys that sentiment.

I’m reminded of a different client many years ago. Susan, who, when asked to describe her experience of what general adaptation syndrome, or severe adrenal burnout, was like, she described sitting on the couch and being unable to do anything, and then the phenomena of losing and the world just going by in her vision. Once a person’s system has achieved this level of chronicity, we would definitely call him chronically depleted.

It’s possible to assess and evaluate this condition with Cranial骶therapy. From a Cranial骶ural point of view, the vitality and quality of the system becomes almost nonexistent, and the resources for healing become so diminished that there is little available using the least amount of influence necessary to get the job done.

Most importantly, people help people.

Shape the future. When Jamie, the client mentioned at the start of this piece, came in for his first session, his system did show signs of being chronically depleted, both in whole body evaluations and in the story he told about his experiences. In the treatment process, we were able to find a way to work with his patterns of dysfunction rather than on the individual stressors. The result was a gentle but powerful session that did not throw his system into chaos, but instead helped his system resources reorganize more functionally.

Thus far, we have had eight sessions together over three months, and his sleep patterns and digestion have improved, his level of physical fatigue and eye sensitivity have diminished, and he has a deep sense of returning back to himself. Jamie is also tapering off his sessions and no longer sees the same need for sessions that he did at the beginning of the therapeutic relationship.

As we talked, it was clear that Jamie had many symptoms across multiple body systems, as well as many ongoing stressors in his life. Wonderfully, he was also fully committed to turning around his own health and maintaining a sense of resilience in his life. The way he was doing with his psychiatrist was helping tremendously. He was also engaging in progressive exercise and nutrition, and was truly open to anything that might help.

The change, I was able to describe a little bit of how a Cranial骶ural Therapist might view chronic depletion, and was able to give him a sense of how previous clients have progressed through treatments. I was also able to give him a good sense of how the first session might look.

My overall message was to convey that we would look for patterns that work to treat the various symptoms individually.

Additionally, clients like Jamie who have a large number of stressors often have adrenals that are overworked, and thus the body would normally be considered a therapeutic treatment might result in several days of discomfort. It is insufficient to work with rules of thumb about healing, but that explanation alone is rarely satisfactory for someone in distress—and it doesn’t really solve the problem.

In west case scenario, the healing crisis explanation really only functions about a well intentioned practitioners of responsibility for a treatment that actually pushed over sensitive systems a tick too far. Basically, it is time for manual therapists to rework our understanding of what is happening and adopt our skills to make sure there is no unnecessary crisis.

There may very likely be more work to be done, but recognizing that tapering of sessions is possible is a great sign of progress in the client’s health and well-being. Our world will likely not become less complex in the future. Massage and bodywork offer people a respite from the stresses and demands of the modern world, and could help shape a more peaceful and connected future.

*Client names have been changed.

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