

NETWORK CARE

By Travis Wild & Kelly Davidson

Network Care is a powerful new approach to healing and bodywork. Using precise, gentle touches, it triggers your body's natural healing capacities, helping you release tension from your spine and body. At the same time, it dramatically improves your health and well-being in every area of your life – physically, mentally and emotionally.

Developed by an American chiropractor, Dr Donald Epstein, Network Care (Network Spinal Analysis) is a method that unifies the best of a large range of techniques and practices developed through chiropractic and other types of bodywork. It combines detailed knowledge of anatomy and physiology, in particular the functioning of your brain, nervous system and sensory perceptions, with that of your body's physical, mental, emotional and energetic responses to stress. Network Care has evolved and developed over the past 20 years into an approach that's both gentle and effective. It used very precise, strategically timed touches to key areas of your spine. These help your body and brain to recognize and release tension and stored energy throughout your body. Your brain, nervous system and body let go of defensive stress responses and are able to function with much greater clarity and efficiency.

The Basics

To understand how network Care works, it's first important to know a few basic fundamentals about the way your body works. The human body has within it over 100000 billion nerve cells which do everything from operate your pancreas to control your body temperature. Your nervous system consists of your brain, spinal cord, sense organs (eyes etc) and the nerves that travel to all the different parts of your body. Your nervous system is what keeps your entire body working. Vital messages travel throughout your body to keep your organs functioning, regulate hormonal balances, monitor your

heart rate and blood pressure and contract your muscles, allowing you to move. Your nervous system also directs all your thoughts and behaviours and allows you to experience "sensation" and emotions. It is also important to understand that your body responds to stress. Stress comes in a variety of different forms that can be physical, mental, emotional or chemical. From falling off a bike to the death of someone close to you, or constant intake of chemical toxins through medication or other accidental exposures – all these experiences are stress in some form and your body responds to all of them. It responds most commonly by tightening up.

Stress responses are mediated through the base or primitive section of your brain. These are the "subconscious" parts of your brain, which direct bodily functions like breathing and heart rate as well as being the seat of your "emotional brain". All your sensory information travels through these regions first before going to your brain cortex or "thinking" parts. This is why you can find yourself responding to a stress, like recoiling from touching a hot stovetop before you become fully conscious of what has happened.

Your body responds to stress

There are lots of different types of stresses and many different stress response patterns. The best known of these is the "fright, flight, fight" response. Imagine yourself walking down a dark alley and somebody jumps out at you. Instantly, the muscles of your body tense, your shoulders rise, the base of your neck tucks down into your shoulders and the backs of your arms, buttocks and calves tighten. What your body is doing by responding in this way is sounding the "alarm" button. Your body is protecting you by bracing you for possible impact and preparing your muscles to either fight or run away. In response to a perceived stress the primitive areas of your brain direct changes in many of your bodily functions as well as altering your thoughts, emotions and behaviours. In the case of the fright, flight pattern it does this in three main ways. First

by building tension in different parts of the body. Most of these tensions centre around the spine but also include the muscles and ligaments of your limbs. You can get an experience of this when you watch someone have a nasty accident. Your body “cringes” in patterns that centre around your spine. The second way your body naturally responds to stress in the fight, flight pattern is to shift energy and blood flow away from your digestive and reproductive systems into your heart, lungs and muscles so you have enough energy, blood flow and oxygen to save your life. Growth, repair, digestion and reproduction get put on hold when your body believes it needs to shift all reserves to save your life.

The third of your body’s responses affects your mental and emotional states. During times of stress your attention shifts to your external environment. You block off from your feelings and divert all your attention to what is happening around you. In times of stress we also “bottle up” feelings at the same time as storing tension in our body. This is one of our most important survival mechanisms. It’s not good for your survival to curl up in a ball and cry when someone jumps out at you in a dark alley, or when your children are in danger. So we “bottle up” the feeling until the stress passes at which time the body naturally releases the tension and emotion associated with the stress.

Your body in “defence”

Your body often goes into defence in response to an uncomfortable or unpleasant feeling or experience. This can happen in times of severe trauma as well as in times of relatively minor stress or discomfort. Your body will naturally “let down” the tensions and resume its normal functioning once the stress has passed and you feel safe once again. However, if the stress is constant, repeated or overwhelming, you can get stuck in the stress response patterns. When this happens the stresses or uncomfortable feeling can stay “hammering away” under the surface, never being fully connected or released. These

tensions and stress responses build up over time and can affect the nerve supplies to various regions of the body, organ systems as well as the brain. Your body has the capacity to store an enormous amount of tension over long periods of time, mostly due to its ability to compensate. The simple movement of turning your neck to one side, for example, incorporates the movement of every vertebra in the top half of your spine. It’s not until your body literally cannot absorb any more tension that symptoms can begin to emerge. It’s often the areas that are working well that become painful or stiff because they have been compensating for the more solid, stuck regions over long periods of time.

