Massage therapist an educator

Coordination with other treatments is emphasized

By KAY S. PEDROTTI
For the Journal-Constitution

Xavier Johnson situated his medical massage therapy business in an office complex near Riverdale for a variety of reasons.

But the most important reason, he said, is that a central location provides better opportunities to educate the public about the medical advantages of massage.

A graduate of Georgia Medical Institute in Jonesboro and a former pastor and restaurant manager, Johnson approached massage therapy with the same gentle concern he displays in the other areas of his life. "It's not about the money, although we do have to support our families," he said; rather, it's about helping people overcome chronic pain, injuries and stress-related illness.

"Therapeutic touch is a complementary medical treatment, not intended to replace a physician's care, chiropractic or physical therapy. If all work together, which is what we strive for, the client, of course, gets more benefits," Johnson added.

Pioneering work in pregnancy massage, labor massage and treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder has yielded surprising and positive results, he said, and he intends to be part of the therapeutic massage community that continues that kind of research.

Johnson has five therapy associates, all working as needed. they are taught "the same touch," he said. Expertise in standards of muscle manipulation creates long-range benefits for both therapists and clients, Johnson said.

As an instructor at Georgia Medical Institute, Johnson also is dedicated to patient "education and self-care." He often gives what he calls "homework assignments," exercises or stretches for patients to do at home to increase their range of motion.

JOHNNY CRAWFORD / Staff

Xavier Johnson gives a massage at his Johnson Touch Therapeutics office. "Therapeutic touch is a complementary medical treatment, not intended to replace a physician's care, chiropractic or physical therapy," Johnson says.

Johnson charges $50 for an hour-long session and $35 for regular 45-minute treatments for pregnant women.

Not all managed-care and insurance plans cover the therapy, but most physician or chiropractic referrals are covered in some way, he said.

One of Johnson's clients, "Jane," said she had definitely been helped by massage therapy after a back injury. She was referred by her medical doctor, she added.

Johnson credits his 6-year-old son, Jamez, with his success. Bringing up his son continues to be a joyful experience that makes him focus on "being successful in a field that helps people, and that I love," he added. Eventually, he said, he would like to "return to pastoring . . . that's what I really want to do."

There is a spiritual element in his work, he said; it is not something he can "talk about or prove to most of the doctors, but I know it's there."

Johnson Touch Therapeutics is in Suite 4-A at 217 Arrowhead Blvd., near Southern Regional Medical Center. 770-472-1459.