

SHIATSU in HOSPITALS

## SHIATSU in HOSPITALS



- SHIATSU in/with:**
- Rehab clinics
  - Geriatrics
  - Pediatric hospitals
  - Gynecologic problems

## Hara Shiatsu in Hospitals

"We have been working in clinical institutions in Austria since 1993 and gained a lot of experience that we would now like to share. Our practical training in these institutions has not only enriched our students and our school as a whole, but also all the institutions we were lucky enough to work with, their doctors, therapists and staff.

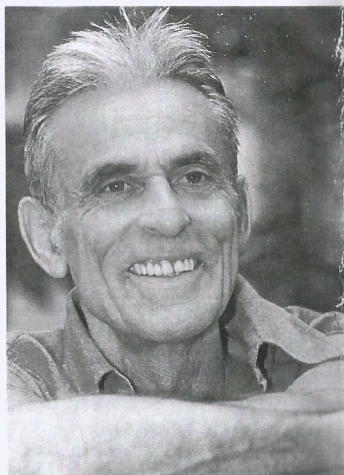
***With our practical Hara Shiatsu training we have found a way to bring together modern western medicine and traditional oriental medicine in a cooperative way for the benefit of the clients and patients.***

In most of these institutions Hara Shiatsu is now among the most attractive treatment options. Hospital staff and Hara Shiatsu practitioners are exchanging and discussing their ideas and experience. Doctors, therapists and nursing staff are always welcome as students in our school.

***We are learning from our partner institutions and they are learning from us.***

That kind of lively exchange creates an energy and an atmosphere that is bound to support any kind of healing process, and we sincerely hope that this film will do the same."

*Tomas Nelissen*



## 1. How we started

More than 15 years ago a psychiatrist working in a hospital came to see me for treatment. After two or three treatments we got to know each other a little and I asked what he thought about the idea of our students working in his hospital to gain practical experience, meaning working on and treating his patients. I was of the opinion that the benefit would be mutual.

Our students would have an opportunity to gain a lot of valuable experience in a short time and under supervision, because in such institutions one is confronted with individuals and patterns that are rarely to be seen in private practice. In these extreme conditions energetic patterns are most obvious and learning to cope with them would be a wonderful challenge for the students.

***We see it as one of our tasks as a Shiatsu school to prepare our students to have a flying start into working in their own practice.***

The more real practical experience they gain during their education, including treating severe and complicated cases, the more competence they show in their private practice. And competence attracts clients who are looking for Shiatsu treatment. Of course it was a challenge for me to find out if Hara Shiatsu would prove to be efficient in the environment of a medical institution.

The psychiatrist mentioned above had enjoyed Hara Shiatsu and felt the effects on his own system, and therefore had some idea of how it worked. He was delighted to hear my suggestion of cooperation and immediately had ideas about which patients would be appropriate as Hara Shiatsu clients.

And so we started the first Hara Shiatsu practical training in Ybbs in 1993 and by 2005 had treated approximately twenty-four patients once a week in the ward for alcohol abuse and mental illness (with medical supervision by senior physician Dr. Gerhard Willinger). We are proud that our students induced a real metamorphosis within the whole ward. The hospital staff for example, started to use our warming up and stretching routines and they started to spread to other wards as well. In addition to the use of herbal tea and home remedies, the patients of some of the wards were able to reduce their medication – while maintaining or in some cases even improving their rate of healing or level of well-being.

***Due to the big success of that first Hara Shiatsu practical training, our students and the centre's staff between them came up with the idea of implementing the same concept in other institutions as well.***

Now, after fifteen years of such research in various hospitals, Hara Shiatsu is well established in the fields of gynaecology, geriatrics, paediatrics, psychiatry and orthopaedics.

