

Neurofeedback And The Senior Mind - A Useful Therapy For The Brain?

Of all the things that people fear about growing old, losing their mental faculties is right at the top of the list. For generations we have thought of grandpa forgetting where he left his keys or grandma using string tied around her finger to remember to take her medicine as just a part of the aging process. These problems were just thought to be an inescapable part of growing old, with nothing that anyone could do about it.

Compared to even ten years ago, the medical community has made gigantic leaps in what they understand about how the human brain and the nervous system actually work. This is an ongoing process, but even now, we know that it is possible to slow the advance of dementia as a person enters their "golden years" and possibly much further, thanks to increasing use of neurofeedback therapy.

Dealing with Dementia

A recent study was conducted on a group of patients suffering from the symptoms of dementia using neurofeedback as the only treatment. The results were very promising. The study concluded that it is quite probable that the use of brain biofeedback therapy can slow the memory loss associated with aging. It is also possible that it will reverse the process somewhat and actually improve memory over time. While this may not sound as exciting as saying there is a cure, it is definitely a step in the right direction.

What About Those with Alzheimer's Disease?

For families coping with a relative who suffers from Alzheimer's disease, life can feel completely out of control. The realization that there is nothing they can do to stop a loved one from slowly slipping into mental oblivion is beyond frustrating. In addition, the lack of understanding by society has placed a fear of this disease into the minds of many people.

Does neurofeedback really help those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease? In some cases, it has been proven to make a difference, but exactly why it has made a difference in some patients and not others is still uncertain. The main reason is most likely that we really do not have a firm grasp of what causes the disease in the first place.

Medical science is just beginning to understand what causes Alzheimer's disease. According to Professor John Gruzelier, of Imperial College London at Charing Cross, "Neurofeedback has been proven to be effective in altering brain activity, but the extent to which such alterations can influence behavior are still unknown." Notice, he did not place a cap on what is possible, he is simply saying, in so many words "this much we know, and we need to see what else there is to know."

What we can say, at this point, is that many case studies have demonstrated the ability of neurofeedback therapy to initiate positive changes in people with Alzheimer's. Some of them are very remarkable changes; others are less impressive, but positive changes nonetheless. The fact that neurofeedback therapy is non-invasive and has virtually no side effects also makes it worthy of consideration as a viable therapy. As we begin to discover more about what is happening within the brain of those who suffer with Alzheimer's, we will be able to more accurately determine how to best use neurofeedback to intervene.