

Case Studies with BAUD

PTSD – Fuzzy creatures

The subject wrote into the Dr. Phil Show and appeared on “Wacky Resolutions” on Jan. 2, 2007. She described a phobia of people dressed up in fuzzy costumes. This irrational fear had existed since age 6 when she was in her home alone and two men attempted to break in. They were dressed like women; however, she generalized to any costume at this stage. She described her life as being diminished by this fear as well as her ten-year-old son. They never went to an amusement park, carnival, or any place where these costumes might be. Halloween was her hell night in which she would stay in her bedroom terrified of the possibility of confronting one of these people, even children. Her son and other validated her behavior.

Method

After Dr. Phil interviewed her on stage she was sent backstage where I worked with her with both the BAUD and EmWave, a biofeedback device that measures synchronicity between heart rate and variability with respiration cycles. As a person approaches a steady heart rate in concert with their breathing patterns, they have an experience of relaxation. There is a light that changes from red to blue to green indicating the progress to ward this goal.

After the subject was asked to adjust the volume so that she heard the sound in the middle of her head and the volume was comfortable, she was connected to both devices.

However, the EmWave was used primarily as an observation for the administration of the BAUD. The dialogue and instructions transcriptions were as follows:

TH: "When you image meeting a "fuzzy creature" what goes on in your body? We know that you go into panic mode in your head, but how does your body feel?"

S: "I hurt in the pit of my stomach. I can't breathe, I can't swallow, I feel that I may vomit."

TH: "So if I were dressed up in a fuzzy suit right now, you would be feeling your stress right there."

S: "And I would be running out of here through that door (gesturing toward the door.)"

TH: "Put your hand on that spot and see if you can sense a reaction to the sound when you turn that knob (upper right.) That is the pitch and sometimes people can notice a change in stress sensation at certain pitches or tones."

The subject closed her eyes and turned the knob. It was noted that the EmWave was indicating a red light, showing stress levels or disconcerted relationships of heart rates and breathing. This makes clinical sense since she was in the process of imaging her fearful scenarios.

S: "That is it. I can feel the stress change with this level."

TH: "Is it making your stress worse or better, do you think?"

S: "I don't know."

TH: "Okay, think of meeting your worse fuzzy, and turn this knob (upper left) to erase your fear."

S: "that would be a clown, but I don't understand how..."

The subject closes her eyes without completing the sentence. She turns the knob and shortly starts smiling while keeping her eyes closed. Her breath becomes more regular and it is noted that the biofeedback light on the EmWave turns to blue.

S: "It is working. The fear is disappearing."

TH: "Good. Keep on for a moment and use other fuzzy people if you want."

The subject keeps smiling as she experiences the shift. She starts to laugh. It is noted that the Biofeedback light on the EmWave has turned to green. Finally she opens her eyes.

S: "It's gone, all gone. I think I actually like them now. I can go up them and look them in the face."

TH: "Do you think you could hug them?" This is an EmWave device I discussed with you earlier. Would you breathe in these patterns and see how you feel?"

Subject breathes in accordance to the patterns on the EmWave; however, the light remains on green, making variability or feedback inappropriate. After five minutes, she looks at me with a broad grin.

TH: "Are you ready to go back to Dr. Phil?"

S: "I am so ready."

Discussion

Dr. Phil introduced back on the show and asked about her progress. She reported she was ready for them. Dr. Phil then brought the characters of Luci, Charlie and Snoopy for the Charlie Brown series dressed up in costumes. They danced to the stage. He asked her if she could shake hands with snoopy and she demonstrated her willingness. Later she hugged each of them on stage and was taped.

The producer did updates on her in two months. She had taken her son and mother to an entertainment park for a week (at Dr. Phil expense) with no fears.
