

## NEWS & NOTES

---

Volume 3, Issue 5  
September / October 2006

---

### supporting your emotional health

Treating specific soft tissue problems is just one piece of the puzzle on the path to wellness. Massage and bodywork can also have very powerful global effects on your whole system. In this issue of *News & Notes*, let's talk about one of these "big picture" benefits of massage therapy. Namely, how massage and bodywork support your emotional health and wellbeing.

When discussing the body-mind "connection," the language can be very tricky. You see, in order to talk about ourselves and our experience of the world, we need to divide our being into separate pieces and parts that, in reality, are *not separate at all*. But using the language of separateness invites us to think about our pieces and parts as separate.

This is true even at a purely anatomical level. You can look at an atlas of human anatomy and see all the different muscles. But we are really constructed of a

*continuous* connective tissue network that contains strategically placed bags of muscle cells. The muscles are separate only by means of a scalpel. We have to make this artificial separation in order to talk to each other about muscles. The same is true when talking about our bodies and psyches. These are just different aspects of *who you are*, not separate entities.

Injury and pain (of all kinds) powerfully affect each aspect of who you are: body, mind, emotions, and spirit. I believe healing (of all kinds) is best achieved by working with each of these aspects. Your body is not simply a machine that your mind and spirit inhabit. You are an *embodied being*.

Because of this, massage and bodywork are a wonderful support to professional counseling for emotional healing. This includes recovery from trauma and abuse, eating disorders, and addiction.

Massage and bodywork are *not* substitutes for psychological counseling. Bodyworkers, unless they have additional training as counselors, should *not* be working with the intent to help you process emotional issues. Massage and bodywork can have wonderful benefits for your emotional health, and bodyworkers need to be mindful of the emotional impact of their work, but ought never be working with emotional or psychological therapy in mind. (I say this so strongly because there are bodyworkers who are working beyond their scope of practice in this regard.)

Studies have shown that massage therapy decreases depression and improves body image. Scientists have measured increases in dopamine and serotonin after massage. Studies have also shown that massage reduces stress and anxiety. This, in turn, improves your sleep. Physically feeling better makes the *whole you* feel better.

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

Another way that bodywork can help is by easing postural strains. This is energizing! Walking taller reinforces positive feelings about yourself. Releasing muscle tension allows you to use that energy for other things.

Massage provides a way for you to nurture yourself with safe and comforting touch. Each session is under *your* control. Reclaim your body as your own. Feel at home in your skin.

If you have questions or would like additional resources, such as a referral to a counselor in the area, please give me a call. It's always wonderful to hear from you!

RACHEL OUILLETTE CLINICAL BODYWORK  
2350 WASHTENAW AVENUE, SUITE 22  
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104

(734) 649-3060

CLINICALBODYWORK.COM

## NEWS & NOTES

Inside this issue ~

**supporting your emotional health**

