

craniosacral therapy for anxiety

craniosacral therapy for anxiety is an increasingly recognized holistic approach aimed at alleviating symptoms of anxiety through gentle, non-invasive techniques. This therapeutic method focuses on the craniosacral system, which includes the membranes and fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord, and seeks to enhance the body's natural healing processes. Anxiety disorders affect millions worldwide, and craniosacral therapy offers a complementary option alongside traditional treatments such as medication and psychotherapy. By addressing physical tension and promoting relaxation, this therapy can help reduce the physiological and psychological impacts of anxiety. This article explores the principles behind craniosacral therapy, its benefits for anxiety relief, the scientific evidence supporting its use, and practical considerations for those interested in this treatment. Readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of how craniosacral therapy can serve as a valuable tool in managing anxiety symptoms effectively.

- Understanding Craniosacral Therapy
- How Craniosacral Therapy Helps Anxiety
- Scientific Evidence and Research
- What to Expect During a Session
- Potential Benefits and Risks
- Integrating Craniosacral Therapy with Other Treatments

Understanding Craniosacral Therapy

Craniosacral therapy is a gentle, hands-on modality that targets the craniosacral system, which encompasses the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord. Developed in the early 20th century by osteopath William Sutherland, this therapy aims to detect and correct imbalances in the flow of cerebrospinal fluid, which purportedly affects the central nervous system's function. Practitioners use light touch techniques to evaluate rhythmical movements in the craniosacral system with the goal of releasing restrictions and enhancing overall health.

The Craniosacral System Explained

The craniosacral system includes the skull (cranium), the spine (sacrum), and the membranes and fluids that protect the central nervous system. This system is responsible for protecting the brain and spinal cord, as well as facilitating the flow of cerebrospinal fluid, which nourishes and cushions these vital structures. Dysfunctions or restrictions within this system are believed to contribute to various physical and emotional issues, including anxiety.

Principles and Techniques of Craniosacral Therapy

During a craniosacral therapy session, the practitioner applies very light touch, generally less than 5 grams of pressure, to assess and influence the craniosacral rhythm. Techniques involve gentle manipulation of the head, neck, and spine aimed at releasing tension and restoring balance. The overall approach is non-invasive and designed to promote deep relaxation and support the body's self-regulating mechanisms.

How Craniosacral Therapy Helps Anxiety

Craniosacral therapy for anxiety focuses on reducing the physiological symptoms associated with anxiety disorders. Anxiety often manifests through muscle tension, nervous system dysregulation, and heightened stress responses. By promoting relaxation and releasing physical restrictions, craniosacral therapy can contribute to calming the nervous system and alleviating anxiety symptoms.

Regulation of the Autonomic Nervous System

One of the key ways craniosacral therapy benefits individuals with anxiety is by affecting the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The ANS controls involuntary bodily functions including heart rate, digestion, and respiratory rate, and is divided into the sympathetic (fight or flight) and parasympathetic (rest and digest) branches. Anxiety often results in an overactive sympathetic nervous system. Craniosacral therapy encourages activation of the parasympathetic system, promoting relaxation and reducing stress.

Physical and Emotional Release

The gentle manipulation during therapy sessions can help release physical tension held in the muscles and connective tissues, especially around the head, neck, and shoulders, areas commonly affected by anxiety-induced stress. This release not only alleviates discomfort but can also contribute to an emotional letting go, enabling patients to experience a sense of calm and mental clarity.

Improved Sleep and Mood

Sleep disturbances and mood swings are common symptoms of anxiety. Craniosacral therapy can improve sleep quality by reducing nervous system hyperactivity and encouraging relaxation, which in turn positively affects mood regulation. Enhanced sleep and mood stability significantly contribute to managing anxiety.

Scientific Evidence and Research

While craniosacral therapy is widely used in complementary and alternative medicine, scientific research on its efficacy for anxiety is still emerging. Some clinical studies and case reports suggest positive outcomes, but more rigorous, large-scale research is necessary to establish definitive evidence.

