

How to Protect Yourself

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Information presented here for educational purpose only

By taking the proper precautions, biofeedback professionals can protect themselves against the uncertainties in natural health care brought about by Codex Alimentarius and the pharmaceutical industry.

INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

In my experience, biofeedback professionals who use an informed consent form similar to the examples given on the NTCB website win any attempts to find them guilty of practicing anything without a license. These cases are normally dropped before the scheduled hearings.

Informed consent forms list the types of services you do not offer and those that you do. By signing your informed consent form, your clients admit they understand that you offer services to help them relax, manage their stress, re-educate their muscles, manage their pain and improve the quality of their lives. They also understand that you are not licensed to perform the services of the professions you list on that form.

The message is clear. One way to protect your future income is to require every client to sign your informed consent form.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

The more you know about the operation of your biofeedback equipment, clinical skills, coaching techniques, anatomy and other topics related to your biofeedback business, the more the public and other professionals consider you a biofeedback expert. The more you become an expert who practices biofeedback and nothing but biofeedback, the quicker licensing boards and judges dismiss your case if you are falsely accused.

It makes sense to get as much education as quickly as you can. In my experience, those professionals who accumulate 100 hours of training within the first three to six months provide better services to the public than those who don't. This training can be in formal classrooms, in large groups or small, over the internet or telephone, one-on-one with another professional, by correspondence courses or self-study. How you obtain the knowledge is not nearly as important as the knowledge you learn.

If you take one of those one week courses that cover basic, intermediate and advanced biofeedback training, you need another 60 hours of training to consider yourself competent to face a license board in defense of yourself. If you take a short one, two or three day training, you should consider that as only a small part of the knowledge you need to gain. In my opinion, your biofeedback training should include human anatomy and coaching unless you've already completed those courses earlier.

If you don't feel competent operating the equipment you own, your clients won't consider you competent either. Practice on yourself and anybody you know willing to be your learning helper. My suggestion is not to charge anybody for your services until you know you're ready to be a professional.

Start out as a technician under the supervision of one or more experts in the operation of your equipment and clinical skills. Be prepared to pay for this service because it's a great learning experience. Improve your skills and knowledge base and grow into the expert you are capable of becoming. That's my suggestion.

The message is clear. One way to protect your future income is to learn as much as you can about biofeedback and the business of biofeedback as quickly as you can.

CERTIFICATION

Certification is always optional. You're never required to be certified in biofeedback.

However, research consistently shows that both the public and other professionals are more likely to consider you an expert if you are certified. If you want to work with medical doctors and chiropractors, or if you expect to obtain referrals from these professionals, they will expect you to be certified in biofeedback as a minimum.

Research consistently shows the public prefers to do business with a certified biofeedback professional if they have that option. Licensing boards, attorneys and judges tend to look more favorably upon certified biofeedback professionals than those who are not certified.

The message is clear. Certification is a necessary cost of doing business if you want to be perceived as being an expert biofeedback provider.

MALPRACTICE PROTECTION

We're all human. We all make mistakes. We are all capable of malpractice every day of our lives.

There are a lot of good honest people in this world. There are also a few that will do anything and say anything to get rich quick. The more clients you see each week, the greater the probability you'll meet a client of the second kind. We all have this unhappy opportunity. Even if we do everything perfectly, we may be accused of doing terrible things and juries may believe the liars.

When this happens, attorney bills can cripple your finances and judgments can ruin your business and reputation. None of us can afford this.

The message is clear. Malpractice protection is a necessary cost of doing business for most biofeedback professionals.

OTHER PROTECTION

There are several kinds of insurance policies designed to protect you against catastrophic loss. It pays to study the risks and make an educated decision about what's best for you and your family. The message is clear. You need to decide what and how much additional protection you and your family need.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Biofeedback associations and other professional organizations are a great source for changes occurring in the biofeedback profession. They are good sources of information about new research, new publications, unfolding events that impact your business and other resources.

Research consistently shows that the public looks more favorably upon professionals who belong to professional organizations. Your image as a professional is enhanced by the professional groups you join. You're more likely to be quoted in local newspapers and radio if you're certified and belong to a professional biofeedback organization.

The message is clear. Considering membership in a professional organization a normal cost of doing business is normally a wise thing to do.

PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

My suggestion to new biofeedback professionals is to decide how you want the public and other professionals to view you. Do you want them to see you as a professional person or somebody providing a service at a reasonable price? Do you want them to consider you an expert in stress management, pain management or some other specialty in biofeedback?

Decide what niche you want to fill and do everything humanly possible fill that niche. This means you need to obtain more and higher quality education than your competitors. It may mean you become certified in biofeedback or in a specialty or both. It probably means you join a professional association and protect yourself and your financial future.

Formulate your own professional code of ethics and share this with your clients. It will not only keep your clients informed, it's good advertising. You will draw to yourself the kinds of clients you want to serve, the ones you can help the most, the ones who embrace your professionalism.

SUGGESTIONS

My suggestion is that you find a niche you can fill in your community and then do everything you can to become the expert that fills that niche. Pursue a great education. Develop your own code of professional ethics and share it with your clients. Create and use a solid informed consent form. Get certified in biofeedback or neurotherapy and/or a specialty of your choice. Protect your future and your family. Join a biofeedback association and other professional organizations that enhance your public and professional image. Love life, your family, your clients, business associates and your profession. Become the expert you can become.

DISCLAIMER

I am retired and no longer practice biofeedback, neurotherapy or naturopathy.

While I was involved in the founding of the Quantum Biofeedback Providers Association, I am not a member of that group. I was also involved in the founding of the Biofeedback Association of North America and I am an associate member but not otherwise involved with that group. (Despite rumors to the contrary, the Biofeedback Association of North America does cover malpractice, general liability, identity theft and other potential losses as a benefit of membership in both the USA and Canada.) I encourage you to investigate both groups, compare the benefits and make your own decision.

I was the principal founder of the Academy of Certified Neurotherapists since merged with BCIA, the Neurotherapy Certification Board and the Peak Performance Certification Board both of which merged with the Biofeedback Certification Board to form NBCB. I am the former executive director of NBCB and currently volunteer as president of NTCB. I am obviously biased in favor of certification and believe the benefit of being certified far exceeds the nominal cost.

I am not an attorney and I do not offer any legal or financial advice of any kind. Any of my comments regarding legal matters are nothing more than my personal opinion and should be considered as such.