## 2. Opening Doors

Making Hara Shiatsu available to clinical institutions is a task that is simple but not easily accomplished. The before-mentioned doctor was our contact and presented and discussed the idea of introducing Hara Shiatsu into hospital life with his boss, evaluating the feasibility and the practical conditions (e. g. insurance, etc.). On getting the green light the next step was to get into action. That meant not only persuading the doctors in charge, but the hospital staff as a whole to support the project. So we had to present ourselves to the staff, making sure that anyone who wanted to could receive a Hara Shiatsu treatment, either sitting in a chair or lying on a mat on the floor. During that demonstration we conveyed the principle of Hara Shiatsu, balancing yin and yang as well as the neutral attitude that serves as a basis for our holistic approach.

***The way we look at things does not use categories like illness or health. Our focus is not on symptoms. They serve more as a hint to find out the cause of a problem.***

By means of the meridians we find a connection to the energy system on a deeper level throughout the whole body. Hara Shiatsu works on that level and it is important to point out this difference, to make sure that there are no wrong expectations or evaluations regarding a certain condition.

After the demonstration we tried to find a contact person: someone who would be our appointed connection with the institution and who would be responsible for continuity and providing us with clients from within the institution. Our contact had to know Hara Shiatsu and be able to provide substitute clients when appointments were not kept. In addition to this, the contact is responsible for providing a room to work in and to ensure the smooth course of the whole project. Without a good contact it would be impossible to carry out the practical training at all. Once the directors and staff had agreed on supporting the Hara Shiatsu project, the further details and conditions had to be settled.



## 3. The Setup

The setup we agreed at Ybbs and which we now have in place with other hospitals is as follows: a continuous course of Hara Shiatsu treatment is binding for both sides. One treatment cycle lasts ten weeks featuring one day weekly of six hours. On each of these practical training days every student treats three to four clients, meaning the same three to four clients during the whole ten weeks cycle. Usually there are six students participating, meaning that our contact within the institution has to provide 18 to 24 clients and make sure they are available for each and every weekly treatment over the ten weeks.

Every practical training features a supervisor from the Hara Shiatsu School as well as an assistant supervisor from within the Hara Shiatsu postgraduate team. Our supervisors offer years of experience in the specific field and themselves receive regular coaching and training.

***The supervisor is the connection between the respective institution and the Hara Shiatsu Institute.***

Every student participating in the practical training has to issue a protocol describing the condition and treatment strategy and conclusion for every client that received Hara Shiatsu during the ten weeks of treatment. This case protocol is checked by and discussed with the supervisor. In addition to this, every student has to present a paper regarding an issue related to the respective institute and field. Furthermore there are two to three meetings with the doctors or staff in charge.

## 4. The Deal

It is important for our work to receive feedback from the institution staff, especially since we are visiting there only six hours once a week. Many of the clients' reactions to the treatment happen without our notice. Therefore we receive and discuss feedback from the staff, regarding the changes the clients show. Is there a reduction in medication? Has the client's behaviour changed? Did we trigger a process of change? Does the client act differently in daily life? But especially, are there any specific changes regarding the primary functions (sleep, digestion, menstruation...)?

***This kind of feedback should take place at the least after five weeks, half way into a training cycle, and then after ten weeks, at the end of it.***

Another important point is Hara Shiatsu training for the hospital staff, to explain and make them understand our position as "aliens" within the institution, as well as our terminology and approach by using common medical terms. This is bound to support communication and mutual understanding.

## 5. Joining Forces

We do not go to hospitals to claim to be able to do something that western medicine cannot. Competition with other therapists, doctors or medical staff would lead to isolation of Hara Shiatsu within the institution. The aim is to inspire others and get inspired by them. It is about coming and working together. We are more like guests in the institution, we learn a lot there and offer our experience in exchange. We do not want to become a lonely island within the institution.

***At the end of the day we are all working on one common goal: supporting and promoting the patient's healing process.***

We do not see ourselves as some transcendental esoteric task force. We work with our hands, doing something that is simple and easily comprehensible. We try to help the staff involved to incorporate our exercises like Do-In, Makaho or Yoga as well as dietary modifications into their patients' daily lives.

