

Case Studies with BAUD

PTSD – Burglary case

This case involves two people, husband and wife who appeared on the Dr. Phil Show because of their extreme fear in going back to their home after being burglarized and terrorized. Two masked men broke into their home at night while they were sleeping to rob them. The robbers held them at gunpoint while ransacking the home. The wife was raped before they left. Although the police noted that theirs were in a series of such robberies and associated crimes, there have been no arrests since this event.

The couple was referred for PTSD, although the husband expressed primarily anger and disgust, which was likely a result of fear. However, he was willing to move back into the house. The wife was obviously shaken and had tremors when discussing the event and her reaction to it. When asked if the arrests of the men responsible were made as a possible choice to move back, she was ambivalent.

Method

The subject and her husband had been in a therapy contract with an existing professional counselor. Although the therapist had noted progress in her depression, the fear response continued to be a challenge. The therapist asked for consultation for the desensitization session.

With the husband and therapist as observers, the following transcript was made to desensitize her:

After the subject had adjusted the ear buds for volume with the criteria of sensing the sound in the middle of the head and keeping it at a high level with good tolerance.

TH: “When you remember this incident, how do you experience in your body? Do you have any tension you can feel?”

S: "I feel it here (pointing to the diaphragm region.) I can't breathe, and I feel pain, like a spasm, for a long time."

TH: "Can you put your hand on that area?"

S: "Like this?"

TH: "With your hand there, can you hum a tone that you can feel in your hand?"

S: Subject hums and changes her pitch several times. After approximately thirty minutes she slowly announces her success. "When I hum this tone (demonstrates) I can feel it right here. Do you want to feel it (directed to me)? Do you want to feel it (directed toward husband)?"

Without hesitation the husband moves hand at the direction of his wife to a place on her lower chest. He nods his understanding and adds to her humming the approximate pitch to intensify the affect.

TH: "Okay, can you adjust this knob that controls the pitch in this device to get the same affect? It will be weaker, because it is not your voice, but see if you can find that pitch."

S: "Okay, I got it. Want to feel it?"

TH: "No, this is your feedback. Now this may be hard, and I can understand if you don't want to, but I want you to close your eyes and imagine that night and feel that place in your breathing area. And when you can image it and feel it in your body, I want you to erase the emotion by turning this knob." Subject nods in understanding.

With eyes closed with one hand on her lower chest and the only hand controlling the knob on the BAUD, she focused on the image. It was noted that she did not show signs of distress in her imagery. Rather she looked as if she was confronting it.

S: "Okay, I got it." She smiled at me, then at her husband, and then at the therapist.

Her therapist asked, "How do you feel?"

S: "I feel wonderful, like something was taken away. It was like my fears disappeared."

Her therapist: "We talked about your nausea and breathing difficulties before when we approached this. Are those feelings with you now?"

S: "No, I feel lighter. No sickness and I am breathing now."

TH: "Take a few more deep breaths and you can turn the device off now."

Discussion

The wife and husband returned to their house after a full police protection plan and sensory system were installed for burglary reasons. The therapist reported relief of symptoms in depression and irrational fear (although it was clearly understood that rational fear could be expected.)