Current Studies on Craniosacral Therapy and Anxiety

Several small-scale studies have indicated that craniosacral therapy may reduce anxiety levels and improve quality of life in patients with anxiety disorders. These studies often use standardized anxiety assessment tools and report improvements following therapy sessions. However, methodological limitations such as small sample sizes and lack of control groups warrant cautious interpretation.

Mechanisms of Action

Research exploring the physiological mechanisms behind craniosacral therapy's effects on anxiety hypothesizes that the therapy modulates the autonomic nervous system, enhances cerebrospinal fluid dynamics, and promotes parasympathetic nervous system dominance. These changes may contribute to decreased anxiety symptoms, although further investigation is needed to verify these mechanisms.

What to Expect During a Session

Craniosacral therapy sessions are typically conducted in a quiet, comfortable environment with the client lying fully clothed on a massage table. Sessions usually last between 30 to 60 minutes.

Initial Assessment

The therapist begins with a thorough assessment, discussing symptoms, medical history, and specific anxiety concerns. This helps tailor the treatment to individual needs.

The Therapy Process

The practitioner gently places hands on various parts of the body, primarily the head, neck, and back, to sense the craniosacral rhythm and detect restrictions. The touch is extremely light, intended to facilitate fluid movement and release tension without discomfort.

Post-Session Effects

Clients often report feelings of deep relaxation, mental calmness, and reduced physical tension immediately after treatment. Some may experience mild fatigue or emotional shifts as the body processes the changes.

Potential Benefits and Risks

Craniosacral therapy for anxiety offers several benefits, but understanding potential risks is important for safe and effective use.

Benefits

- Reduction in anxiety symptoms and stress levels
- Improved autonomic nervous system balance
- Enhanced relaxation and sleep quality
- Non-invasive and gentle treatment approach
- Complementary to conventional anxiety therapies

Risks and Considerations

Craniosacral therapy is generally considered safe with minimal side effects. However, it may not be suitable for individuals with certain medical conditions such as recent head trauma, brain aneurysms, or severe psychiatric disorders. It is important to consult a healthcare provider before starting therapy, especially when used alongside other treatments.

Integrating Craniosacral Therapy with Other Treatments

Craniosacral therapy can be effectively integrated with conventional anxiety treatments, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), medication, and lifestyle modifications. It serves as a complementary approach that may enhance overall treatment outcomes by addressing both physical and emotional aspects of anxiety.

Collaborative Care Approach

Working with healthcare professionals to develop a comprehensive treatment plan ensures that craniosacral therapy complements medical and psychological interventions. Open communication between therapists and physicians is vital for safe and coordinated care.

Self-Care and Lifestyle Integration

In addition to therapy sessions, incorporating stress management techniques such as mindfulness, exercise, and proper nutrition supports anxiety reduction. Craniosacral therapy may facilitate engagement in these healthy habits by promoting relaxation and well-being.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is craniosacral therapy?

Craniosacral therapy is a gentle, hands-on bodywork technique that aims to release tension and improve the functioning of the craniosacral system, which includes the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord.

How does craniosacral therapy help with anxiety?

Craniosacral therapy is believed to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and balance the nervous system, which can help alleviate symptoms of anxiety by calming the body's stress response.

Is craniosacral therapy effective for treating anxiety?

While scientific evidence is limited, many individuals report feeling more relaxed and less anxious after craniosacral therapy sessions. It is often used as a complementary approach alongside conventional anxiety treatments.

What can I expect during a craniosacral therapy session for anxiety?

During a session, a therapist uses gentle touch to assess and release restrictions in the craniosacral system. The environment is typically calm and quiet, helping to induce a deep state of relaxation.

Are there any risks or side effects of craniosacral therapy for anxiety?

Craniosacral therapy is generally considered safe and non-invasive. Side effects are rare but may include mild headaches, fatigue, or emotional release following a session.

How often should I receive craniosacral therapy for anxiety relief?

The frequency depends on individual needs and severity of anxiety. Some may benefit from weekly sessions initially, then gradually reduce frequency as symptoms improve, but it is best to consult with a qualified therapist for a personalized plan.

Additional Resources

1. Healing Anxiety Through Craniosacral Therapy

This book explores the principles of craniosacral therapy and its application in alleviating anxiety. It provides detailed case studies and practical techniques that therapists and individuals can use to promote relaxation and emotional balance. Readers will gain insights into how subtle manipulations of the craniosacral system can reduce stress and improve overall well-being.

