

The Mind-Body Connection: Pain Relief and Emotional Release



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Most people think of Osteopathy for treating physical issues resulting from trauma or overuse. However, not all pain a patient feels is physical. Sometimes the pain comes from an emotional source, and we may greatly underestimate the role of emotion in all pain.

"At the moment of a physical trauma the person's emotional state at that moment becomes part of the whole package of 'pain' the person experiences. I have seen many instances whereby I was treating someone for a physical issue, and the patient began to cry. Sometimes they knew why, and sometimes they didn't. However, very often as treatment progresses the patient will be able to relate the emotion they felt to either a physical accident, or to an earlier time in their life, and to their presenting symptom."

For example, here are some interesting findings on pain and emotions:

- Dr. John Upledger, the developer of Craniosacral Therapy, found the body can retain imprints of physical trauma in the tissues. These imprints, which can also include intense feelings that occurred at the time of injury, actually leave a residue embedded in the body. He called these areas of restricted or disorganized energy "energy cysts." He devised a method of accessing and dissipating these via a process called SomatoEmotional Release.
- When many of us are injured, we go into a state of disassociation at the moment of trauma to survive. We experience an instinctive "freeze response" and this positional, physiological memory becomes indelibly imprinted into our mind/body awareness. This "freeze response", over time, creates holding or bracing patterns that even-

tually produce increased chronic muscular tone, spasm, and myofascial restrictions that eventually become symptoms.

- All types of emotional wounds can result in bodily pain, as expressed by John Barnes, one of the leading proponents of Myofascial Release in the U.S., "...the body remembers everything that has ever happened to it. Time does not heal emotional wounds; it simply covers them up with layer on adaptive fascial layer, tightening over time."

Because of the subconscious or instinctive nature of these types of mind-body interactions, osteopathic treatments may work to release patterns that are difficult to access via counseling or traditional therapeutic techniques. These methods, often combined with other modalities, can provide excellent results by working through the deeply intertwined connections between trauma, pain and emotions.



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