

# How Could Emotions Affect Tissues in the Body?

By: Vivien Henderson LMT, CST-D

When I think about the body and mind connection, SomatoEmotional Release (SER) immediately comes to mind. SER is an advanced therapeutic process that can sometimes happen in a CranioSacral Therapy (CST) session. It is best described as the expression of emotion that may have been retained, suppressed, and isolated in the tissues for some time. As an example, if you are involved in a fall or accident and suffer a physical injury, it may be accompanied with shock or emotional trauma that gets absorbed into the tissues of the body. For the physical injury and restrictions to fully heal, we often need to also address and resolve the emotional components.



In the late 1970's, Dr. John E. Upledger, a principal investigator from Michigan State University was in research at a county center for autism with Dr. Zvi Karni, a biophysicist and bioengineer. The research was to determine the effectiveness of CranioSacral Therapy in the treatment of Autism. The study measured the effects of Dr. Upledger's therapeutic touch on the baseline electrical potential of the human body. CST is a manual therapy that releases tension, relieves pain, and improves overall body function and health. Therapists use gentle palpation skills to release restrictions and tension in the fascia, muscles, bones, and organs. The focus is on deep tissue release for improved functions of the body as a whole. Releasing the restrictions can help the body to self correct, relax and let the central nervous system and all connections to it, heal, strengthen resistance to disease and eliminate pain. While working with the children after releasing emotional expression and tension in the body, the autistic children who often reacted violently by the touch of the therapists in the beginning, began to express affection towards other human beings. This introduction to SER work led to further study.

## **So How Could Effects from A Traumatic Event Possibly Penetrate Tissue?**

Traumatic Injury in physical terms is like an inserted force of energy into the victim's body. For example, at the end of a go-cart ride I stopped, and my cart got slammed from behind by a kid. The motion between the main structures is important, the force of impact from the kid's cart was interrupted by my cart and my back, spine, and surrounding tissues. The traumatic force is counterbalanced by the effect of the bodily tissues that the energy penetrates. This is because body tissues have density and if not, the energy of the injury would move all the way through the body. This abnormal input of excess/entropic energy, described by the research director Dr. Elmer Green as a "cyst of energy" can reside in the connective tissue, bone or joints and cause pain and dysfunction. CranioSacral therapists are trained to feel/locate the areas that can disrupt the function of the craniosacral system and refer to them as energy cysts. I had a colleague perform a CST session on me as I felt restrictions in my back and two weeks after the incident my frontal bone began to almost throb. The therapist confirmed that indeed there was an energy cyst at T11-12, Occipital Cranial Base and at the Frontal bone causing some discomfort and pain. At the time of impact, my upper body thrust forward and back with great force within a second and each movement created a force of energy into my body creating energy cysts in its trail.

## **Processing My Emotions**

Various CST techniques were used to release the energy cysts which then led to an SER experience. The emotional component of the injury was shock, anger, and fear. I shared with the therapist that I was in shock that someone had the audacity to drive into my cart while I had stopped. I was angry

for a moment, not at the little kid that was completely oblivious to his actions, guilty of only having fun while driving underage with no clue how to drive, but I was angry with the company because there were no helmets to protect the children. I never thought this injury could happen at a children's establishment, so then fear came in because I was driving with my daughter who was seven years old. If I felt the impact that deeply, then is my child okay? Multiple CST techniques contributed to processing my emotions, once they were shared in session, the biggest shifts in my body occurred and every complaint of pain and restriction I had was gone.

The reason I wrote this article is for you, the reader, to better understand how emotions could affect tissues in the body. They say words are powerful, well so are emotions.

#### **References:**

Upledger, John E., OMM (1990). *SomatoEmotional Release and Beyond*. Palm Beach Gardens, FL: UI Publishing, Inc.  
Upledger, John E., DO, OMM (1997). *Your Inner Physician and You*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.  
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### **Patient testimonials:**

*"I came to Vivien because I was in a car accident a few years ago. I knew from the first session she was going to do wonders for me. She has very skilled hands and such loving attention and intuition. I would recommend her to anyone. She will change your life and help your physical body become at ease. The more regularly you see her, the better it will be."*

–Ruth Kraft

*"I did not know what to expect when I stumbled upon the info for CranioSacral Therapy and decided to have my brother who was diagnosed with dementia try it, through the Upledger Institute International-Heal it Forward Program. Outside of the friendliness and total care shown by staff members, I was in total shock and disbelief, when my brother woke up the next morning after his session, came downstairs and said, "morning sis [this was normal, but then came] you know I dreamt last night, I haven't dreamt in years, I dreamt about my ex-wife" and burst out laughing. I could have cried."*

*I started to question him about the dream and wanted to push his mind more, I could hardly wait for his next session! I have also noticed since his sessions he clearly sleeps better throughout the night. A big Thank you to his therapist Vivien Henderson and the entire team at Upledger Institute International."*

–Carla Patterson

*"I approached Vivien Henderson because I had Sciatica, back pain and numbness in my right leg. CranioSacral Therapy helped me by reducing the pain and after a series of sessions her healing hands helped my body to dissolve the pain completely. It also helped me to feel good in mind, body, and spirit. The result was a much happier me with more flexibility and no pain. Plus, the extra bonus of feeling younger and more energized!"*

–Dede Lyons