

Limbic Retraining - Homework and tips after Part 1,2

Change your routine continually

Routine is hardwired and will keep the brain following the same pathways it always does.

Go outside the box of your habit zone- learn new things, do things differently. Helps rewire new brain connections

- Use your opposite hand for a few tasks
- Do things that are routine in a different order
- Add in a new habit

Fun, joy, music, Laughing

Consider adding in affirmation and visualizations.

Affirmations: (Use these or make your own)

I am brave.....I am ready.....I am brave....

My body is healing every second, every minute, every day

I am grateful for my body

I am resilient and strong

I am a warrior

I am strong and energetic today

I am in charge of my healing journey

I feel my body healing

I give myself permission to heal, I am worthy

I am in control of myself

I am the creator of my own reality

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZeev-T98WE>

Visualizations:

<https://retrainingthebrain.com/welcome-to-the-dnrs-2-0-online-course/annies-guided-visualizations-2-0/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0u3jNOYWinU>

<https://www.youtube.com/@HealingWithRachael>

You will be modifying your language to change your brain's association to symptoms/conditions.

Refraining from discussing symptoms or conditions by their names (ie fatigue, anxiety, stomach pain...) and using a more neutral word - you will learn to modify your language and help change your brain's negative association with symptoms and illness to a more neutral one.

Pick a word that is neutral to you - I came up with "signals".
If signals is a neutral word for you - you can use that because it is these little signals that our body gives to tell us we need to pay attention. Not scary symptoms or illness....just signals.

1. How have "signals" given me a deeper understanding of myself?
2. How has "signals" led to a deeper level of compassion for myself and others?
3. How has "signals" demonstrated my personal strength?
4. Review everything you have written.

Delete words that relate to or indicate personal ownership - such as "my" when referring to symptoms or conditions.

Doing this will send a signal to your brain not to take ownership of the symptoms or conditions.

Make a list of the elements you believe contributed to your perfect storm

Physical

Emotional

Psychological

Was the onset of your condition/increase in symptoms gradual or more sudden in nature?

PP Exercise (Past Pathways)

Review the list of PPs (Below and in more detail on handout)

Make a check mark to those you most relate to

If you don't find one - make your own

From the list, identify the top three most common PPs

Describe what you think, feel, or do when each of the PPs show up.

Thought PPs

- Having negative thinking patterns about yourself, others and the world.
- Being stuck in trauma from the past or predicting the future in a negative way.
- Defining yourself through the lens of illness
- Thinking you are the expert
- Over-analyzing situations, illness/symptoms, or emotional states
- Discounting the positive
- Catastrophizing

Emotional PPs

- Constantly worrying, feeling fearful, or anxious
- Finding yourself reacting to situations with anger, sadness, frustration, despair
- Experiencing mood swings and/or over-reacting emotionally
- Feeling confused or indecisive
- Repetitive feelings of uncertainty
- Experiencing a flat affect

Behavioral PPs

- Body checking for symptoms
- Scanning the environment
- Behaving in a symptom-focused or overly self-protective way
- Blaming, justifying, or complaining
- Procrastinating and/or rushing
- Needing to be in control, over-responsible, or hyper-vigilant
- Having perfectionist tendencies

- Endless questioning about your health or needing continuous reassurance
- Engaging in addictive behaviors
- Lacking in self-love or self-care

Limiting Beliefs:

With limbic impairment - we put new limits on ourselves based on past life experience

Before - a person can do things without limitations

After - we have more and more limitations.

Start developing beliefs on what you can and can't do - which changes behavior.

What limiting thoughts, emotions, and behaviors might be impacting your experience?

How do PPs affect your daily life? Symptoms?

How PPs affect our entire life experience.

Thought, emotional, behavioral PPS that that person may have in that experience.

1. Review the four PPs situations below
2. Pick two situations that you want to work on
3. Identify the possible PPs (thoughts, emotions, behaviors) the person in those situations might experience.

Food Sensitivities

I just ate my typical breakfast of organic oatmeal and organic almond milk. Immediately afterwards I feel terrible.

ITs: Painful bloating, stomach pain, rash, itching, fatigue.