This creates a new fresh dynamic between patients and staff and among the patients respectively. We encourage the staff of the respective ward to do these exercises with the patients on a daily basis. This is also bound to neutralise the sharp separation between authority (staff) and needy people (patients). The professional distance gets spiced up with a personal flavour that allows a certain level of compassion. In some cases this attitude has led to a more friendly decoration of the recreation room, the use of aromatherapy and substituting coffee with herbal tea.

Patients as well as hospital staff take more responsibility for themselves. The focus is not on having the patients consume one more therapy, but on them realizing what they can contribute to their own healing process.

The difference is the holistic approach that takes the laws of the body-spirit system into account.

## 6. Hara Shiatsu is different

Hara Shiatsu does not work because we want it to or because we hope it does, but due to paying attention to these laws and letting things happen. Therefore it is necessary to accept what is, without trying to change it into something we deem healthy or right.

***Energy flows where the attention goes. If we are facing a problem and keep concentrating on it, it only grows bigger. But if instead we focus on the essentials, the problem ceases to exist.***

If we focus on the whole human being, instead on focusing on his or her problem, he or she will be able to make them fade away. It is the person who receives treatment, not the problem. The aim is to make the patient regain control over his issues. This focus is of outstanding importance! Unfortunately, even therapists of oriental medicine can forget that.

The strength of Hara Shiatsu therefore focuses on the unity of soul, energetic body and physical body and only shows after some time. It takes some time for the three parts to melt together and only that can start a process that eventually makes the symptoms disappear. This different focus is why Hara Shiatsu works with a different focus and why it is such a valuable supplement to the other therapies in clinical institutions.

## 7. Students Benefits

Especially during the second and third year of education we are always interested to see how the students begin to show more trust in their abilities, and how this allows them to take a tremendous leap forward. We deem the clinical practical training to be the main reason for that. It's there that the students are confronted with challenging cases that make them dig deeper and prove what they are capable of. They gain experience that they would hardly ever find in private practice. After a severe accident the average patient would not go to see a Shiatsu practitioner. And even if he wanted to, he would be treated in hospital, where Shiatsu treatment is not usually available.

***In the Hara Shiatsu practical training we get confronted with extreme situations and patterns and all under the eyes of a critical audience.***

Since we are working with only six students in the practical training, the supervisors and their assistants are able to deal with the students' blind spots one on one, supporting them and challenging them in a positive way, to help them break through their physical and psychological barriers. In addition to this, the feedback from the clinical staff, the critical audience, is valuable testimony from a medical authority of the student's success. That is another factor that builds the students' self esteem and their confidence to work on cases that they had not dared to touch before. And this kind of confidence creates the basis for a successful carer as a Hara Shiatsu practitioner, because they learn what they can accomplish and what Hara Shiatsu is capable of, so they do not get surprised by symptoms that could overtax them in private practice and they have the confidence of having already proven successful in a hospital environment.

***There are not many Shiatsu practitioners who can claim to have experience with clinical work in the field of gynaecology, geriatrics, paediatrics, rehabilitation and psychiatry.***

In spite of only three practical trainings being necessary for graduation, many students decide to do a fourth one to enhance their abilities, sometimes even after graduation. We see a high level of independence in our students after graduation, which manifests in a successful private practice, in founding new Shiatsu schools and being integrated into clinical institutions.

## 8. Benefits for the partners

In addition to the benefits the patients get from Hara Shiatsu treatment, the other big plus is the wind of change that the students create in the institution. They face their cases with curiosity, questioning things that have become daily routine in the institution and that are maybe not considered important, but may be of utter importance to the patients and may provide other therapists and medical staff with some kind of insight. When it comes to healing of, let us say a knee, observing the emotional condition can be of more importance for Hara Shiatsu diagnosis, than just evaluating the physical condition. For example, if a man defines himself strongly by his feeling of being a victim of circumstance, than maybe he does not even want to get well, because in that case he would have to question the role he plays in life and develop a whole new strategy and attitude towards it. Hara Shiatsu diagnosis will take his into account because it focuses on the whole individual. Many institutions are understaffed and so the people working there are not able to give enough attention to the patients, even if staff and patients would like to have it that way.

