

MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY



Rick D. Froilán-Dávila, Ph.D.

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INTRODUCTION

I will present some thoughts on the subject "Multiple Pathways to Recovery" in addiction recovery from the perspective of someone who is in long term recovery in the 12 step approach.

As stated, I am a person in long term recovery (47 years) and as can be imagined, sometimes very set in my ways as to what works in addiction recovery. However, I am open minded and real clear that there are "multiple pathways" to recovery. What this means is that there are more ways into recovery than just the 12 step recovery program that is my pathway.

So, what got me here to this view of multiple pathways to recovery? Well, first of all I got over my inner fear that I may end up getting drunk or marginalized by my 12 step peers if I outwardly supported other pathways to recovery for others. I took a good long look at this and realized that there are people who are out there doing very well with their pathway to recovery, e.g. church, peers, recovery coach, exercise, education, family support, technology, etc. I also realized that I do not have to give up what works for me to open up my mind to support what can work for others.

In 2007 I flew from Florida to New Hampshire to attend a CCAR five day Recovery Coach training. It opened my eyes and helped me to overcome my fears mentioned above. One of the outcomes also of my new found world views in the recovery of addiction was a newly found holistic approach through technology, the **Biolounge** by **Biosound Healing**. Following are the results of my research conducted on the 24th and 25th of April, 2014 in South Florida.

The use of biofeedback, music therapy, meditation and massage has long been used in the relief of stress and trauma. To give an example of this and to get a perspective on the above - mentioned combination of massage, biofeedback, music therapy, and meditation, I quickly did

a review of literature on the history of these four treatment approaches. Needless to say there were many references so only one will be presented for each.

BACKGROUND

Biofeedback history and the roots of self-regulation go as far back as 5,000 years - to the beginnings of meditation and various yoga techniques. While the word "biofeedback" wasn't coined until 1969, the roots of biofeedback and self-regulation are much older.

Yogis have been consciously controlling their autonomic nervous system (slowing down their heart rate, increasing body temperature, decreasing oxygen consumption) for thousands of years. This act of self-regulation of the autonomic nervous system was not believed to be possible in the West even as late as 1950's.

It can be said that biofeedback history began with the research of Edmund Jacobson who developed the progressive relaxation technique in the 1930's and Johann Schultz who developed autogenic training. Both of these techniques are self-regulatory techniques and they served as the basis in research and discovery of biofeedback.

Biofeedback is also nicknamed "Yoga of the West" or "Zen technology." Biofeedback emerged in the 1960's when several scientific, philosophical, and social movements were converging. Three key researchers are thought to be the "fathers" of biofeedback: Neal Miller, John Basmanjian, and Joe Kamiya. They all contributed to the development of a variety of biofeedback techniques.

[Biofeedback History. <http://www.stress-relief-tools.com/biofeedback-history.html>]

Music therapy in the United States of America began in the late 18th century. However, using music as a healing medium dates back to ancient times. This is evident in biblical scriptures and historical writings of ancient civilizations such as Egypt, China, India, Greece and Rome. Today, the power of music remains the same but music is used much differently than it was in ancient times.

The profession of music therapy in the United States began to develop during WWI and WWII, when music was used in Veterans Administration Hospitals as an intervention to address traumatic war injuries. Veterans actively and passively engaged in music activities that focused on relieving pain perception. Numerous doctors and nurses witnessed the effect music had on veterans' psychological, physiological, cognitive, and emotional state. Since then, colleges and universities developed programs to train musicians how to use music for therapeutic purposes.

In 1950 a professional organization was formed by a collaboration of music therapists that worked with veterans, mentally retarded, hearing/visually impaired, and psychiatric populations. This was the birth of the National Association for Music Therapy (NAMT). In 1998, NAMT joined forces with another music therapy organization to become what is now known as the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA).

[Music as Medicine. <http://www.musicasmedicine.com/about/history.cfm>]

Meditation has a paucity of recorded history, but its roots travel back to ancient times. Researchers speculate that primitive hunter-gatherer societies may have discovered meditation and its altered states of consciousness while staring at the flames of their fires. Over thousands of years, meditation evolved into a structured practice. Indian scriptures called “tantras” mentioned meditation techniques 5000 years ago (meditationcenter.com).