Possible PPs (thoughts, emotions, behaviors)?

Chronic pain

Everything hurts all the time. When one area feels better - another starts to hurt. Even daily tasks create pain for me. It seems I can't do anything anymore - daily tasks and definitely not anything fun.

ITs: Pain in my joints and muscle, tired and achy all the time, tightness and pain in my upper body. Sometimes my head even feels too heavy for my neck and shoulders.

Possible PPs: Thoughts, emotions, behaviors?

Chronic Fatigue

I will do a little more one day - like take a shower, or do dishes, and then I will pay severely for it for the next few days. I can hardly get out of bed and I definitely can't clean, or do other household tasks when I feel that way.

ITs: Fatigue, weakness, excessive sleep, post-exertional malaise

Possible PPs - Thoughts, emotions behaviors?

Anxiety

When I go to social functions, I get so anxious. My heart starts to race, and I feel panicky and like I need to leave. This makes it really hard to be sociable and have fun.

ITs: Heart palpitations, dizziness, tingling, sweating, temperature fluctuation, headache, insomnia

Possible PPs: Thoughts, emotions, behaviors?

Now do the same exercise you just completed - to your own situations.

Start by choosing 1 situation that creates PPs for you.
Do 2-3 more.

Prepare your mind to notice and gently shift your brain's attention.

This will help weaken old neural pathways of survival and strengthen new pathways to move to a state of growth and repair.

Examples:

Being invited to a social function.

Thoughts: I don't know if I will feel well enough to follow through.

People will think I am lazy and antisocial.

Emotions: Sadness, worry, depression

Behaviors: Avoiding all social engagements, isolating

Eating a meal

Thoughts: I am reacting negatively to foods.

This meal will probably make me sick again.

Emotions: Fear, dread hopelessness

Behaviors: Limiting foods, avoiding eating all together

How to Identify PPs throughout the day:

Pause once in awhile and ask yourself 4 questions:

1. What thoughts am I having right now?
2. What emotions am I entertaining right now?
3. What behaviors am I engaging right now?
4. Do my answers support a stress response, or do they make me feel empowered and calm?

Notice.

Acknowledge the pattern and gently shift your focus to thoughts, feelings and behaviors that will nourish you.

When you notice and recognize these PPs - you will do the following:

- Make it easier to create new positive neural pathways
- Decrease the stress levels associated with hormones such as cortisol, adrenaline and norepinephrine
- Create emotional distance from your symptoms

When experiencing a PP - ***may need to think greater than how you feel***

Acknowledge the brain's involvement with illness and symptoms.

Sometimes you need to override your old beliefs about illness.

Challenging: Some coping behaviors that may have helped a little in the past - are not helpful in neuro rehabilitation.

Not a denial - but a new way of acknowledging symptoms - choosing to actively act back on the brain.

Can make it a light and playful experience

Can make it a game

Not about stopping them - but being a curious observer to recognize them - acknowledge them and then choose to feed new pathways.

Positive opposites (PO)

Assist in developing new ways of thinking, behaving, feeling.

This exercise will assist you in learning how to use PO's to shift your brain's attention when experiencing a PP.

1. Review the three situations you listed earlier that typically bring up PPs for you.
2. Write the three situations in the area provided below.
3. Identify three quick distractions or PO's you could use to redirect your PPs when you are in each of the situations again.

Make a list of distractions that resonate with you (for unexpected)

Limbic Exercises

Start with a declaration.

1. Imagine your ideal state of optimal health
 - a. What are you thinking?
 - b. How are you feeling emotionally?
 - c. What are you doing?
2. Write a declaration that describes your ideal state. Remember to keep it short and simple.
3. Which gesture(s) will help you connect with and feel the declaration more strongly.

Repeat your declaration out loud several times using the gesture(s) you choose. Adjust the words/gestures if needed.

When you have a proclamation -

- Write it 10 times a day for 30 days.
- Place it where you can see it often
- Picture it as if you have already achieved it
- Use your declaration to redirect PPs

Other:

Consider the facebook group to share and get support.

Find a funny video or something that makes you laugh or smile

Laugh daily

Do 1 new thing each day

Try to reframe negative into positive

