

Human relationships can certainly be toxic. Doctors Dan and Lucy Chartier, of Life Quality Resources in Raleigh, are both pioneers and contemporary experts in the art of psycho-emotional detoxification. With skills and knowledge based on more than three decades of experience, Dr. Dan Chartier, a board-certified psychologist, and Dr. Lucy Chartier, a psychiatric Nurse Practitioner with a doctorate in clinical psychology, are acknowledged masters of innovative techniques to train the human brain—in ways of letting go of a toxic past and learning to live and thrive in a detoxified present.

“Of course, there are many ways in which we are exposed to toxins,” Dr. Dan Chartier observes. “In our practice and our work here at Life Quality Resources, we are primarily interested in the psycho-emotional and relationship toxicity that can impair a person’s sense of happiness and the quality of his or her life. At the same time, we also recognize that if we’re not doing everything we can to avoid the build-up of physical and chemical toxins—such as air pollution and toxins that may reside in the foods we eat—then we’re not really addressing the full, comprehensive picture.”

TOXIC STRESS

“Considering first psycho-emotional issues,” he continues, “there are many ways in which our bodies react to the day-to-day stress of our world: traffic in the morning, lost car keys, a disagreement with your spouse or partner. All of these things are going to create toxicity in the body in the form of stress hormones. In the face of these inevitable life events, cortisol levels rise, the adrenal system kicks in, and at times the whole cascade of the fight-flight system responds. The end result of each of these processes in small, isolated episodes, often on a frequent, daily basis, produce physical and mental issues that are ultimately biologically toxic to our well-being.

“And if we don’t do something about this toxicity that we create within our own bodies, then we are carrying around our own bit of toxic poison without even having to breathe toxic air or drink toxic water.”

Dr. Lucy Chartier agrees, and adds: “So, the question then is how aware can we be of when we’re out of balance, and when that psycho-emotional toxicity level has risen? Basically, if you’re not feeling happy, if you’re not feeling at least content in your present experience, then that’s a red flag that something is out of balance.”

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

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RELEASING OUR EMOTIONAL TOXICITY

“Psychotherapy helps us look as far back as we need to go to find those earliest traumas, those original events that cause a person to react in a toxic way,” Dr. Lucy Chartier says. “Often, whatever those initial experiences may have been, they create a vulnerability to similar kinds of toxins that develop through life experiences.”

Notes Dr. Dan Chartier: “It’s the Default Mode Network—the part of the brain that becomes active when we’re not doing anything else. It’s kind of the idling mode of the brain. And for most people, if you were to begin really paying attention to what’s going on in those idling moments, the thought cycles, the ruminative thinking, you’d find it to be a largely negative space. It’s going to be self-critical, concentrating on failures and disappointments. That in itself is a fundamental psycho-emotional toxin. So, the way we do anything about that is first learn the feeling of what really being neutral is—the essence of that default mode.”

BRAIN SCIENCE DRIVEN

“It’s interesting, because much of our work these days is brain science driven,” he offers. “Our stress management methods now are all about how we change our thinking and our reactivity. But it gets even more fundamental than that. What happens when you unplug from that default mode—exiting the cortical and dropping back into the limbic—the earlier areas of the brain where we’re focused on releasing anything and everything that is reactive? It’s a very pleasant state once one learns to do it. This is one of the things we have been helping train our patients to do for 30 years with the use of bio- and neurofeedback. With the use of our equipment and experience, it’s like anything else you can learn to do—it just takes practice.