***Therefore sometimes treating the staff has priority for us, since they carry the major part of the responsibility for their patients.***

And sometimes whole departments change under the influence of Hara Shiatsu. Our students inspire the staff to renew their focus on taking care of their own vitality, start to exercise, pay attention to the way they eat and of course keep their mind clear and focused. So finally a positive attitude develops and spreads to anyone involved. Other therapists also take advantage of the outcome and side effects of Hara Shiatsu treatments. Psychotherapists and psychiatrists for example are able to work much more effectively with hyperactive kids if the kids received Hara Shiatsu before they meet them. Their feedback says that the kids are calmer, more open to therapy and more aware of themselves after Hara Shiatsu treatment. In addition to this the institutions offering Hara Shiatsu treatment are demonstrating an open mindedness to alternative methods that clients expect nowadays from a modern institution that claims to make the individual the centre of attention.



## 9. The different trainings

### Rehab

In addition to the benefits the patients get from Hara Shiatsu treatment, the other big plus is the wind of change that the students create in the institution. They face their cases with curiosity, questioning things that have become daily routine in the institution and that are maybe not considered important, but may be of utter importance to the patients and may provide other therapists and medical staff with some kind of insight. When it comes to healing of, let us say a knee, observing the emotional condition can be of more importance for Hara Shiatsu diagnosis, than just evaluating the physical condition. For example, if a man defines himself strongly by his feeling of being a victim of circumstance, than maybe he does not even want to get well, because in that case he would have to question the role he plays in life and develop a whole new strategy and attitude towards it. Hara Shiatsu diagnosis will take his into account because it focuses on the whole individual.

Many institutions are understaffed and so the people working there are not able to give enough attention to the patients, even if staff and patients would like to have it that way. Therefore sometimes treating the staff has priority for us, since they carry the major part of the responsibility for their patients. And sometimes whole departments change under the influence of Hara Shiatsu. Our students inspire the staff to renew their focus on taking care of their own vitality, start to exercise, pay attention to the way they eat and of course keep their mind clear and focused. So finally a positive attitude develops and spreads to anyone involved. Other therapists also take advantage of the outcome and side effects of Hara Shiatsu treatments. Psychotherapists and psychiatrists for example are able to work much more effectively with hyperactive kids if the kids received Hara Shiatsu before they meet them. Their feedback says that the kids are calmer, more open to therapy and more aware of themselves after Hara Shiatsu treatment. In addition to this the institutions offering Hara Shiatsu treatment are demonstrating an open mindedness to alternative methods that clients expect nowadays from a modern institution that claims to make the individual the centre of attention.

**CORE ISSUES: Remobilisation after severe injuries - Reintegrating injured limbs into daily life - Rebuild trust in the body after trauma**

### Gynaecology

The practical training in this field deals with all the topics that have to do with being a woman, for example, the menstruation cycle (PMS, missing of menstrual periods, inter-menstrual bleeding), hormonal disturbances from taking the Pill or other forms of contraception, preparation for women who desire to have or are expecting a child, transition into menopause as well as general problems in and around the reproductive organs.

The cause of problems normally is a tendency towards "too much" or "too cold". An excess of energy is naturally eliminated from the body through menstruation. If this surplus is too much, it can lead to congestions. If this gets out of hand it can lead to inflammation of the ovaries or conglutination. Subsequently, also through emotional stress, the formation of cysts and myoma can occur.