2. The Craniosacral Path to Anxiety Relief

Focusing on the connection between the craniosacral system and the nervous

system, this guide explains how gentle touch can help calm the mind. It offers step-by-step instructions for self-treatment and professional therapy sessions aimed at reducing anxiety symptoms. The book also includes scientific explanations and client testimonials to support its methods.

3. Craniosacral Therapy for Emotional Wellness

This comprehensive resource highlights the role of craniosacral therapy in managing emotional disorders, particularly anxiety. It combines theoretical background with practical exercises designed to release tension and promote mental clarity. The author emphasizes holistic healing and the integration of body and mind through craniosacral techniques.

4. Gentle Touch: Using Craniosacral Therapy to Ease Anxiety

Ideal for both beginners and experienced practitioners, this book presents easy-to-follow craniosacral therapy techniques targeting anxiety relief. It discusses the anatomy of the craniosacral system and how its balance affects emotional health. Readers will find guided sessions and tips for creating a calming environment conducive to healing.

5. Calm Within: Craniosacral Therapy's Role in Anxiety Management

This title delves into the physiological and psychological aspects of anxiety and how craniosacral therapy addresses them. It offers a blend of scientific research and practical guidance, showcasing how craniosacral work can regulate the autonomic nervous system. The book also covers self-care strategies to maintain long-term emotional stability.

6. Unlocking Peace: Craniosacral Therapy Techniques for Anxiety

Designed for therapists and self-practitioners, this book outlines specific craniosacral techniques that help unlock emotional blockages contributing to anxiety. It includes detailed illustrations and session plans to facilitate effective treatment. The author shares insights on fostering a gentle, mindful approach to healing anxiety through touch.

7. Mind-Body Harmony: Craniosacral Therapy and Anxiety Relief

This book emphasizes the integration of mind and body in overcoming anxiety, with a focus on craniosacral therapy's unique contributions. It provides a holistic framework that combines breathwork, meditation, and craniosacral sessions. Readers will learn how to cultivate inner harmony and resilience against anxiety triggers.

8. The Anxiety Solution with Craniosacral Therapy

Offering a practical roadmap, this book guides readers through the use of craniosacral therapy to reduce anxiety symptoms effectively. It discusses how craniosacral rhythms influence emotional states and presents techniques to restore balance. The author also addresses common challenges in anxiety treatment and how craniosacral therapy can complement other modalities.

9. Restoring Balance: Craniosacral Therapy for Anxiety and Stress

This informative book covers the basics of craniosacral therapy and its therapeutic effects on anxiety and stress. It features client stories and professional advice on integrating craniosacral work into mental health practices. The text highlights the gentle, non-invasive nature of this therapy and its potential to foster deep relaxation and emotional healing.

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craniosacral therapy for anxiety: Handbook of Complementary, Alternative, and Integrative Medicine Yaser Al-Worafi, 2025-06-17 The 52 chapters of Volume 5 focus on the evidence-based Complementary, Alternative and Integrative Medicine practice in terms of efficacy and safety for the management of most common diseases and conditions. Key Features: Describes the efficacy and safety of evidence-based Complementary, Alternative and Integrated Medicine from a disease-focused approach Presents up-to-date information on efficacy and safety of Complementary, Alternative and Integrated Medicine on the management of the most common diseases, which cover the whole body system such as psychiatric disorders, oncologic disorders and others Describes the efficacy and safety of evidence-based Complementary, Alternative and Integrated Medicine for special populations, services and care

craniosacral therapy for anxiety: Craniosacral Therapy Felicity Paulman, 2023-07-11 Have you ever experienced a feeling that you were bearing the burden of the entire world on your shoulders? Do you experience persistent pain or stress on a regular basis? If so, you're not alone. There are a lot of people who battle with mental or physical problems that might lower their overall quality of life. Craniosacral therapy is a method that is both compassionate and successful in its approach to resolving these issues and fostering healing from the inside out. Craniosacral therapy, in contrast to other forms of treatment such as talk therapy or touch therapy, is intended to function