When your body is stuck in these tension patterns, there is a decreased flow of energy and information throughout your body, especially through your central channel and nervous system, leading to decreased organ function. Your “secondary” systems such as the digestive and reproductive systems can become sluggish. Mentally, emotionally, energetically and physically you become increasingly restricted and rigid. You are less and less able to feel and experience all the different aspects of life, pleasant and unpleasant. Your ability to feel and express your essential states of being – passion, strength, power, value, and love – decreases. Your ability to assimilate new information, concentrate, cope with stress and change and make lifestyle improvements diminishes. When new experiences, feelings, opportunities or stresses come along, you experience them through the filter of unprocessed feelings, rather than being clear and fully present. Your body and brain are stuck in the past.

How Network Care works

Network Care works by using precise touches to key areas of your spine as well as other body movements and positioning, all specifically and strategically designed to help your body and brain to discover, connect with and release the areas of tension and stored energy throughout your body.

Rather than push your body around or try to make it do things it doesn't naturally want to do, the touches and other body movements used in Network Care are like wake-up calls to your body's powerful healing capacities. The method is structured around ways of asking your body exactly where it wants input and how much pressure would be ideal at any moment in time. It is a way of being in the right place, at the right time, with the right amount of input, working with your body instead of pushing against resistance.

The defensive stress responses stuck in your body often carry with them the tone or energy of the undigested feelings or stresses from your past. The precise touches used in Network Care draw your body and brain's attention to become fully present with these stored tensions and energy. This triggers your body's innate healing abilities to transform these tensions, integrating the energy, information or "emotional charge" associated with them.

One of the most important and empowering aspects of Network Care is that your body actually learns how to more effectively connect with and release or integrate tensions and stored energy. As people progress through Network Care, they find themselves naturally wanting to move. These movements evolve through the different levels of Network Care into distinct, coordinated waves. They are your body learning new healing strategies, ways of self-correcting and more effectively regulating its own tension. To the point that your body learns these new strategies, you keep them for the rest of your life.

Experiencing Network Care

Network Care is structured in levels that build on each other. Throughout these levels your body learns to accelerate its ability to transform and release deeper layers of tension and stored energy. Your first visit to a Network Care practitioner is typically an extended consultation in which the practitioner will ask you about your health history and perform detailed assessments of your body. They will be finding out if and where your body

has become stuck in defensive stress response patterns. After the initial consultation, visits usually take between 5 and 20 minutes, during which time you lie facedown on an adjusting table, fully clothed. As you progress, the practitioner may get you lying on your side, on your back or sitting up at specific times. Each visit consists of a series of touches made typically along your neck or tailbone in the beginning. Practitioners use various methods to assess what your body is up to and what input is required. A short amount of time is allowed between each of the touches for your body to begin working with the input. This continues until your body says, "that's enough for today". The input from your practitioner triggers your body to transform the tensions and integrate stored energy which your body will continue to use over the following hours and days. Throughout the first level of Network Care, visits are recommended every second day to continue the momentum of change and maximize their effect.

One of the first things many people notice when beginning Network Care is their breathing becomes freer and easier. As you progress through the treatments, your body will begin to spontaneously move in order to quickly and effectively dissipate and integrate tensions. This is often first noticed as the desire to move your feet, ankles, wrists or hips. These movements grow and evolve into often quite large visible wave-like movements. They become progressively more specific, refined and coordinated. Different parts of your body begin to move or rock in harmony with each other and with your breath. People often notice sensations such as tingling, warmth or different aches and pains as they progress with the work. Every now and then, you may notice emotions arising. After a Network Care visit, most people notice their awareness and thoughts are dramatically clearer and more peaceful.

Somato Respiratory Integration (SRI)

Soma means body therefore SRI is body breath integration. SRI is a series of exercises designed to help us connect with tension held in our bodies and assists us in learning how to use it productively. There are 12 exercises that correspond with the 12 Stages of Healing. Learning how to use these exercises will assist us in adapting to the fluctuations of our daily lives. SRI is a perfect compliment to Network Care. At the SRI workshops we will explore how to use the SRI exercises on a regular basis. It will include both hands on and lecture format. Over the course of the evening we will move through a number of different stages. When used with your Network Care it will accelerate your progress.

