

# **BENEFITS & RISKS OF NEUROFEEDBACK**

## **Benefits of Neurofeedback**

The FDA recognizes that all interventions pose risks and benefits. Typically, the benefits of neurofeedback far outweigh the risks and although on occasion, it can result in non-serious adverse events. As a form of biofeedback it falls under the category of other low risk activities such as progressive relaxation, hypnosis, breathing exercises, meditation, yoga, energy medicine and massage. The benefits are usually experienced as improved focus, enhanced concentration, increased energy, higher quality sleep, decreased moodiness, diminished agitation, and reduction in anxiety, as well as reductions in other physical symptoms typically related to stress such as headache.

## **Risks of Neurofeedback**

Training with neurofeedback can occasionally result in adverse response(s) that temporarily increases symptoms, which are typically associated with relaxation and calming of the central nervous system such as fatigue, headaches, lightheadedness, dizziness, irritability, moodiness, weeping, insomnia, agitation, and difficulties with focus and anxiety. These reactions, if they occur, are temporary and typically only last 24-48 hours. Once clients become more relaxed and aware, they tend to integrate past emotional issues and these symptoms subside.

In pursuing neurofeedback training, I understand that:

- 1) NFB is not a quick fix or cure all but reduces symptom severity over time through training to improved Central Nervous System (CNS) regulation.
- 2) The average number of NFB sessions to achieve enduring change is 40 sessions.
- 3) On average, most people require 15 sessions to experience symptom changes. If symptom changes do not occur within 15-20 sessions, it is most likely due to either metabolic or personal relationship issues.
- 4) Side effects may result from prescribed drugs when dosage is not reduced over sessions.

- 5) The chronic use of psychotropic drugs impedes progress.
- 6) Reducing dependence on pharmaceuticals is a key objective of the training program.
- 7) Failure to notify your practitioner about changes in medications (changes in medication type, changes in dosages, taking new medications or stopping current medications) may negatively impact the overall efficacy of neurofeedback.
- 8) Some agitation or irritability may occur for a couple of weeks following the 15<sup>th</sup> session.
- 9) Clients must make efforts to manage diet, exercise, sleep and stressful activities to achieve the best results.
- 10) Failure to work with practitioner to make lifestyle changes can reduce or mitigate effects of NFB training.