



Dr. Chartier engages with a young client seeking to modify the impact of ADD during a biofeedback session.

Dr. Dan Chartier, psychophysiological psychologist and co-founder of Life Quality Resources, believes that some of the most powerful healing tools reside within us—in what he calls *our internal physician*. “While medication can help the healing process,” he says, “sometimes all it’s doing is treating symptoms.”

Dr. Chartier emphasizes that he is not anti-medication. “I take meds for various things when I need them and certainly work with people who rely on medication. And, in truth, it is often helpful in assessing a patient to know what pharmaceutical agent is helpful to them. For example, children with ADHD who respond to stimulant medication also will respond to neurofeedback.”

“I think the problem lies less with the medication itself than with the perspective—that has become so prevalent ever since penicillin—that ‘medication is the answer.’ And we tend to confuse the symptom relief provided by medication with a ‘cure,’ and in the process ignore the source of the problem.”

“But what I have experienced throughout my career is that there are other powerful ways to treat the sources of psychological and physical pain and disease. And, in our work at Life Quality Resources, we rely primarily on alternatives to medication to harness the internal healing capacity we all have.”

These alternatives include biofeedback and neurofeedback, techniques with demonstrated efficacy in treating a wide variety of conditions ranging from anxiety and attention deficit disorder, to headaches and adult hypertension, to temporomandibular joint issues (TMJ), urinary incontinence, asthma, and more.

“Biofeedback is not a magical panacea for all conditions,” says Dr. Chartier, “but it does illustrate the power of tapping into our own healing capacity—what I call our ‘inner physician.’”

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

**LIFE QUALITY RESOURCES**  
5613 Duraleigh Road, Suite 101  
Raleigh, NC 27612  
Telephone: (919) 782-4597  
[www.LifeQualityResources.org](http://www.LifeQualityResources.org)

# Positive Reinforcement *Can Be Powerful Medicine*

## POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT YIELDS POSITIVE RESULTS

Dr. Chartier cites two of the many children he’s successfully treated using neurofeedback training. “One of the earliest child patients I worked with had tested at a below-average IQ level over several years and testing points,” he recalls. “After several months of neurofeedback training, the young man improved in attention and focus. And in the next school year, his special education teacher noticed such a difference that she retested his IQ, finding it to be above average!”

“We didn’t make him smarter,” explains Dr. Chartier, “but we made him more able to respond to the test situation in a way that demonstrated that he had cognitive skills. He had abilities that had just been obscured by his inattentiveness.”

“Another example was a fourth-grader who, after a few months of training, came in beaming and clutching piece of paper that seemed to be a most valuable object. He couldn’t wait to show us that he had scored his first-ever A grade on an assignment.”

“When asked how he managed to do so well, he said: ‘Well, I did that dizzy thing with my brain.’ He was trying to describe the subjective experience of what it was like to stay focused and attentive. And it wasn’t dizzy like spinning around. He was feeling his brain engaged in a way that hadn’t been a part of this awareness before he started doing the training.”

## BEYOND ADD / ADHD

Anxiety is another condition where Dr. Chartier regularly works with people to help reduce or eliminate medication. “Anxiety,” he explains, “presents in the brain with a lower activation level of alpha brain waves—what I would call the brain’s ‘idling rhythm.’ When alpha is elevated, the brain is in a quieter or calmer state; as anxiousness begins to develop, alpha plummets rapidly. If we can give a person feedback on even the slightest increase of alpha, they begin to get a better and better sense of what it’s like to generate more alpha levels. This reduces the subjective feeling of anxiety.”

“And this same approach,” he notes, “can also be useful for people susceptible to alcoholism or other substance abuse, who often have deficits of alpha brain waves.”

## TECHNOLOGY HELPS ENABLE REMOTE TRAINING

Amid these unusual times, at-home tools play an important role in Dr. Chartier’s work. The *HeartMath* system offers an app called *Inner Balance*, while another device, the *Muse*, feeds its smartphone app information about alpha activity via a headband with sensors. These tools don’t require a prescription, making progress possible even during a pandemic.

“These tools are a wonderful resource,” says Dr. Chartier. “For many patients, we’re now able to guide biofeedback and neurofeedback training safely and remotely—which wasn’t previously possible. Just as in the case of a musician spending daily time on their instrument, the brain and the mind-body system can be made better with persistent, appropriate practice.”

Dr. Chartier adds that people with diagnosed psychological and psychiatric conditions may need additional help—beyond such training—based on what may underlie these lower alpha levels or other imbalances. “These underlying issues might include repressed memories of traumatic events or adverse childhood experiences,” he explains, “which need to be addressed with psychotherapy. So, the brain training isn’t a standalone tool—it’s all part of the healing.” **h&h**

**“Medications for ADD and ADHD address symptoms. They provide no real help in changing the biological underlying conditions that produce inattentive behavior.”**

“Its effectiveness stems, in part, from creating a positive feedback system for the body, mind, and emotions,” he explains. “By giving the signal that something is good and healthful, we increase the probability that the behavior will occur again—whether it’s the suppression of anxiety or more calm and joyful feelings in a depressed person or the ability to focus in a child who’s never known what really focusing feels like.”

While many medicines aim to reduce symptoms, he explains, “behavioral training can bring the mind, brain, body, and emotional networks back in balance in a way that eliminates the symptoms, all while actively engaging the patient in the process.”

## ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ADD AND ADHD

Dr. Chartier often uses biofeedback/neurofeedback with individuals with ADD and ADHD. “Attention itself is a skill that involves the coordination of different activity levels in the brain,” he says, “and the brain can be trained in a similar way to an athlete training select muscles.”

Stimulants are the primary medication used for attention and focus problems, notes Dr. Chartier. “They’re effective—in that they speed up the brain’s activity, moving it out of that slower, daydream frequency. However, they also bring serious consequences, like poor appetite and weight loss or even a negative rebound effect when the medication wears off.”

“There are now a number of different meds being used, some in combination with anti-depressants, that are helpful,” he says. “But I always wonder what the long-term costs are to the child who, at seven or eight, is put on a stimulant medication and kept on it for their entire school career. Some indications are that they’re more susceptible to drug abuse and other negative behaviors.”

“And, importantly, these meds address *symptoms*. They provide no real help in changing the underlying biological conditions that produce inattentive behavior. When the medication runs out, the patient is back in the same inattentive, unfocused state that they were in before they took medication.”

Self-regulation training using biofeedback and neurofeedback, on the other hand, says Dr. Chartier, “helps accurately identify and encourage the more focused, attentive patterns in the brain. In other words, we can *train* our brains to focus—at any time—rather than temporarily *drugging* our brains to focus.”

“We’re not anti-medicine; we’re pro-positive behavior,” he emphasizes. “And time and again, we’ve observed ADD/ADHD patients learn to focus themselves and reduce or even eliminate the need for medication as the training takes effect.”