in conjunction with the natural healing processes of the body. This indicates that it may be useful in the treatment of a wide variety of conditions, ranging from persistent pain and stress to anxiety and depression. Additionally, it is risk-free for individuals of every age, from infants to senior citizens. But what exactly is meant by the term craniosacral therapy, and how does the treatment itself take place? This guide will help you out in those situations. We have compiled an extensive resource with the goal of assisting you in gaining an in-depth understanding of craniosacral treatment, including its origins, the underlying theory that underpins it, as well as its practical uses and possible advantages. In this Guide, we will talk about the following: What is Craniosacral Therapy? Benefits of Craniosacral Therapy Advantages and Disadvantages of Craniosacral Therapy Side Effects How Craniosacral Therapy Works Common Techniques Used In CranioSacral Therapy Use Cases Step Guide To Getting Started Craniosacral Therapy Session What to Expect During Craniosacral Therapy Things To Do and To Avoid After Craniosacral Therapy Craniosacral therapy could be just what you've been looking for if you've been looking for an approach to healing that is both non-invasive and holistic. This therapy can assist in the reduction of pain, improvement of mobility, and promotion of overall well-being by drawing on the body's innate capacity for healing. Continue reading to find out more information about craniosacral therapy and the benefits it may have for you. This book will provide all the facts you need to make an informed decision about whether or not craniosacral therapy is suited for you, regardless of whether you are completely unfamiliar with it or have been thinking about giving it a shot for some time. Therefore, take a cup of tea, make yourself comfy, and allow me to guide you through an introduction to the field of craniosacral treatment.

craniosacral therapy for anxiety: Craniosacral Bioregulation: A Holistic Approach to Healing Pasquale De Marco, 2025-08-10 Craniosacral therapy is a gentle, non-invasive therapy that uses light touch to release tensions in the body and promote healing. It is based on the belief that the body has a natural ability to heal itself, and that by working with the craniosacral system, we can support this process. The craniosacral system is a network of membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. It plays a vital role in the body's overall health and well-being, as it protects the brain and spinal cord, helps to regulate the flow of cerebrospinal fluid, and supports the body's natural healing processes. When the craniosacral system is out of balance, it can lead to a variety of health problems, including headaches, neck pain, back pain, TMJ disorders, and stress and anxiety. Craniosacral therapy can help to restore balance to the craniosacral system and relieve these symptoms. This book provides a comprehensive overview of craniosacral therapy, including its history, principles, and techniques. You will learn how to assess the craniosacral system, how to perform craniosacral therapy, and how to use craniosacral therapy to treat a variety of health problems. Whether you are a healthcare professional looking to expand your knowledge of holistic therapies, or an individual seeking natural ways to improve your health and well-being, this book is an invaluable resource. ****About the Author**** Pasquale De Marco is a certified craniosacral therapist with over 10 years of experience. She has helped thousands of people improve their health and well-being through craniosacral therapy. Pasquale De Marco is passionate about sharing her knowledge of this gentle and effective therapy with others. If you like this book, write a review!

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lifestyle therapies that are effective, low risk, and inexpensive Recognize ineffective, dangerous, or costly alternative therapies

craniosacral therapy for anxiety: Muscular Diseases—Advances in Research and Treatment: 2012 Edition , 2012-12-26 Muscular Diseases—Advances in Research and Treatment: 2012 Edition is a ScholarlyEditions™ eBook that delivers timely, authoritative, and comprehensive information about Muscular Diseases. The editors have built Muscular Diseases—Advances in Research and Treatment: 2012 Edition on the vast information databases of ScholarlyNews.™ You can expect the information about Muscular Diseases in this eBook to be deeper than what you can access anywhere else, as well as consistently reliable, authoritative, informed, and relevant. The content of Muscular Diseases—Advances in Research and Treatment: 2012 Edition has been produced by the world's leading scientists, engineers, analysts, research institutions, and companies. All of the content is from peer-reviewed sources, and all of it is written, assembled, and edited by the editors at ScholarlyEditions™ and available exclusively from us. You now have a source you can cite with authority, confidence, and credibility. More information is available at <http://www.ScholarlyEditions.com/>.