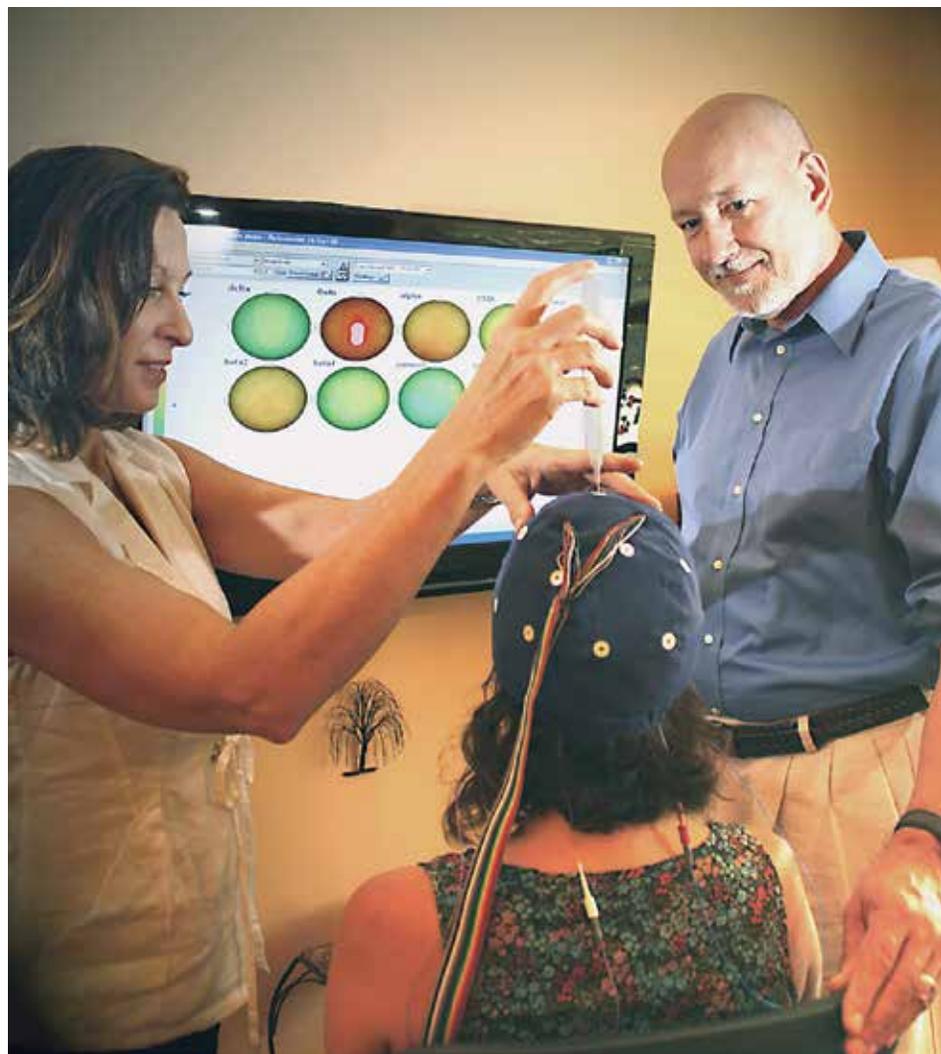
“Once we can help a person achieve this level of awareness, it becomes possible to break the cycle of toxic reactivity which has built up over the course of a lifetime.”

Notes Dr. Lucy Chartier, “It’s like having a food allergy; if you’re allergic to eggs, and you eat something with even a trace amount, your body is going to let you know, *I just ate something that wasn’t good for me.* Similarly, as you get more pure and clear in your psycho-emotional space, and that sense of contentment, balance, and well-being strengthens, it becomes easier to notice when a conversation or relationship is dipping into that toxic realm, allowing you to choose to disengage from that potential source of psycho-emotional toxicity.

“So, we work very hard with our clients to help them find that pure, neutral energy, that ability to just be for a moment, and to identify where those toxins are located in that person’s life in order to help clear them out.”

DETOX TRAINING

The methods used by Doctors Dan and Lucy Chartier to achieve these expressed goals “go well beyond traditional psychotherapy, though basic, fundamental therapy is no doubt the bedrock upon which



Drs. Lucy and Dan Chartier.

Prescriptions for Toxic Relationships

all psycho-emotional resolution is built,” Dr. Lucy Chartier observes.

“What we do expands on the basic understanding of psychotherapy. There are a number of objective biomarkers that we use to measure things like stress and anxiety being exhibited by the body. We can monitor surface EMG—muscle tension—with sensors on the forehead, masseter, neck, and shoulder muscles. Because we know what normal is in terms of microvolts put out by the relaxed muscle, elevated readings from a patient who is intentionally trying to be relaxed are a red flag that they are carrying more toxic tension than is necessary.”

“Learning to control this muscle tension,” Dr. Dan Chartier adds, “is learning the technique of self-regulation, which we assist and support in our training with biofeedback technology.”

Surface EMG is only one example of the use of biofeedback, and the type of support and guidance to a less toxic way of living offered at Life Quality Resources. “Along with everything we do,” Dr. Dan Chartier concludes, “will come encouragement to improve diet, increase exercise, engage in healthy leisure activities, work-life balance, fighting fair, and to live with respect and partnership for the self and others.”

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