

Notes Dr. Dan Chartier, “The treatment process that Dr. Lucy Chartier and I offer our patients at Life Quality Resources in Raleigh is itself a training process: training the body to respond differently to stress or injury; training the brain to wake up, calm down, or have better focus.”

Dr. Dan Chartier’s introduction to this process of neuro- and biofeedback was an introduction to his life’s work. For more than 30 years, he, and his wife and partner, Dr. Lucy Chartier, have been guiding their patients through this simple method of learning to change everything from unhealthy patterns of muscle tension causing chronic pain to ADHD.

“Our work is grounded in learning theory,” he continues, “and is based on the knowledge that if a person practices something—whether it’s a relaxation of muscles or a shift of their autonomic nervous system through feedback training—they are engaged in a learning process that has an ultimate treatment effect of reducing or eliminating physical and psychological symptoms.”

Training the body and the brain to eliminate pain and distress comes as second nature to this pair now, but to become trainers required years of training of their own. Their professional development and backgrounds followed different paths and, while today each is an expert in psychotherapy, bio- and neurofeedback, each continues to pursue continued professional education in ways that bring diverse strengths to their shared practice.

DR. LUCY CHARTIER

Dr. Lucy Chartier began her professional career as a nurse. Quickly realizing her passion for psychiatric nursing, she returned to school at the University of Kansas where she earned a Master’s degree in Psychiatric Nursing, followed by a PhD in Clinical Psychology from the Union Institute in Cincinnati.

“In order to become a competent practitioner of psychology,” she explains, “one must go through the work oneself. What we do is all about helping our patients to become self-aware, to acknowledge the impact emotions have on the physical body, or to tune in to themselves enough to change patterns of thinking or behavior. Self-awareness is key, and it’s vital that we as the practitioners guiding our patients to accomplish this are self-aware, as well.”

“So, in my graduate training,” she continues, “group work was a significant part of what we did. Training in psychoanalysis was a part of my work as a PhD student. While psychoanalysis isn’t the methodology I practice today, it was an important part of my training in terms of coming to know and understand myself well enough to be able to help my patients do the same.”

“There’s a difference in that kind of work, the kind that is an on-going process of reflection and self-improvement, and the weekend workshops to become an ‘expert’ in some specific named method I see so much of today. The bio- and neurofeedback we provide requires engagement with the



Drs. Lucy and Dan Chartier

Training to Change *Life Experiences*

“The *changes in the technology* that the doctors have witnessed over the course of their careers *have been profound.*”

patient from a place of honesty, and sometimes vulnerability, that can only happen when you have opened up and worked through your own trials—just as we are asking the patient to do.”

Dr. Chartier continued her professional education: ten years ago, she earned certification as a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner from Rush University in Chicago.

“I didn’t like caring for my patients from a psychological perspective, and then having to send them away for medication management,” she explains. “It felt like disjointed care, and I didn’t always agree with what my patients were being prescribed. I always prefer to keep people off of medications when possible, but when it’s necessary, I am now able to provide more comprehensive care.”

DR. DAN CHARTIER

Dr. Dan Chartier began his professional training at UNC-Chapel Hill, where he earned an undergraduate degree in psychology, and a master’s degree in counseling. He followed these accomplishments with study at North Carolina State University, where he graduated with a PhD in psychology. It was early on in his career, during his doctoral training, that Dr. Chartier’s path took a turn towards what

would become a lifelong process of training and learning.

“There was a pivotal moment, an epiphany of sorts, that occurred while I was in my PhD program,” he recalls. “A fellow grad student, Kelly, made an announcement in class that he had gotten funding to purchase biofeedback equipment to train patients at Cherry Hospital in Goldsboro, to improve their ability to control stress and to relieve pain. He was asking for fellow grad students to volunteer to help him figure out how to do the training, and that sounded interesting to me.”

Needless to say, Dr. Chartier volunteered.

“Kelly wired me up to this biofeedback equipment in nice wooden cases—like old stereo equipment—with analog meters, buttons and dials,” he recalls. “He put wires on my head to monitor muscle tension in my forehead and a temperature sensor on my fingertips.”

“He was essentially reading instructions from the manual on how to relax,” Dr. Chartier says, clearly amused at the memory. “And I wasn’t doing very well. Then, while I was sitting there, it occurred to me that, through the Raja Yoga I had been practicing for years, I had become familiar with an

inner sense of deep calm and peacefulness. I wondered what would happen if I followed the meditative experience that I’d been cultivating with my Yoga. So, I took a few breaths and tapped into that familiar pathway.

“Within seconds, I heard Kelly say, ‘My gosh! What are you doing?’ Instantly, Dr. Chartier remembers, all of the meters had dropped from ‘tense’ into the ‘very relaxed’ zone. “That was a direct awareness, an epiphany for me,” he says. “It told me two things: First, that the subjective experience that I’d been cultivating through this learned process of meditation was capable of producing a physiological change that was being objectively monitored by this biofeedback equipment.”

“Secondly, it occurred to me that I could use this biofeedback stuff to help teach my patients how to access this deeper calm, peaceful state. I knew that this very direct, practical will to make a dial move could impact my work as a psychologist in a huge way. And because it’s such an amazingly successful tool in the treatment of my simplest and my most challenging cases alike, it’s been a path that’s been happily followed over the last 30 years of my professional life.”

CHANGES IN THE TECHNOLOGY

From those stereo-sized wooden boxes housing the first biofeedback equipment, to the modern iPhone, the changes in the technology that the doctors have witnessed over the course of their careers have been profound.

“There’s been a proliferation of inexpensive, but apparently accurate feedback mechanisms that can be used on Smartphones,” Dr. Dan Chartier says. “It’s phenomenal, really. And it’s making my job easier, because when I see a client, instead of them coming in once or twice a week to practice their biofeedback skill development, I can encourage them to get a phone app and an appropriate set of sensors and practice every day. So, it’s really revolutionizing the field in terms of this accessibility.”

“This increased access speeds the dynamics of treatment considerably,” Dr. Chartier finds. “Of course, the timing all depends on the levels of psychological and emotional complexity involved in the physical symptoms we’re treating. But having access to daily training speeds the process along significantly—and is something I couldn’t have imagined 30 years ago.” *h&h*

For further information about neurofeedback, biofeedback, and psychotherapeutic services offered by Drs. Dan and Lucy Chartier and their associates, contact:

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