

Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback - Nursing Scope of Practice

Applied psychophysiology/biofeedback involves the technique of using equipment which monitors internal physiologic functions. Through the use of visual or auditory signals, biofeedback is a form of training which involves teaching a person to control processes that are not normally within one's conscious awareness. Examples of bodily process which person can learn to modify include blood pressure, heart rate, respirations and temperature.

Applied psychophysiology has proven successful in the treatment of a variety of physical health problems that have a psychological component. The physical and psychological states achieved through biofeedback can be beneficial in decreasing tension and stress. It has also been successful in treating patients who manifest psychosomatic symptoms.

The specific machinery used for biofeedback training is determined by the type of bodily function to be monitored. As a technique, biofeedback is used by many different types of health care givers. Special training is required to use this technique. It can be used as part of the assessment process, as a treatment modality itself and/or as a technique in treating symptoms within an overall plan of therapeutic approaches.

It is the position of the Oregon State Board of Nursing that the technical aspects of applying biofeedback equipment, the procedure of using biofeedback, and the process of basic training for the use of biofeedback equipment, can be done by a licensed practical nurse or registered nurse, provided those individuals have had specific training in the use of the equipment and have demonstrated competency in using the equipment.

It is the position of the Oregon State Board of Nursing that the use of applied psychophysiology and biofeedback as an assessment tool, primary therapy or as an adjunct to therapy is an advanced function and should be done only by an advanced practitioner of nursing; that is, a nurse practitioner or a clinical nurse specialist. Nurse practitioners or clinical nurse specialists who use applied psychophysiology as part of their treatment modalities must have special training and be able to demonstrate competency in the use of this technique for assessment purposes, as a primary treatment or as an adjunct to other therapies, including psychotherapy.

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