

# BIOFEEDBACK DEFINITIONS

**Biofeedback:** The process of helping clients measure and change their biological activities by relaxing and re-educating their muscles in order to help them manage their stress and pain.

**Biofeedback Equipment:** Medical devices used under the jurisdiction of and registered by the FDA, Health Canada and other international agencies, to help clients measure and change their biological activities by relaxing and re-educating their muscles in order to help them manage their own stress and pain. Here's a list of the most common biofeedback devices used by biofeedback specialists:

1. Capnometers measure the amount of carbon dioxide in the expired breath
2. Electroencephalograms (EEG) measure the amplitude and frequency of the client's brain waves
3. Electromyograms (EMG) measure the amount of tension in a client's muscle or muscle group
4. Galvanic Skin Resistance (GSR) devices measure the voltage, current and resistance of the client's skin Note: Electrodermal Resistance (EDR) devices are the same thing as GSR devices. Only the name is different.
5. Heart Rate Variability (HRV) devices measure the variability of the client's heart rate
6. Neurotherapy equipment is EEG biofeedback devices
7. Pulse Oximeters measure the oxygen content of the client's blood
8. Temperature Trainers measure the client's temperature at locations chosen by the operator

**Biofeedback Specialist:** A person trained to use biofeedback equipment to measure the biological activities of their clients, in order to teach their clients how to relax and re-educate their muscles, so their clients can manage their stress and pain.

**Client:** A person under the care of a biofeedback or neurofeedback specialist or other unlicensed professional. The term "patient" is applied to clients under the care of a licensed healthcare professional.

**Coach:** A person who empowers his or her clients to make their own decisions about healing themselves without advising or counseling in any way. To be a coach is the opposite of being a person who prescribes.

**Code of Professional Conduct:** The same thing as a Code of Professional Ethics.

**Code of Professional Ethics:** A formal statement outlining the things a professional can and cannot ethically do. Example

**Cure (Medical and Psychological):** To cure is to correct, heal, mend, regenerate, rehabilitate, relieve, remediate, repair, restore, treat or otherwise help a person recover

from any medical or psychological disease, disorder or condition. In most jurisdictions it is illegal for any unlicensed professional to cure or treat any medical or psychological conditions, diseases or disorders; and it is legal only for those licensed professionals whose license specifically includes the treating of medical or psychological conditions, disorders or diseases within the scope of practice for that license.

**Diagnose (Medical and Psychological):** To diagnose is to analyze, appraise, assay, assess, calculate, evaluate, estimate, examine, experiment, gauge, guess, investigate, judge, probe, rank, rate or reckon any medical or psychological condition, disease or disorder. In most jurisdictions it is illegal for any unlicensed professional to diagnose medical or psychological conditions, diseases or disorders; and it is legal only for those licensed professionals whose license specifically includes the diagnosis of medical or psychological conditions, disorders or diseases within the scope of practice for that license.

**Disclaimer:** A statement concerning what the professional does not do and what clients cannot expect from the professional services being offered. **Example** See also Standard Biofeedback Disclaimer and Standard Neurotherapy Disclaimer in this list. Professionals are tending to use fewer disclaimer forms and are more and more using informed consent forms in their place.

**Informed Consent Form:** A form including a disclaimer and waiver outlining the services to be provided and the risk of accepting those services. Clients are asked to read these forms and sign that they understand what they have read. Most professionals have an informed consent form which they require to be signed before providing any professional services. **Example**

**Licensed Therapist:** A professional qualified by law to diagnose, treat, cure and prevent disease, disorders and conditions permitted by their license and defined within their scope of practice.

**Neurobiofeedback:** Biofeedback using an electroencephalograph (EEG) to measure brain wave activity so clients can learn how to relax and re-educate their muscles in order to manage their stress and pain.

**Neurotherapy:** Another, and more common, name for neurobiofeedback or EEG biofeedback.

**Neurotherapist:** A professional trained to use neurofeedback equipment to measure the biological activities of their clients, in order to teach their clients how to relax and re-educate their muscles, so their clients can manage their stress and pain.

**Neurotherapist:** A professional trained to use neurotherapy equipment to measure the brain wave activities of their clients, and to teach their clients how to relax and re-educate their muscles in order to manage their stress and pain. Some neurotherapists have a broader scope of practice because they are licensed.

**Neurofeedback equipment:** Medical EEG devices used under the jurisdiction of the FDA and Health Canada to measure brain wave activities so clients can learn how to relax and re-educate their muscles in order to manage their own stress and pain.

**Neurotherapy equipment:** Medical EEG devices used under the jurisdiction of the FDA and Health Canada to measure brain wave activities for the purpose of diagnosing, assessing, and evaluating brainwave abnormalities. Neurotherapy equipment is usually operated by licensed professionals practicing neurotherapy within their scope of practice.