Network Intensives

We are now offering Network intensive days. These days can be transformational. To spend a day on yourself, listening to your body and the wisdom it has. The day includes multiple entrainments, SRI, meditation of various sorts and a light lunch. These intensives are a great way to advance your care. Life often pulls us back into patterns we have developed in the past, a day like this gives you an opportunity to create new patterns that can impact both your health and your life.

Suggested prerequisites:

- SRI workshop or familiarity with the 12 Stages of Healing
- to be in at least early level two Network Care

Please ask Dr. Josephene or Dr. Rob for more information and details.

Network Levels of Care

During the first level of Network Care, called Basic Care, your body moves from being stuck in defence, feeling relatively "unsafe" and often rigidly defended in places, to a point of relative "safety". This signals the beginning of the second level when the practitioner can then begin to assist your body to transform deeper layer of tension in more refined ways.

Throughout these first two levels, most people notice dramatic improvements and changes in their posture and flexibility. Different aches and areas of discomfort often improve, along your spine and in other regions of your body. As your body comes out of defence, your normal, healthy bodily functions and rhythms begin to assert themselves.

Your brain functions improve and your perceptions become increasingly clear. Instead

of experiencing the world and reacting to it through the filter of past stresses and built-up emotional charge, you are more able to experience events, change and opportunities as they truly are and respond to them more effectively and with greater flexibility and creativity.

People discover that situations they used to find stressful no longer seem so, and when stressful events do arise, they relax out of them much more quickly. They are more productive and able to make constructive change in their lives. With a greater connection to their feelings and the flow of energy through their body, people find healthy lifestyle improvements virtually automatic and almost effortless. The effectiveness of other types of healing practices such as exercise and meditation is also dramatically enhanced.

Progressing through the third level of Network Care onwards, your experience is focused on growth and expansion, rather than the recovery often felt during the first two level of care. During Level Three, your chest and the regions around your heart open dramatically. People experience themselves becoming more present, both in themselves and with others around them. They notice increasing levels of openness and accelerated change. Stressful events in your life or tensions and feelings arising from the past are experienced more as fuel for growth than things to protect yourself from, and they are fully felt and integrated quickly and with less struggle.

Your ability to respond to stressful events and people and relax out of them continues to expand. You become increasingly healthy and fully alive with a greater capacity to express yourself and your essential states – your passion, strength, power, value and love. People in this level often describe themselves as becoming increasingly "heart centered".

Research

Several recent studies (see references below) have shown that Network Care dramatically and consistently improves people's enjoyment and quality of life in all aspects (physically,

mentally and emotionally), with benefits including:

- Greater energy
- Improved flexibility
- Reduced symptoms, pain and headaches
- Fewer colds or flu
- Markedly reduced stress levels plus much greater capacity to cope with stress
- Heightened emotional and psychological well-being
- Improved ability to think and concentrate and much greater ability to focus and stay on-task
- Reduced anxiety and depression
- Much greater ability to relax
- Greater life enjoyment
- Greater confidence and ability to express oneself and communicate effectively
- Higher productivity and ability to accomplish goals
- Increased ability to adapt to change and manage problems and adversity in life
- Increased satisfaction and contentment with self, work and life

The research has also shown that people in Network care have a dramatically greater ability to change their behaviour, make lifestyle changes and take up and maintain healthy lifestyle habits such as good nutrition, regular exercise and meditation. The benefits of Network Care were evident to researchers as early as a few weeks into care and continued to grow dramatically from there. The longer people participated in care, the greater benefits they experienced. Network Care is taught only to qualified chiropractors at a postgraduate level. There are practitioners of network Care working in nearly all capital cities of Australia and in many regional centers.

For further details about Network Care please visit elanfamilywellness.com or call 403-217-5577

References

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Epstein DM, 'Network Spinal Analysis: A System of Health Care Delivery Within the Subluxation-based Chiropractic Model', *Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research, Vol 1, No1, 1996*

Travis Wild completed his degree in chiropractic at RMIT University in 1993. Since then he has studied and practices in England, Portugal, the USA and Australia, completing the highest levels of post-graduate training in several different chiropractic methods. Travis has been practicing Network Care in Australia since 1996. Together with Kelly Davidson he runs Natural Wisdom, a practice in the Sydney suburb of Paddington. Established in 1998, Natural Wisdom is Sydney's first dedicated Network practice.

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