

Mother-daughter business offers medical massage therapy

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By Rose Luna Killeen Daily Herald

No pain, no gain.

That's what many people feel when they're on a massage table, having a knot worked out by a masseuse.

But the licensed massage therapist at Tranquil Retreat in Harker Heights feel a massage should involve a minimal amount of pain.

"We provide pain relief without trigger point therapy," said Laura Warwick, co-owner of Tranquil Retreat. "The techniques we use reeducate the muscles."

The family-owned business began when Warwick's mother, Barbara Robinson, massaged her husband through cancer and diabetes until he succumbed to his disease. Afterwards, Robinson moved in with her daughter.

"I told my mom that she did such a good job with my dad, that she should consider becoming a therapist," Warwick said.

Robinson, Warwick, and Warwick's daughter, Sarah Cantu, enrolled in the massage therapy course at Austin School of Massage Therapy.

The mother, daughter and granddaughter trio received their certificates in May 2006.

"We knew from the beginning that we wanted to open up our own place," Warwick said. "But there are too many spas in this area."

The maternal trio immediately took medical massage classes through LMT Success group.

"Their technique works within a client's pain tolerance, so we essentially provide pain relief without causing pain," Warwick said.

Soon afterwards, Warwick took various classes to add to her medical massage techniques.

"The way I see it, the more we can learn the better," Warwick said.

Therapists at Tranquil Retreat are also trained in the Critz Technique for upper and lower torso pain. This technique works within a client's pain tolerance, so the goal is to get rid of pain without causing more.

"We use it to treat low back pain, sciatica, neck and shoulder pain ... just about any pain radiating from the spine," Warwick said.

The Critz Technique is in no way a chiropractic treatment or trigger point therapy. This protocol is strictly soft tissue releases designed to restore balance to the musculoskeletal system naturally,

utilizing Classic Muscle Energy Technique, Positional Release Therapy, Myofascial Massage, and Cross Fiber Friction Massage. Many of the clients at Tranquil Retreat are soldiers returning from Iraq who have back problems from carrying heavy loads all day.

"Most of the soldiers will get a 30-minute medical massage, and then an hour fluff and buff," Warwick said. "The combination of both is more lasting."

Tranquil Retreat also offers Swedish massage, or "fluff and buff," which Warwick says is just as essential to the body as a medical massage.

"Getting any kind of massage is good," she said. "It releases good chemicals in your body and releases toxins in your muscles.

It also helps circulation, lower blood pressure and stress." Warwick is also trained in Russian Medical Massage for treating fibromyalgia, carpal tunnel syndrome and migraines.

"The woman who taught the class claims almost 100 percent improvement to most of her patients," Warwick said.

Warwick says her clients have been completely satisfied as well with the treatments and have noticed a positive difference in the way they feel. For expecting mothers, Tranquil Retreat has three licensed doulas, who are women who provide continuous physical, emotional and information support to the mother before, during and just after childbirth.

"The premise is to make the woman feel safe and protected," Warwick said.

Warwick will work with a mom-to-be to create a peaceful environment, whether it's through providing calming music and the relaxing scent of lavender or being the mother's advocate. She will meet with the parents during a prenatal visit to map out a plan of the delivery and go through the stages of childbirth – which is especially popular with first-time parents and single mothers.

"There are a lot of women, whose husbands are in Iraq, that will have a doula present during the delivery," Warwick said. "But in no way am I there to take the place of the daddy."

Studies have also shown that women attended by doulas have fewer secondary complications such as fever and infections, newborn problems and post-partum depression. Warwick has aided successfully in six births, and has six more births scheduled.

"I love it because I get to participate in a miracle," Warwick said.

The doula package at Tranquil Retreat starts at \$400, and includes two prenatal visits with massage, formulation of a birth plan, attendance and support during labor and delivery, a written birth log, around-the-clock telephone and e-mail support, pictures and a post-partum visit.

Tranquil Retreat is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. They do take walk-ins and are available for additional hours by appointment only. For more information, call the Tranquil Retreat at (254) 519-2273.

Contact Rose Luna at rluna@kdhnews.com or call (254) 501-7469