

Conceptualization of Craniosacral Therapy in Water™

Craniosacral Therapy in Water™ is an integrative therapeutic approach developed within the field of advanced aquatic therapy. It considers the body as a dynamic and self-regulating system in which structure, function, consciousness, and environment interact interdependently.

It is based on light, intentional, and highly trained touch, together with the use of the aquatic environment as a sensory and mechanical modulator. This context facilitates the perception of the craniosacral rhythmic impulse, the release of fascial restrictions, and the reorganization of neurophysiological patterns associated with pain and dysfunction.

The model places the therapeutic relationship and the facilitator's state of presence as central elements of the process. The intervention is not conceived as a corrective action, but as an accompaniment that supports the organism's capacity for self-regulation.

This approach integrates principles and resources from disciplines such as Watsu®, Craniosacral Therapy, manual therapy, and Myofascial Induction Therapy®. In the aquatic environment, these elements enhance the patient's neuroception and interoception, generating both local and systemic effects oriented toward the recovery of health.

Development and Evolution of the Concept

The development of Craniosacral Therapy in Water™ began in 2007 as a result of a process of clinical research and professional evolution initiated in 2001.

In 2010, the model was incorporated into the postgraduate program in Aquatic Physiotherapy and Balneotherapy at the European University of Madrid. It later became part of the postgraduate program in Aquatic Therapy at Rey Juan Carlos University, where it continues to be taught today.

In 2014, the approach was approved as a core subject by the Worldwide Aquatic Bodywork Association (WABA), becoming integrated into the international training pathway for Watsu® professionals.

In the research field, a qualitative study on aquatic intervention in individuals with cerebral palsy was conducted in 2017 and published in 2020. The results showed benefits across different dimensions of health, learning, and participation, with low risk and high adherence.

Currently, the model continues to evolve through clinical practice, teaching, and research, including participation in scientific committees and the review of clinical cases.

Clinical Foundations

Craniosacral Therapy in Water™ is grounded in the interaction between the neuromeningeal system and the fascial system, both of which are key in the functional organization of the body.

The aquatic environment facilitates a reduction of mechanical load, enhances body awareness, and promotes states of nervous system regulation. In this context, the patient can more easily access processes of internal reorganization.

The therapeutic work is oriented toward:

- releasing restrictions in connective tissue
- improving neuromeningeal function
- promoting the hydrodynamic balance of the body

The process is guided by listening to physiological rhythms, respecting the patient's limits, and facilitating the organism's spontaneous responses.

Authorship of the Concept

The concept has been developed by Elisa Muñoz Blanco, a physiotherapist with more than 20 years of clinical experience, as well as a university lecturer and clinical researcher.

Her work focuses on the treatment of complex health conditions, including persistent pain, pediatrics, disability, and therapeutic work in the aquatic environment. She integrates different approaches from physiotherapy, manual therapy, and nervous system regulation.

She is the founder and director of the Watsupath™ Training Institute, from which she develops clinical, educational, and research activities at both national and international levels.

More about Elisa

I am a physiotherapist, university lecturer, and clinical researcher. For more than two decades, I have been supporting individuals, children, adults, and families, through processes of pain, illness, health, and change, creating therapeutic spaces where the body can feel heard, respected, and cared for.

My practice is grounded in a conviction supported by both evidence and experience: even in contexts of significant fragility, the body retains a profound capacity for health. Throughout my professional journey, I have integrated evidence-based physiotherapy, neurophysiology, psychosomatics, advanced manual therapy, and aquatic therapy, shaping a systemic, sensitive, and embodied perspective.

From this integration emerges Craniosacral Therapy in Water™, an original and innovative approach that I have been developing for over fifteen years through clinical practice in Madrid, teaching in diverse contexts, and, currently, through research projects addressing the complexity of pain and trauma in the aquatic environment.

I am the founder and director of the Watsupath™ Training Institute, an international ecosystem for clinical practice, research, and knowledge transmission. From there, I lead the development of advanced training programs such as Clinical Watsu® 3: Fascia as a System, in dialogue with current perspectives on fascia as a living, relational, and regulatory system.

My specialization in pediatric physiotherapy and in working with vulnerable nervous systems underpins everything I do. I believe in a form of care that is precise and rigorous, yet also close and deeply respectful, where science and sensitivity come together to support real processes of relief, reorganization, and recovery of health.



Craniosacral Therapy in Water™ Training Program

Craniosacral Therapy in Water™ (CST in Water™), having been approved by the Education Standards Committee (E.S.A.C.) of the World Aquatic Bodywork Association (W.A.B.A.), and its training program added as a core subject of said Association for any of its training institutes, automatically becomes CECs (Continuing Education Credits).

Students who complete the 200-hour program will be registered as W.A.B.A.-accredited Water TCS Professionals™ and their credits will also be considered for any of the training courses accredited by W.A.B.A.

Craniosacral Therapy in Water™ Module 1 (5 days, 50 hours)

Few systems have as much impact on the human body as the neuro-meningeal system and the fascial system. In this Craniosacral Therapy in Water™ Module 1 course, the necessary foundations are taught to understand the relationships and relevance of both systems, the principles of treatment, and some of the techniques used to facilitate changes in them.

