

# **Craniosacral therapy relieves fibromyalgia pain**



**LIFE CHANGING THERAPY — Valerie Destito, right, was living with constant fibromyalgia pain. Since beginning craniosacral therapy with Trista Richardson, MS, OTR, L, (left) Destito says her chronic pain is in control.**

(PHOTO SUBMITTED)

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Pain was in charge. That's how Valerie Destito of Rome describes the 16 years of her life before she discovered craniosacral therapy at Chestnut Commons Physical and Occupational Therapy. The department of Rome Memorial Hospital is located at 107 E. Chestnut St.

Valerie began her journey in October, 2002 when she was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. Conventional medications were prescribed to treat her swollen and painful extremities, but one of her chief complaints, a burning pain across her back, arms, legs and face, went unresolved. She describes the extreme burning sensation to be worse than any sunburn she ever experienced, yet her skin was not burned. It wasn't until years later that these symptoms were identified as fibromyalgia.

"In 2002, fibromyalgia was relatively new and the symptoms of chronic pain similar to rheumatoid arthritis and other conditions made diagnosis difficult," Valerie explained.

Fibromyalgia symptoms include widespread body pain, fatigue, poor sleep and mood problems. According to the American College of Rheumatology, fibromyalgia cannot be diagnosed with x-rays or blood tests, but these tests may rule out other health problems that can be confused with fibromyalgia.

"The constant burning feeling was exhausting and wore me out," Valerie continued. "I had to adjust my work schedule because I just couldn't do it anymore."

"Stress made the pain worse, and the worse the pain was, the more stressed I became," she said. Then Valerie read about Trista Richardson, MS, OTR, L and craniosacral therapy on Facebook and immediately called her primary care physician for a referral.

"My life changed when I met Trista and began craniosacral therapy at Chestnut Commons," Valerie said.

"Prior to seeing me, Valerie suffered with fibromyalgia pain levels of seven to eight out of 10 and was attending a pain clinic to find relief," Richardson said. "Since receiving craniosacral therapy, she has been able to control her chronic pain.

Craniosacral therapy (CST) is a gentle, hands-on method of evaluating and enhancing the functioning of a physiological body system called the craniosacral system. This system is comprised of the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord. The therapy focuses on the role the musculoskeletal system plays in the functioning of the nervous system and compliments the natural healing processes of the body.

CST has proven effective for a wide range of medical problems related to pain and dysfunction including:

Migraine headaches

Sinus problems

TMJ (Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction)

Chronic neck and back pain

Chronic fatigue syndrome

Fibromyalgia

Post-traumatic stress disorder

Trauma of any kind

Post-surgical recovery

Chronic fatigue

Central nervous system disorders

“Before craniosacral therapy, I tried everything from homeopathic remedies, injections, infusions and a very long list of medications including anticonvulsants, antidepressants, narcotic pain medications and patches,” Valerie explained. “Some did nothing at all, some masked the pain so I could function. The medications were costly even with insurance, and that added to my stress.”

“Now, I have discontinued all medications associated with fibromyalgia. I no longer go to a pain management clinic or to the rheumatoid arthritis doctor,” Valerie added.

“The constant gloom I lived with for so many years is gone!”

Now, Valerie is reporting only a one or a two on the pain scale – and holding steady.

“Before therapy, pain was always in charge,” she continued. “Now it is never a factor in anything I want to do!”

“Trista is a Godsend to me! She is kind, knowledgeable and considerate. The therapy staff at Chestnut Commons was always accommodating and friendly. I would highly recommend them for anyone seeking any therapy.”

“When an individual is experiencing chronic pain, it can restrict their activities and impact quality of life,” Richardson said. “As an occupational therapist, I am passionate about assisting my patients to reduce the pain that is limiting their activity and helping them gain independence.” In a typical therapy session, the patient lies quietly, fully-clothed, while the practitioner uses a light touch to detect restrictions and blocks in the craniosacral system. Soft, subtle adjustments allow the circulatory and nervous systems to function smoothly and encourage natural healing.

Richardson became a member of Rome Memorial Hospital’s occupational therapy services team in 2012, after earning her master’s degree in occupational therapy from Utica College.

A physician’s prescription is required to make an appointment to see an occupational therapist for craniosacral therapy. The therapy is covered by most major medical insurance carriers, including Medicare and Medicaid.

For more information, contact Chestnut Commons Physical and Occupational Therapy at 315.337.7952. The office is open Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.