



Physical Therapy and Further Degrees: One Person's Story

Published in *Advance for Physical Therapists and PT Assistants*
Volume 17 No 24 November 6, 2006

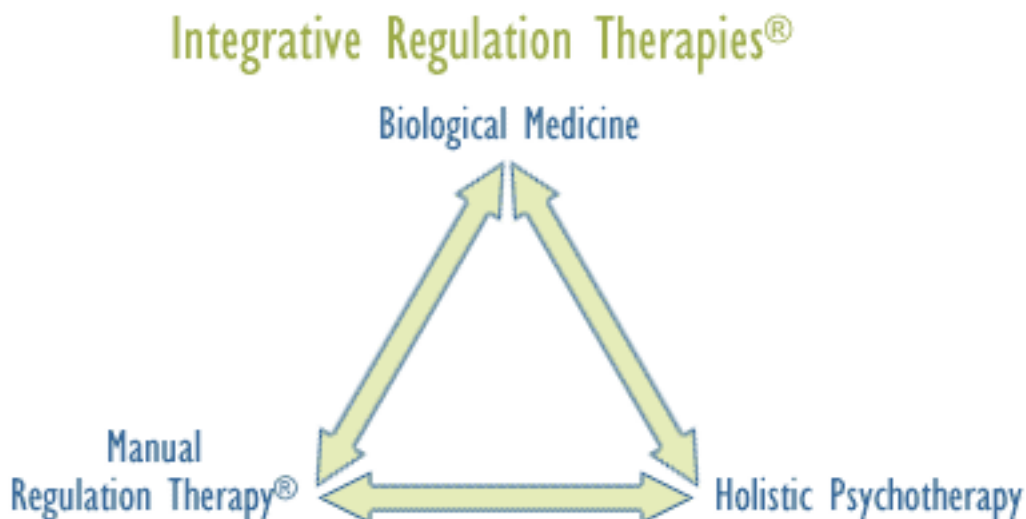
It is interesting to consider the career paths and professional beliefs of physical therapists that go on for other degrees. Ron Murray PT, ND, and Doctor of Integrative Medicine is a case in point. Ron Murray with Martha Bramhall, a social worker, co-directs an integrative clinic named The Asclepeion Center for Body Mind Therapy in Silver Spring, MD a suburb of Washington, DC. The Asclepeion Center is situated in a gracious nineteenth-century manor house. Sheltered by two acres of wooded hillside and beautifully planted grounds, the center provides an energetically healthful space for healing work to be accomplished.

The center is named after Asclepeius, the Ancient Greek god of healing. Legend tells that, as a boy, Apollo's son Asclepeius learned the healing arts from his immortal mentor, the compassionate centaur Chiron. In ancient times, temples were dedicated to Asclepius by grateful patients; such a center of healing was called an Asclepeion. At the Asclepeion Center for Body Mind Healing the staff strives to dwell ever more deeply in the tradition of honoring both Asclepeius, the Greek god of healing, and Hippocrates, the Greek physician, father of traditional medicine. The aim of the center is to wisely blend all potential aids to bring people ailing in body, mind, and spirit back to optimum health.

During his training as a PT Dr. Murray had the very unusual opportunity to be taught by someone who had trained at the Michigan State University School of Osteopathy. So even before graduating Dr. Murray was adept at using light touch manual therapies in his practice. After graduating he took additional training from nationally and internationally famous manual therapists and became an original partner in one of the largest integrative medical clinics in the country.

Becoming increasingly interested in how healing occurs Dr. Murray became a naturopath and also obtained a Doctorate in Integrative Medicine. He also began reading extensively about spirituality and became especially interested in Buddhist philosophy. From these intertwining roots he has developed a theory and practice of healing that is described below.

To begin the services at the Asclepeion Center are grouped into three categories and placed under the general rubric of Integrative Regulation Therapies®. The three categories, Manual Regulation Therapy®, Holistic Psychotherapy, and Biological Medicine, can be viewed as forming a triangle, as the diagram shows:





On one side of the base of the triangle are the different types of Manual Regulation Therapy® - including hands-on-healing techniques such as CranialSacral or Visceral Manipulation therapy – which primarily strive to bring about a shift in the regulatory mechanisms of the body, that is, how the body habitually deals with the problem.

On the other side of the triangle base are the different forms of psychotherapy such as guided image, cognitive therapy, or anger regulation – which primarily strive to directly bring about a shift in the thoughts and emotions of the client, which also affect regulation.

The top angle of the triangle represents Biological Medicine. This angle represents, first information gleaned from various functional assessment devices and, second, the various remedies that are used to encourage the client's body/mind/spirit to restore cellular regulation, self-heal and function harmoniously.

The reader can see how the different trainings that Dr. Murray received influenced the development of this model of services. The Manual Regulation Therapy® concept comes directly from his PT roots, The Holistic Psychotherapy concept, though greatly influenced by his partner, grew also out of working with the emotional reactions that people have during the light touch manual therapy work. Emotional states are also greatly considered and attended to in the third category of Biological Medicine. The Biological Medicine concepts were derived during his later training as a naturopath and his doctoral work but carry a slightly different quality of service and concept because of his PT roots.

The former thought brings us to the over riding concept held by Dr. Murray, a concept that draws from all his unique training and experience but is very much grounded in his PT education. He has synthesized a construct, The Dynamic Colloid Fluid Model, to explain the integrated functions of the human body, mind, and spirit.

A colloid is a substance or structure that sometimes behaves like a solid, and sometimes more like a liquid. The Dynamic Colloid Fluid Model envisions all aspects of the body – muscle and bone as well as blood and organs – are essentially colloidal in their nature. That is, the model sees our body's tissues as capable of dynamically shifting from a more solid to a more fluid state, and back again.

Any trauma, whether local, systemic, or both triggers the ANS, which in turn affects autonomic tone. For example, chronic tension, inflammation, and or a strong single stressor in the muscle or fascia can cause changes in viscosity. Even bone though solid, is dynamic, and trauma to a bone can cause a palpable rigidity. The stressors can be metabolic, physical and or emotional in origin and perpetuation. These changes make the tissue more rigid. When behaving with more rigidity, bodily tissues can stubbornly retain the imprint of trauma and stress—literally perpetuating inflammation, pain and dysfunction.

Through hands on manipulation, emotional catharsis, changes in attitude and thinking, and or homeopathic remedies the therapist can down regulate or normalize the ANS and break the grip of inflammation, pain, and dysfunction, encouraging the impacted tissues to soften and behave more like a fluid.

The concepts of The Dynamic Colloid Fluid Model and Integrative Regulation Therapies® are under girded and bound together by Dr. Murray's earliest professional training as a PT. It is interesting to note how one person has moved forward from and built on his historical training.