**Pain:** A physical, emotional, mental, psychological or spiritual symptom of stress or insult to the body, mind or emotions. Stress is best managed by the process of biofeedback. Insult is best managed by a licensed therapist trained in treating that particular medical disease or disorder.

**Patient:** A person under the care of a licensed therapist. The term "client" is used to designate a person under the care of an unlicensed professional.

**Peak Performance Specialist:** A specialty area within the scope of practice for Neurotherapy. Neurotherapy professionals may also call themselves peak performance specialists. Board Certified Neurotherapists also qualify to become certified as Certified Peak Performance Specialists.

**Prescribe:** To prescribe is to advise, apply therapies, coerce, counsel, manipulate, promote, recommend, require, suggest or otherwise treat a client. The opposite of prescribe is to coach.

**Prevent (Medical and Psychological):** To prevent is to take remedial action to cause any suspected medical or psychological disorder, disease or condition not to occur at some future date. In most jurisdictions it is illegal for any unlicensed professional to treat or prevent any possible future medical or psychological conditions, diseases or disorders; and it is legal only for those licensed professionals whose license specifically includes the treating or preventing of medical or psychological conditions, disorders or diseases within the scope of practice for that license.

**Qualified Biofeedback Professional:** Any licensed professional whose scope of practice includes biofeedback; and, in the absence of a biofeedback license in the person's jurisdiction, any person certified in biofeedback by a recognized certification board.

**Qualified Neurotherapy Professional:** Any licensed professional whose scope of practice includes EEG biofeedback; and, in the absence of an EEG biofeedback license in the person's jurisdiction, any person certified in EEG biofeedback by a recognized certification board.

**Relaxation:** The process of releasing, letting go, softening, lengthening and making more comfortable the physical, mental, emotional, psychological and spiritual tension, tightness, hardness, pain, stress and discomfort. Trained therapists can train clients how to relax and manage their own stress and pain.

**Scope of Practice:** The scope of practice outlines the types of disorders, diseases and conditions a person with a specific license may diagnose, treat, cure or prevent. The scope of some licensed professionals includes the practice of biofeedback, neurofeedback and/or neurotherapy. Some do not. The scope of practice for unlicensed biofeedback and neurofeedback professionals is relaxation and muscle re-education with the intention to reduce a client's stress, pain or hypertension.

**Standard Biofeedback Disclaimer:** Neither biofeedback therapists nor biofeedback devices are intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any medical or psychological disease, disorder or condition. Healthcare providers licensed to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any medical or psychological disease, disorder or condition may use biofeedback devices for any purpose permitted by their license.

**Standard Neurotherapy Disclaimer:** Neither neurofeedback therapists nor neurofeedback devices are intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any medical or psychological disease, disorder or condition. Healthcare providers licensed to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any medical or psychological disease, disorder or condition may use neurofeedback devices for any purpose permitted by their license.

**Stress:** A biological reaction to physical, emotional, mental, psychological or spiritual stimuli whereby normal functioning is compromised. According to studies published in major medical journals, stress is implicated as the cause of about 80% of all disease.

**Stress Management:** A specialty area within the scope of biofeedback. Certified Biofeedback Specialists also qualify to call themselves stress management specialists and to become certified as a Certified Stress Management Specialist.

**Therapist:** A generic term referring to a clinician or other trained person providing any type of training to the public. Licensed therapists may diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any medical or psychological disease, disorder or condition permitted by their license. Unlicensed therapists may not legally diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any medical or psychological disorder, disease or condition. There is pressure from some licensing boards to require all therapists to have a license.

**Training:** A generic term referring to interventions with a client for the purpose of assisting the client with a specific training such as psychotherapist, massage training, biofeedback training, and other health-improving therapies.

**Treat:** To treat is to attempt to cure by various means. In most jurisdictions it is illegal for any unlicensed professional to treat any medical or psychological conditions, diseases or disorders; and it is legal only for those licensed professionals whose license

specifically includes the treating of medical or psychological conditions, disorders or diseases within the scope of practice for that license.

**Unlicensed Therapist:** A person trained to be a professional provider but who is not qualified to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any medical or psychological condition, disease, disorder. By law it is illegal in the United States, Canada and most other jurisdictions in the world for unlicensed therapists to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any medical or psychological disease, disorder or condition. In these same jurisdictions it is legal for qualified professionals to practice biofeedback and neurofeedback as long as they do not diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any medical or psychological disorder, disease or condition.

**Waiver:** To give up a right or benefit. A Signed Waiver Form is a form requiring a signature to abrogate the rights being given up. **Example** Professionals tend to be moving away from waiver forms and using informed consent forms instead.