To deal with such problems, our focus in Hara Shiatsu has to go beyond touch. Beside the treatment symptoms can be brought effectively under control through the use of certain herbal teas, avoiding meat and dairy products or supporting the treatment with the application of ginger. With find ourselves and our patients as much in the kitchen as on the floor doing shiatsu. But the main point and focus is, to support the women to find their very own rhythm and strength as a woman.

On the other hand, when the gynecological problems are related to cold, it can lead to a disturbance in the water and wood elements, causing conglutination and congestion in the lower abdomen, which, depending on how manifest it is, can make pregnancy impossible. However, even in the most difficult of these cases we are quite successful: 25% of women who, according to orthodox medicine, cannot become pregnant, fulfill their desire to have children through Hara Shiatsu within a period of one to two- years.

**CORE ISSUES:** *Menstruation issues - Desire for parenthood - Hara Shiatsu during pregnancy - Menopause problems - Problems with internal female organs (cysts, endometriosis etc)*

## Geriatrics

The physical contact through Hara Shiatsu can work wonders, above all, for people who have been alone for a long time and have closed up to the outside world and to life itself. Our work also comprises the re-mobilization and revitalisation of impaired parts of the body. The most important thing apart from dealing with these problems is encouraging the retirees do rediscover and rekindle their sense of the meaning of life. It is of utmost importance that what is still possible is put back into focus, instead of concentrating on things they cannot do anymore. Older people should be encouraged to express their creativity and vitality within the realms of their possibilities.

Dealing with the loss of a loved one is another core issue in the geriatric field. When friends and loved ones pass away the person "left behind" is painfully confronted with being alone and with the prospect of their own end as well, which can go so far as longing for death rather than having to live with grief. Hara Shiatsu helps to bring the focus back to life and the happy things that are still to come, instead of focusing on everything that has been lost over the years.

**CORE ISSUES:** *Aging well and happily - Age related diabetes - Rheumatism - Arthritis - Positive focus on the "golden years" Mourning the loss of loved ones - Grief - Being lonely - Fear of dying*

## Psychiatry

In psychiatry Hara Shiatsu is used for two reasons. Patients suffering from alcohol- or drug abuse as well as depression are helped to move out of their negative passive role. Patients suffering from addictive behaviour tend to be labelled - or see themselves - as victims. This attitude destroys their focus and trust in the possibility of change. They want to deal with the addiction and with the ways of the world that put them in the situation where they find themselves now. They see themselves as victims and everyone around confirms that point of view. It is important to cultivate their feeling of being in control and being able to lead a happy life. This confidence enables them to continue on their way even after having left hospital and returning to their old environment and social structure. That is accomplished by Shiatsu treatment on the one hand and by collective exercises, diet changes and working on a new positive focus on the other.

**CORE ISSUES:** *Alcohol and drug abuse - Depression / manic-depression - Patterns of disturbed personality (schizophrenia) Phobias*

## Paediatrics

From the Hara Shiatsu point of view children cannot be seen separated from their parents. Children may show a symptom, but the cause can be found in the parents. In clinical institutions – just like outside of them – it is hard however, to integrate the parents into the treatment and healing process. Therefore the opportunities are limited. However, children react very well to the Hara Shiatsu treatment, because the neutral, positively focused physical contact makes them feel secure and confident and builds a feeling of acceptance in a nonverbal way.

That kind of acceptance can sink in deeper than just an intellectual approach. A child's system is not yet divided into body and spirit and therefore can easily be supported by touch. And that is exactly where Hara Shiatsu in clinical institutions comes into play. An important positive side effect of Hara Shiatsu is confirming the nature of the individual that has often suffered by growing up in unlucky situations and environments and is often expressed as hyperactivity, bed-wetting or auto-aggression. Due to its physical approach, Hara Shiatsu is powerful supportive therapy in addition to others used in paediatric psychosomatic institutions.

**CORE ISSUES:** *ADS and ADHS - Impulsive behaviour - Distorted eating behaviour (anorexia and bulimia) - Bed wetting - Aggressive and auto-aggressive behaviour - Phobias - Abuse*