

THE ART OF THERAPY: CLINICAL SKILLS and HEMI-SYNC

Therapy has frequently been described as both an art and a science. With the predominant focus on the scientific aspects in professional education programs, a bias is created that allows the art of therapy to emerge in a random fashion. An extensive scientific rationale is provided in the assessment and treatment process. Without comparable training or background in the inner skills contributing to the non-scientific or “art” of the clinical process, therapists are left on their own to develop this art and integrate the scientific and intuitive aspects of therapy. Workshops on the development of clinical intuition are available and are highly recommended as a balancing factor in the unequal experience given the therapist in logical and intuitive processing styles. In addition to more formal training, the therapist can enhance a natural intuitive ability through the use of sound and music in the background of and while writing reports, and when working with clients.

Hemi-Sync: The Process

The use of recordings containing Hemi-Sync™ sounds has contributed to the learning of children and adults with sensorimotor disabilities. This paper will address the contribution of Hemi-Sync to the learning of the therapist and the art of therapy.

Hemi-Sync works through a process of creating binaural beats in the brain. Different sound frequencies presented to each ear through stereo headphones or via stereo speakers create a difference tone (or binaural beat) as the brain puts together the two tones it actually hears. For example, if the individual listens to a tone with the frequency of 440 Hz in one ear and another tone of 444 Hz in the other ear, a binaural beat of 4 Hz will be produced. The electrical signal produced by this Frequency Following Response occurs with relatively equal frequency and strength in both hemispheres of the brain, and creates a synchronization of the two sides of the brain.

In a typical therapy setting pre-recorded CDs (Metamusic™) containing Hemi-Sync signals embedded in music are played softly in the background through stereo speakers. Both the child and therapist are bathed in a sound envelope which acts simultaneously to facilitate the process of entrainment. As two individuals become entrained, they literally begin to respond with greater attunement to each other. The sounds invite a greater balance of information processing between the right and left hemispheres and between the cortical and subcortical regions of the brain. Many of the prerequisite abilities associated with the more intuitive art of therapy are enhanced.

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Hemi-Sync and the Art of Therapy

Therapists using Hemi-Sync Metamusic as a background in therapy report the following observations and reflections on their behaviors during therapy.

- **Physical Relaxation Combined with Increased Mental Alertness**

Relaxation seems to be necessary for full information processing. As relaxation of muscles and blood vessels occurs, more oxygen is carried to the brain, enabling a higher efficiency in learning. Soft background music is frequently relaxing, but often dulls the mental state when the desire to sleep intervenes. Hemi-Sync signals, however, tend to stimulate both physical relaxation and the mental alertness needed for information processing.

- **Increased Focus of Attention**

Focus of attention allows the therapist to be fully attentive to the child and the interaction between them. The mind does not wander to other personal or professional areas. This enables a more complete intake of information and communicates an undivided attention to the child.

- **Openness to New Information & Possibilities**

The ability to learn new information and see new possibilities is at the root of creativity. Often only those aspects of information which agree with what we already believe or know are perceived and integrated. This limits us in our ability to find new answers and understand what a child may be telling us. Therapists frequently report more complete information processing and higher levels of creativity during therapy sessions with Hemi-Sync. Because of the mutual entrainment of therapist and child to the Hemi-Sync signals, a sharing of thoughts and spontaneous awareness of the child's unspoken needs and desires often occurs.

- **Greater Awareness and Receptivity to Non-Verbal Communication**

Receptivity to non-verbal information is traditionally viewed as a right hemisphere and subcortical preference. Since Hemi-Sync creates a more equal activation of both the right and left hemispheres of the brain and the limbic system, it is much easier to perceive the non-verbal and integrate it with the verbal input of the left hemisphere.

- **Reduction of Stress**

Most of us live in a society and culture in which we are dealing with many external stressors. Challenges to our lives are created by the failing economy, job insecurity, and inconsistent daycare and health care. Many have little time for rest and renewal as they move from one job to another or from work to family and to the extracurricular activities of children. It is common for therapists to respond to these issues with body symptoms of stress, poor sleep and mental exhaustion or depression. Stress reduces the therapist's ability to focus and to be intuitive and creative. With a Hemi-Sync background, adults report greater relaxation, movement toward inner calmness and more frequent discoveries of intuitive, creative responses to the challenges posed by the needs of both the child and parent.

- **Greater Trust in the Child's Choices and Responses**

With Hemi-Sync the therapist becomes more comfortable and integrated in the ability to receive and process information and trust the accurateness of this information. With self-trust it becomes easier to trust the child's preferences and responses and to follow the child's lead. The greater involvement of the right hemisphere and subcortical areas enhances clinical intuition.

- **Greater Emotional Calmness in Relating to Both the Child and Parents**

Hemi-Sync enhances the ability to be a non-judging observer of oneself and others. There is a calming of the emotions for most listeners and an enhanced ability to respond in an open and non-judgemental way.

Incorporating Hemi-Sync in Therapy

Guidelines for incorporating Hemi-Sync recordings into therapy sessions are provided in a number of other papers available online or through New Visions. These include: "*Opening the Door with Metamusic*" and "*User's Guide: Hemi-Sync for Learning and Stress Reduction*". The most important component, however, lies in the personal use of Hemi-Sync by the therapist. Therapists need to become familiar with their own responses to these recordings before using them with clients in a therapy session. As they discover the personal value of Hemi-Sync in reducing stress, enhancing sleep, and supporting greater efficiency in reading and writing reports, their overall understanding and skill in using this therapy tool will be greatly enhanced.