Buddha, one of history’s major proponents of meditation, and a major meditation icon, first made his mark around 500 B.C. His teachings were spread far and wide across the Asian

continent. Separate countries or cultures adopted different forms of the word “meditation,” and they each found their own unique way of practicing it. Buddhist- and Hindu-based Eastern-style meditation practices are still the most popular today.

Meditation was spread to Western society thousands of years after it was adopted in the East. It finally started to gain popularity in the West in the mid-20th century. In the 1960s and 1970s, many professors and researchers began testing the effects of meditation and learned about its multitude of benefits.

[Meditation History. <http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/spring05/luft/history.htm>]

Massage therapy can be traced back over 5000 years when men and women in many ancient countries used oils and herbs to massage muscle pain away. It is considered one of the earliest forms of pain relief, as well as a way to produce a sense of peace and well-being.

Massage has been highly regarded as a part of Chinese medicine in the Western medical community for at least 3000 years. In its earliest days, it was taught and practiced primarily by physicians.

In some of the oldest Chinese medical books, it's one of the topics that is covered most extensively. It has been discovered that Chinese Amma techniques were practiced as far back as 3000 B.C. The Chinese medical community continues to improve upon these techniques, referred to as "Amma", and consider the use of massage an integral part of the Chinese health system. The modern term for Chinese massage is tui-na, which means "push-pull". This term is used across the entire world to describe Chinese massage”.

[Massage Education Guide. <http://www.message-education.com/history-of-massage-therapy.html>]

TECHNOLOGY- AIDED RECOVERY

Biosound Healing, formally known as Xtreme Serenity, has found a product called the *Biolounge* to combine biofeedback and music therapy as well as meditation and guided imagery. They even include a process that gives the person a sound frequency massage through the use of a comfortable cushioned bed that has a monitor sitting up high at the end of the bed.



Many of the claims regarding outcomes of this approach with patient/clients in substance use disorder treatment programs show promising results. This author tried the *Biolounge* and found it to be a completely body, mind and spirit experience which contributed to an even greater recovery state of mind.

The founder and current CEO, Rick Gallant, discovered this approach while searching for an alternative treatment solution for alleviating chronic back pain he was experiencing. He did not want to get hooked on the many pain relievers available to him. He is a person in long term recovery and did not want to go down that long pill road for chronic back pain. Rick found the long term solution through the combined use of biofeedback, music therapy, meditation and massage all happening during a 30-45 minute treatment session. He and his son Chris own and manage Biosound Healing.

The *Biolounge* produces the same type of results for people who are currently in treatment. To get a sense of the effects of this all-in-one biofeedback, music therapy, massage and meditation on persons in treatment for addiction, this author visited three treatment programs that had

the *Biolounge* at their facility, and interviewed some staff and clients (named here as, "recipient of services") who had also used this treatment.

My first visit was at a program called *The Recovery Team*. I met first with the Program Director, Terry Marvin. The program believes in Holistic treatment in the recovery process. The *Biolounge* fits into this treatment approach as it works on many senses and leaves one with a consciousness to slow the mind down and relax.

The program director was sold on this treatment approach within ten minutes into the treatment. He stated he had never experienced this out of body meditative experience until using the *Biolounge*. For his own experience he rated the bed a 9 out of a possible 10. His response to the question regarding the *Biolounge* providing the recipient of services with the help to slow down racing thought patterns was, "the treatment forces you to focus on the need to concentrate and leaves you with the experience to slow the mind down". On a scale of 1-10 he gave it a 7.5 for the recipient of services. When asked of the durability of the equipment he stated that "there are not a lot of things to break. It is durable through lots of use. This program service is also billable to some insurance providers."