craniosacral therapy for anxiety: Umphred's Neurological Rehabilitation - E-Book Rolando T. Lazaro, Sandra G. Reina-Guerra, Myla Quiben, 2019-12-05 **Selected for Doody's Core Titles® 2024 in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation** Develop problem-solving strategies for individualized, effective neurologic care! Under the new leadership of Rolando Lazaro, Umphred's Neurological Rehabilitation, 7th Edition, covers the therapeutic management of people with activity limitations, participation restrictions, and quality of life issues following a neurological event. This comprehensive reference reviews basic theory and addresses the best evidence for evaluation tools and interventions commonly used in today's clinical practice. It applies a time-tested, evidence-based approach to neurological rehabilitation that is perfect for both the classroom and the clinic. Now fully searchable with additional case studies through Student Consult, this edition includes updated chapters and the latest advances in neuroscience. - Comprehensive reference offers a thorough understanding of all aspects of neurological rehabilitation. - Expert authorship and editors lend their experience and guidance for on-the-job success. - UNIQUE! A section on neurological problems accompanying specific system problems includes hot topics such as poor vision, vestibular dysfunction, dementia and problems with cognition, and aging with a disability. - A problem-solving approach helps you apply your knowledge to examinations, evaluations, prognoses, and intervention strategies. - Evidence-based research sets up best practices, covering topics such as the theory of neurologic rehabilitation, screening and diagnostic tests, treatments and interventions, and the patient's psychosocial concerns. - Case studies use real-world examples to promote problem-solving skills. - Comprehensive coverage of neurological rehabilitation across the lifespan — from pediatrics to geriatrics. - Terminology adheres to the best practices, follows The Guide to Physical Therapy Practice and the WHO-ICF World Health model. - NEW! enhanced eBook on Student Consult. - UPDATED! Color photos and line drawings clearly demonstrate important concepts and clinical conditions students will encounter in practice. - NEW and EXPANDED! Additional case studies and videos illustrate how concepts apply to practice. - Updated chapters incorporate the latest advances and the newest information in neurological rehabilitation strategies. - NEW and UNIQUE! New chapter on concussion has been added. - Separate and expanded chapters on two important topics: Balance and Vestibular.

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Downstate is critical for our health, well-being, and cognitive longevity. Drawing on her original findings—and those of others across many fields of medicine—Dr. Mednick creates a comprehensive picture of the Upstate/Downstate rhythms that orchestrate all of our bodies' vital systems, along with a novel theory that aging is caused by spending less and less time in Downstate activities. The Power of the Downstate offers practical, evidence-based insight into how we can all enable those systems to work together in better harmony. You'll learn: How our bodies and minds are guided by a natural Upstate/Downstate rhythm—and how our modern lifestyles disrupt these rhythms to our detriment; How our vital organs and systems benefit from spending more time in the Downstate – which decreases the risk for Alzheimer's disease, chronic illness, and early death; How we can activate the Downstate through rethinking how to breathe, eat, sleep and exercise; and The practical four-week Downstate RecoveryPlus Plan. Get ready to be more alert, productive, and cognitively sharp during the day, feel greater intimacy and affection, and enjoy consolidated, restorative sleep at night . . . not to mention expand your years of mental and physical vitality.

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craniosacral therapy for anxiety: CranioSacral Therapy: Touchstone for Natural Healing John E. Upledger, 2001-05-31 In CranioSacral Therapy: Touchstone for Natural Healing, John E. Upledger, DO, OMM, recounts his development of CranioSacral Therapy. He shares poignant case studies of restored health: a five-year-old autistic boy, a man with Erb's palsy, a woman with a fifteen year history of severe headaches, and numerous others. And he offers simple CranioSacral Therapy techniques you can perform at home on yourself or loved ones.

