

BIOFEEDBACK

Offered by Ryan Dielschneider at PPC

If your counsellor asked you to slow down your breathing and take a series of deep breaths, you probably wouldn't have much difficulty. But what if your counsellor asked you to reduce the activation of your sympathetic nervous system? Or, to increase the mean amplitude of low beta brain waves at your sensorimotor cortex? Chances are, you wouldn't even know where to begin. That's where biofeedback comes in. (And, if you were wondering: yes, we actually can have some direct control over our brain-waves!)

Biofeedback is a specialized technique used in psychology, physiotherapy, medicine, and related fields to help individuals learn self-regulation. The essence of biofeedback is right in the word – you get moment-to-moment information provided to you (feedback) about a physiological process in your body (bio). By getting to instantaneously see what's going on in your body, you can learn better control over yourself and, subsequently, optimize your functioning and live a better life.

Biofeedback services are now being offered at PPC by Counsellor Ryan Dielschneider who has completed training accredited by the Biofeedback Certification International Alliance (BCIA).

What kinds of self-regulation can biofeedback teach you?

First, biofeedback can help you learn to **Relax your Body** by training muscle tension and stress responses in your skin.

Second, biofeedback can help you learn to **Calm your Mind** by training heart-rate patterns related to resiliency and brain-wave patterns related to a 'busy brain.'

Third, biofeedback can help you learn to **Focus your Attention** by training brain-wave patterns related to maintaining a broad, open, alert awareness.

Put all together, biofeedback can ultimately help you to **Optimize your Performance**. Research has demonstrated it can be helpful for symptoms related to a wide variety of concerns, including but not limited to ADHD, anxiety, depression, trauma, chronic pain, headaches, substance use, and athletic performance.

What should I expect?

Biofeedback is safe, non-invasive, and painless. Initially, your therapist will complete a physiological profile assessment in order to get a baseline. Then, in a typical biofeedback session, your therapist will attach one or more sensors to you and then adjust the parameters of biofeedback software to optimize the training for you. The sensors simply measure something, such as brain-waves (EEG) or your level of anxiety (SC); they do not alter or impact you directly. While training, you will practice relaxing your body, calming your mind, and maintaining a focused mental state while the computer gives you feedback in the form of an animation, video, or game. (You can even train while watching almost any video on YouTube!)

It is a little bit like going to the gym, but you are improving your mind and exercising your nervous system. As you train, you consciously learn what the ideal physiological state feels like so you can bring it up at will – for example, when an anxiety attack is starting or when you need to concentrate on a task. In addition, your body passively learns to regulate and balance itself simply through the feedback rewards the computer provides, naturally moving toward healthier functioning.

Biofeedback training for as little as 15 to 20 minutes can create positive, permanent changes to clients' nervous systems. The types of biofeedback and number of training sessions required to reach an individual's goals are unique for every person. However, since biofeedback involves a steady process of learning, research suggests that gains will add up over time:

- Sessions 1 to 4: you should begin to notice positive changes in your attention, clarity, and ability to relax;
- Sessions 5 to 12: you should achieve moderate improvements in the areas you are working on;
- After 20 sessions: you should achieve significant improvements; and,
- Completing 40 sessions is typically the optimal “magic” number for obtaining the best results

**To book an appointment and try biofeedback training for yourself,
please call PPC at (306) 664-0000.**