Biofeedback For Stress Management

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FSAP ... finding solutions to life’s challenges.
Objectives

- Describe the basics of biofeedback
- Identify the relationship between physical symptoms and overall experience of stress
- Demonstrate the practice of techniques to monitor and change the body’s responses
What is Biofeedback?

The process of increasing awareness of physiological functions using instruments that provide feedback on the body’s activity in order to learn to manipulate them at will.

(Durand & Barlow, 2009)

Biofeedback instruments can be simple or complex, expensive or affordable.
Biofeedback (Continued)

- Some of the processes that can be controlled include brain waves, muscle tension, heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, and skin conductance.

- May be used to improve health, performance, and the physiological changes that often occur in conjunction with thoughts, emotions, and behavior.

(Association for Applied Psychophysiology & Biofeedback, 2008)
How It Reduces Stress

- Stress results in faster heart rate, restricted breathing, higher BP, reduced temperature in extremities, and increased skin conductance.

- If you intentionally increase those, it results in increased stress.

- Intentionally reducing those responses naturally reduces the experience of stress itself and improves adaptive responding.
Health Benefits

- Stress Management
- Hypertension
- Migraines
- Pain Management
- Anger Management
- Distress Tolerance
- Sleep
FSAP Offerings

- Heart Rate
- Breathing
- Skin Conductance (also called Galvanic Skin Response, like the old “lie detector tests”).
Demonstrations
Best Practices

Do’s
• Start out practicing at quiet times and comfortable spaces
• If longer periods are difficult, start small
• Give yourself time to learn and practice
• Gradually incorporate into stressful moments or environments

Don’ts
• Practice when you are already stressed (at first)
• Push yourself too hard if it is not automatic
• Go straight from practice into chaos or vice versa
• Practice in bed or just before bed
• Practice if taking medication or other substances.
Questions