Program:

The Craniosacral System
Palpation. Listening
Fascia and Diaphragms
The Occipital Cranial Base and the Sacrolumbar Area
The Dural Tube
Still Point Induction
Energy Cyst and Somato-Emotional Release®
Precautions and Contraindications

Course highlights:

At the end of this 50-hour module, you will be able to:

- Describe the scientific basis and principles of Craniosacral Therapy and why it is key to relieving pain and dysfunction at its source
- Develop refined palpation skills that you can rely on as highly sensitive tools
- Identify the cranial rhythmic impulse and interpret its patterns to accurately assess dysfunction and its corrections
- Locate the origin of inertial fulcrums by contacting the fascial system
- Release restrictions in the dural tube to improve interactions between the central nervous system and the rest of the body
- Use profound techniques that produce Significant Clinical Change (SCC)
- Implement a respectful and effective approach based on listening and presence.

Prerequisites:

- Be a health professional, student in a health sciences program, or aquatic bodywork practitioner.

Preparatory work for the course must be completed by the student prior to the start date.

Craniosacral Therapy in Water™ Module 2

(5 days, 50 hours)

Understanding the body as an interrelated whole, where the most tangible spheres coexist with the most subtle, provides a space for the facilitator to get to know themselves. These foundations will make the therapeutic alliance the framework, supported by the water, where healing is possible.

Once the cells, tissues, and fluids can speak directly, they easily guide the Therapist and Patient on an efficient and effective Path back to Health. This is the future of modern medicine.

Program:

1. Consciousness
2. Cranial Membrane System
3. The Temporomandibular Joint
4. Nonverbal and Nonviolent Communication
5. SomatoEmotional Release®
6. Multiple Hands
7. Clinical Applications

Course highlights:

At the end of this 50-hour module, you will be able to:

- Discover how to integrate the Sutherland technique for identifying biomechanical injuries into the current biodynamic vision of CST in Water™.
- Improve your ability to assess the body as a whole by focusing on the physiological phenomena that occur.
- Facilitate and accompany the release of various segments of the body through the application of more global techniques.
- Explore the concepts of SomatoEmotional Release® and Energy Cysts, facilitating the release of emotions associated with structural injuries.
- Perfecting awareness, listening, accompaniment, and support skills through individual and group dynamics.
- Observe demonstrations by experts and participate in clinical simulations.
- Complete supervision with the instructor and/or assistants, supporting your journey and orientation towards Module 3.

Prerequisites:

CST in Water™ Module 1 and a thorough understanding of practical work through practice sessions, sessions received, and supervised group practice.

Craniosacral Therapy in Water™ Module 3

The Path of Expression

(5 days, 50 hours)

Addressing the palate, tongue, jaw, and temporomandibular joint as part of the assessment and treatment of the cranio-cervical-facial complex stimulates expression and helps release repressed emotions.

The emphasis is on learning to listen to the body as a whole and immersing oneself in the various physiological phenomena that occur, using various forms of communication that can be applied both on the surface of the water and underwater.

It is an open and profound exploration of the possibilities that can be achieved through connection with the consciousness of an organ or tissue, using listening and therapeutic dialogue among other tools.

Program:

- The Path of Expression: hard palate, vomer, palate, zygomatic bones, nasal bones, teeth, supra- and infrahyoid tissues, gums, and floor of the mouth.
- Integrating systems, improving structure and function, inviting Health, feeling a Unified Body.
- The therapeutic connection between professional and client: Therapeutic framing and communication.

Course Objectives:

At the end of this 50-hour module, you will be able to:

- Discover and describe the neuroanatomy, physiology, and biomechanics of the cranio-cervico-facial complex.
- Assess and mobilize the Pathway of Expression through more than 10 different body components, including the thoracic inlet, hard palate, and related tissues.
- Use Presence, Listening, and Communication to support and accompany the Body in its process of recovering Health, from Dynamic Stillness, and through Power.

Prerequisites:

Craniosacral Therapy in Water™ Module 2 and a deep understanding of practical work through practice sessions, received sessions, and supervised group practices, as well as supervision with a CST in Water™ Instructor. Completion of the final project and other requirements described below is required to become a CST in Water™ Professional.

Other requirements to complete this training:

Practice sessions

Students are required to give at least 20 hours of practice sessions during their CSTW™ studies, spreading the required hours evenly over a maximum of 3 years. Students should not receive payment for their practice sessions during this time. It is acceptable for the recipient to offer a contribution towards the pool rental.

Sessions received

Students are required to receive 10 professional sessions during the program. At least five sessions must be received from a CSTW™ certified professional, and the remaining sessions may be with certified professionals in their field, such as WaterDance®, Jahara®, Healing Dance®, Watsu®.

Practice groups

Students are required to complete 5 hours of supervised group practice. These hours can be combined with a CSTW™ 1, 2, and 3 course, making it more accessible for students who travel or do not have a local community of CSTW™ students with whom to practice. A certified assistant or teacher will supervise the class to help refine and define competencies, moving from the CSTW™ framework.

Supervised session with a CST in Water™ Instructor

Two 2-3 hour sessions are required, one before and one after CSTW™ Module 3. This time one-on-one, it consists of going over the student's weaknesses and strengths. An individual plan is then developed to help students achieve their professional goals.

Clinical case

This consists of a project of at least 6 to 10 sessions by one or more CSTW™ students to complete the required certification hours. This project may consist of a case study, bibliographic review, or developing a continuing education course for CSTW™ professionals.

Projects may be completed at any time during the 6 months following the completion of Module 3, and once completed may be posted on the Institute's website as a resource for the benefit of all in terms of information and results.

The student will be mentored during the development of the clinical case to facilitate its planning, development, and conclusion.

- At least 50 continuing education credits are required every 2 years. These approved courses complement and deepen the training of a CSTW™ professional and allow the individual to continue their education in an area of interest.
- Any type of CSTW™ can be repeated to complete these Continuing Education Credits.