

Important Aspects of Biofeedback

When considering biofeedback treatment, there are many important aspects to keep in mind. In contrast to medication, which may seem like a quick and cost-effective fix, biofeedback teaches the patient to develop and regulate his or own physiology. As such, biofeedback treatment has been shown to reduce medical costs, as well as the need for long-term medication. Skills learned during self-regulation therapies such as biofeedback can be applied throughout the individual's lifespan—meaning that the long-term effect leads to a better prognosis at significantly reduced medical costs.

One may also want to consider the particular modality of the biofeedback practitioner—temperature training, heart rate variability (HRV), hemoencephalographic (HEG), and electroencephalogram (EEG) biofeedback are all commonly used by biofeedback practitioners for different purposes. For instance, temperature training may be one practitioner's de facto method of treatment for anxiety disorders, while another practitioner would prefer using EEG biofeedback instead. In another case, a practitioner may see a client with chronic migraines and view the problem as a dysregulation in the central nervous system, thus prompting the use of heart rate variability biofeedback. Alternatively, a school of biofeedback practitioners would much prefer using HEG biofeedback for the treatment of migraines. In biofeedback research, it is common for multiple modalities to be used in one research study, e.g., substance abuse disorder is treated with both temperature training and EEG biofeedback.

Biofeedback is an especially important component of behavioral medicine, in that it literally "feeds back" information about the patient's own physiology. As such, biofeedback has immense capabilities to access deep physiological disorders. As biofeedback instruments are especially precise, a patient may be able to control a muscle to the extent of 1/10 of a microvolt (one ten-millionth of a volt). Notably, Olympic athletes have had tremendous success with biofeedback—most likely because they are well prepared to control fine muscle tension.

One is able to control his or her own physiology without any psychological insight whatsoever. This is especially important when treating those with limited language, or trauma-related disorders such as PTSD.