

Questions to Ask Your Provider

1. **How does Neurofeedback fit into your overall treatment/training approach?**

Tips:

Neurofeedback is a tool, not an overall approach. Neurofeedback helps train the brain, but doesn't account for nutrition, environmental/social factors, chronic stress, and/or potential medication barriers. Most Neurofeedback providers are trained in mental health, as the focus with Neurofeedback is to regulate brain function to improve emotional and mental well-being as well as cognitive performance. Most clinicians believe there is a cognitive or mental component to most conditions that patients must examine as well.

Most professionals these days are offering biofeedback, which can help calm stress, allowing the brain to also calm down, in addition to neurofeedback. If the patient is stuck in fear, the brain can be harder to train, thus Neurofeedback may not work as effectively as one that has regulated his/her physiology or stress level.

2. How long have you been providing Neurofeedback?

Tips:

There is no right answer to this question because greater time in the field often yields greater wisdom and experience, the newer providers seem to be on the cutting edge and are being trained with more advanced equipment. The bigger question to ask is does the provider have multiple forms of equipment.

3. Where did you receive your training?

Tips:

Preferred training will take a more eclectic approach as most providers use multiple machines to accommodate different people's needs. Remember no single machine can help fix everybody's brainwaves in the same way. Be wary of a provider who has only been trained by the company who makes the clinician's equipment because they will have a far narrower focus versus what could be offered as alternative methods and protocols.

4. **Are you Licensed or Certified by BCIA (The Biofeedback Certification Institute of America)? Do you hold a practitioner or technician status?**

Tips:

This is a highly confusing topic, because you have to be licensed to treat a medical condition, but a license doesn't make you a Neurofeedback provider. Conversely, a certification even from BCIA makes you ethically a trained provider in Neurofeedback, but you can't treat individuals. Most non-licensed people work on a team with a licensed medical professional if they "treat" anybody. Also, you'll hear terms like, "train the brain," instead of "treat a medical condition," with non-licensed providers. You get the same Neurofeedback training sessions - it's just called something different (treating vs training).

The regulatory board (BCIA) requires all of its providers and or practitioners to have a degree in a health related field, complete academic coursework in Anatomy & Physiology as well as Neurofeedback and education on qEEG brain mapping. BCIA requires one to be mentored by a current BCIA provider, and continued education in the field. Always ask your provider as some don't update their information (sometimes merely an oversight) on the BCIA website as often as they should. BCIA providers will have a certification on their wall most likely.

Be careful of anybody who has only trained with the owner of a company providing the equipment, as he/she will have a more strict and narrow focused approach to Neurofeedback. Some companies out there don't even let the neurofeedback provider tweak the systems or change the protocol even when a qEEG tells the provider the wrong site is being trained. It's always better to seek out somebody who has been trained by a non-biased provider/educator and on multiple pieces of Neurofeedback equipment.

5. **What types of Neurofeedback are they currently using?**

Tips:

Due to the many different forms/styles of Neurofeedback and machines available, it is wise to educate yourself on the different types of Neurofeedback and how they relate to one another, and which are best for certain conditions/situations needing to be addressed. If the full qEEG brain mapping analysis identifies connectivity issues all over the brain, a 1-2 channel training system isn't going to cut it. If somebody has a more localized or central imbalance, doing whole head training is overkill just the same. Thus, the assessment is a critical factor in not doing 50 neurofeedback sessions in the wrong spot!

6. **What type of assessment do you offer with regards to starting Neurofeedback?**

Tips:

There are 3 main types of assessments for Neurofeedback:

A) First there is the single/dual channel assessment, where only 1-2 of the 19 recommended sites are measured and recorded. This method only has a 2 in 19 chance of seeing any potential brainwave imbalances.

B) Next, there is a mini-map or segmented brain map, which is often misleadingly called a "brain map." With this, each of the 19 channels is recorded, but only 2

channels at a time are recorded. Thus, it is impossible to know the connectivity between the front and the back of the brain when these areas are not recorded at the same time.

C) Finally, the Gold Standard for Assessment and creating a Neurofeedback Protocol for training is the full QEEG brain map. The advantage here is that all data from all 19 channels is simultaneously recorded. This is the same tool Neurologists use for measuring brainwaves, but with more of a biological focus (Neurofeedback is more behavioral in focus). With the full qEEG, we have an accurate picture of the entire brain's activity at each location as well as the connectivity between all the sites offering greater clarity for building the most accurate Neurofeedback training protocol.

7. Will you be training yourself or will you be trained by a provider?

Tips:

While this may seem like a weird question, there are some companies out there that ship you a unit, set up protocols, and have you train your own brain! While some may have success with this, there is a better approach called, "remote training," where you can hook yourself up at home, but the Neurofeedback session is run by a professional in another place, city, or even state! This is the best of both worlds, as you have convenience at home, with the skill set of a professional running the sessions. The downside is you have to pay for or rent the equipment, but if a chosen provider lives far away, it can often be the best option.

8. Do you have any references or fellow clinicians I could speak to?

Tips:

Most people in the field are eager to share with you other people who have been helped by Neurofeedback. However, understand that some people are very private and don't want the world knowing that his/her son or family member is having difficulty if the family is well known in a community. Also, confidentiality issues arise when a provider is seeing a patient/client for mental health related issues and not just Neurofeedback training.

9. How long is the Neurofeedback Training?

Tips:

Be very cautious of anybody giving you a concrete answer on this question. There are norms that some people offer as a guideline. For example, whole head LORETA training can be as little as 20-25 sessions for moderate brainwave imbalances and no medication barriers. However, traditional 1-2 channels Neurofeedback could be more like 30-50 sessions. Keep in mind, whole head training costs 9-10 times as much to buy the equipment and receive the best training, so the sessions may cost more, but in the end the treatment could cost less as you often need only 1/3 the sessions.

People also charge accordingly, with providers more accessible in more populated areas charging a little more than their counter parts who are lower, hoping people are willing to travel a greater distance for the same service. In the end, you need to find a provider who will work with you and your schedule and fit into your budget for training.

10. Is there anything I should be doing at home to make my Neurofeedback training sessions more effective?

Tips:

The answers to this question are a game changer! Yes, there are so many things one should be doing. Proper nutrition, sleep and daily exercise, decreasing environmental stressors, having a biofeedback stress assessment, working to calm down the body and brain connection are just a few. If anybody claims that Neurofeedback is the only thing you need, and he/she can do it all for you, be weary of other inaccuracies they are not sharing with you.

Again, Neurofeedback is only a single tool in the tool box. It can work wonders and change the lives of many people, but there are always other variables at work, and a certified or licensed professional will have more information on this than a company who sends you a machine to use on your own.