The recipient of services I interviewed at this facility stated, "Before I used the *Biolounge* I was having racing thoughts and unable to quiet my mind. After the treatment I felt more at peace and more [calm]. The vibration and music combined to take me out of where I was. In terms of feeling a body, mind and spirit experience, I felt at times like I was floating. On a scale of 1-10 with one being the least I would give it a 9 and would love to take one home."

The second program I visited was *The Transformative Treatment Center* where I met with James Wainwright, who is assigned full time to administering the *Biolounge* treatment. He explained that everyone admitted to their center goes through at least three, half-hour sessions on the *Biolounge*. "It contributes to reducing anxiety and racing thoughts often experienced by recipients of service coming into treatment," said Wainwright.

On a scale of 1-10 he gave it a 7.0 for the recipient of services. He felt that through the guided imagery "it brings the mind to the present. This helps the recipient focus more. This program also is able to bill some insurance providers for this service." He stated that he uses it for himself, but in small doses because he doesn't get the time to go through a full treatment.

As a result Wainwright rated the *Biolounge* 5 out of 10 for himself. He also discussed how positive the application is on the neural pathways through the guided imagery exercise done in this process. He had collected over 2500 single sheet self-evaluations completed by each recipient that had experienced the *Biolounge*. He too, found the *Biolounge* to be very durable.

This author spent a lot of time reviewing the 2500 self-evaluations and focused on those that had some narrative written in them. The responses on the Likert scale were mostly "received some or a lot of benefit from the treatment". Below are some comments, again most in the positive range. There were only two not so positive and I will state them also; however these were very minuscule considering there were more than 2500 responses:

"this thing is amazing, I feel so much better"... "Phenomenal videos and audio!!!"
"Excellent"... "I wished I had asked more questions before doing this"... "videos switch (sic)
scenes every 5 seconds are actually aggravating for me"... "great session very good for mind
and body"... "my favorite was the health video because it gave me something to focus on"...
"relaxation, very good"... "love the feeling of when the vibration slows down, feeling the
stress just falling off the body"... "I did the Freedom one (I think) and it was stress relieving,
relaxing and let me decompress and focus on my state of being and mind and body
connection; very productive for anxiety"...

The third program that was visited during this study was *Recovery Forever*, where I met with Dr. Joseph Millitz. He stated that "the message-guided music is a good temporary effect for

calming down emotionally and physically. It calms down the racing mind effect especially for anxiety.”

New recipients of service are encouraged to use the *Biolounge* at least twice. Dr. Millitz states that on a scale of 1-10 he would rate it an 8 for the recipient of services and an 8 for his own experience in using it. There are programs included in the *Biolounge* that he said helped him get rid of guilt and shame while lowering his blood pressure, anxiety and pulse. “The *Biolounge* is used very regularly and holds up well,” reported Dr. Millitz.

Another therapist described it as “reducing anxiety and actually feeling the emotions rising and melting away.” She had worked in Hospice for 20 years previous to coming to work at Recovery Forever and stated that this would be a great addition to that work. She herself at one time had a diagnosis of cancer and the *Biolounge* treatment reduced her headaches. She stated that on a scale of 1-10 she would rate it a 7 for the recipient of services and a 10 for her own experience in using it.

This author also interviewed a recipient of service who had high anxiety and who didn’t think this would work with her. She stated “I was very surprised it greatly reduced my anxiety.” As a result of using the *Biolounge* periodically she has learned how to meditate on her own. When asked if she thought it was a body, mind and spirit experience she stated that “after a couple of minutes on it I feel I am in a safe place.” On a scale of 1-10 she rated her outcomes at between 8 and 9. She would like to have one at home as well.

In summary this process has shown the success of alternate pathways to addiction treatment as well as enhancement to current, well known pathways. The world of substance use disorder treatment in this day and age is encouraging, or, should I say demanding, a more holistic approach to include global wellness into the recovery oriented system of care process. The *Biolounge* certainly contributes to this criterion.

About the Author: Dr. Rick Dávila is a Full Professor of Human Services and Coordinator of the Addiction Services track at the School of Human Services, Springfield College. He is also President of Recovery All, Inc. (www.recovery4all.com)