

Upledger Institute Case Study

CranioSacral Therapy – A Traumatic Birth

By: Consuelo Tenerilli, LMT, CST-T

Background:

This client is now an 11 month old girl that is treated for health maintenance. A client of mine sent the mother and daughter to me because she felt they were really struggling. She was 6 weeks old at her first appointment. The birthing process had been traumatic for both of them. The mother was in labor for over 24 hours. She was so exhausted at the time that she was involuntarily falling asleep in-between contractions. The infant got stuck in the birth canal, with the spinal cord wrapped around her throat, and asphyxiated by inhaling fluids in the process. The appearance of the plagiocephaly was the most dramatic that I have seen in 23 years of practice. She only wanted to be bottled fed. Which was worrisome and emotional for the mother. Watching her nurse, I was able to observe a PTSD response. The infant would panic that she would not be able to breathe again and stopped nursing repeatedly. The mother would try to calm her down but was also battling her own recovery issues. She was depressed, frustrated, exhausted, and hadn't been sleeping because of anxiety. Watching the two of them together, I observed they both needed a reset for themselves and with each other.

Treatment:

The first session was for the daughter. The second session was for the mother. Most of the following sessions have been for the daughter.

The mother's treatment consisted of a general full body CST session. Holding space for her to let go, relax, and get centered. She was able to get into a deep meditative space to allow her body to make changes. After one session, she reported a significant difference in her overall mood and was sleeping. She also noted that she was in a better space and this was helping her newborn to be in a better space as well.

The daughter's first session showed the left arm and shoulder were compressed and twisted from the birthing process. Hypertonic tensions in the right leg and hip, lumbar, diaphragm, lungs, chest, hyoid, throat, cervicals, sub occipitals, dura mater primarily around the left side of the brain, and the left falx tentorium. The shape of her head was compressed medially. The left side ranging from the frontal, temporal, parietal, and occipital was compressed medially and slightly anteriorly. The right side was compressed more medially and superiorly.

The first half of the time was spent working on the limbs, fascial diaphragms, restrictions in the CranioSacral system, and her cranium. This included some mouth work. Her body was ready to make changes.

The second half of the time was spent helping her nurse without panic. Which had already shown improvement from the treatment. I explained the reticular alarm system to the mother and how to set the intention to calm it down.

One week later the mother sent me a picture of her baby. It appeared that the shape of her head had improved about 80-90% and she reported that she was feeding without panicking. Still only from a bottle. Which did continue to overwhelm and upset the mother. It made her feel inadequate that she wasn't breast feeding.

The second session was 10 days after the first. There was a significant difference in the both of them together. The plagiocephaly was almost unrecognizable. A compression to the left posterior temporal and lateral occiput remained. We have continued to work on this area. She was feeding without any panic. There was reduced but remaining tensions in the right leg, hip, left arm and shoulder, throat, sub occipitals, and the dura mater on the left side.

We have done a total of 10 sessions now. She comes in every 6-8 weeks for health maintenance.

Conclusion:

Over the course of this time there were a couple of times she would come in and the shape of her head were startling. The mother and I both observed this would occur with growth spurts. By the end of the session the appearance would be dramatically reduced. A week later I would always get a followup picture of the continued improvement. For the infant there remains a mild visual compression the left posterior temporal bone and lateral occipital bone. An underlying tension remains in the left mid falx tentorium.

This was a lovely opportunity to observe CranioSacral Therapy help 2 individuals at once. The anxiety and trauma leftover from the delivery was impacting both the mother and daughter. They were stuck on a cycle together. This work is beautiful in it's simplicity, gentle approach, and that it didn't take a ton of treatments to make progress.