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Case studies use real-world examples to promote problem-solving skills. Non-traditional approaches to neurological interventions in the Alternative and Complementary Therapies chapter include the movement approach, energy approach, and physical body system approaches therapies. Terminology adheres to the best practices of the APTA as well as other leading physical therapy organizations, following The Guide to Physical Therapy Practice, the Nagi model, and the ICF World Health Model of patient empowerment. Updated illustrations provide current visual references. NEW chapters on imaging and robotics have been added. Updated chapters incorporate the latest advances and the newest information in neuroscience and intervention strategies. Student resources on an Evolve companion website include references with links to MEDLINE and more.

craniosacral therapy for anxiety: The American Holistic Medical Association Guide to Holistic Health Larry Trivieri, Jr., The American Holistic Medical Association, 2001-04-26 A Complete and Comprehensive Guide to Holistic Treatment Larry Trivieri beautifully illuminates the full spectrum of natural healing approaches, highlighting the unifying themes and distinctive features of health systems around the world and across the ages. This book is a valuable resource for individuals interested in their personal well being, as well as health professionals seeking to deepen their understanding of holistic medicine.-David Simon, M.D., Medical Director, the Chopra Center for Well Being, Author, Vital Energy and Return to Wholeness Find reputable practitioners and put proven healing therapies to work in your life with this informative and reliable guide to holistic medicine and its primary treatment methods, including: * Nutritional Medicine * Environmental Medicine * Mind-Body Medicine * Traditional Chinese Medicine * Osteopathic Medicine * Chiropractic * Botanical Medicine * Bodywork/Massage * Naturopathic Medicine * Homeopathy * Ayurvedic Medicine * Acupuncture * Yoga and many more

craniosacral therapy for anxiety: Craniosacral Therapy and the Energetic Body Roger Gilchrist, 2006-08-11 This useful book discusses craniosacral therapy's history and present situation as well as its spiritual implications and practical contributions in the world of healthcare. Gilchrist demonstrates how the subtle patterns of this practice become a dynamic force in the body, and how this influences overall functioning. What most sets the book apart is Gilchrist's discussion of the relationship of the craniosacral system and biodynamic functions to the human energy system. Though dealing with a complicated topic, the book provides a grounded, progressive approach that is both specific and insightful.

craniosacral therapy for anxiety: Craniosacral Therapy for Children Daniel Agustoni, 2013-02-05 Craniosacral Therapy for Children introduces a craniosacral therapy treatment protocol for babies and children up to 12 years of age. A gentle hands-on healing approach, craniosacral therapy releases tensions in the body in order to relieve pain, resolve trauma, and improve physical and emotional health. Author and craniosacral therapist Daniel Agustoni discusses the reasons for treating young children and for beginning treatment during pregnancy. He explains how the stress of birth can cause asymmetries and misalignments in babies' bodies that can lead to problems later in life: from suckling problems, abdominal colic, and fragmented sleep patterns to anxiety, hyperactivity, and ADD. Agustoni demonstrates how craniosacral therapy can also offset the effects of stress, trauma, and PTSD that may affect the growing child depending on his or her environment, biology, and temperament. Enhanced with over 120 instructional photos and illustrations, the book's hands-on techniques are presented along with suggestions for interacting with parents, babies, and young children. The book discusses methods of evaluation and treatment following structural, functional, and biodynamic models. Engaging case examples describe the therapeutic results of the treatment, which include increased security and confidence, relaxation, support for the immune system, and a sense of well-being. An important resource for healthcare practitioners, this book is also useful for educators, parents, and caregivers interested in learning new ways to help their children.

craniosacral therapy for anxiety: Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy, Volume Three Michael J. Shea, Ph.D., 2010-11-30 Dr. Michael J. Shea's series on Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy is based on healthcare providers physically sensing love and accessing a deep sense of warmth and

stillness in the heart. He begins this third volume by emphasizing the therapeutic application of touch therapy skills. As in the previous two books, he teaches these skills by explaining the importance of practitioners being able to perceive Primary Respiration, a slow rhythmic tidal movement in the fluids of the body. He goes on to discuss the distinctive influence of human embryology on any therapeutic modality. A number of other experts in the field contribute chapters that illuminate the spiritual and psychological dimensions of human embryonic development, especially the heart. Dr. Shea offers valuable new skills for anyone, from midwives to pediatricians, working therapeutically with infants. In addition, he summarizes current thinking on infant brain development, discusses the long-term consequences of attachment issues between the mother and infant, and explores the importance of understanding the similarities of the mother-infant and the therapist-patient relationships.

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