

## Your Introduction to Af-x®

### Starting Out!

**Af-x Therapy** involves a highly-effective approach that was originated and developed in Australia. In recent years it has proven to be just as successful and popular in Europe, helping people with all forms of emotionally-based problems. af-x practitioners are now being trained internationally.

- *Why am I reading this?* -

You've expressed an interest in this form of therapy to assist you with making positive changes in your life, either from visiting the website or from reading other material. Because this work challenges some of the well-entrenched conventions of what our society thinks constitutes "good therapy," it is very important that you take a little time to read and understand the contents of these few pages.

Doing this will help you have an idea of some of the important requirements of this approach. It will successfully prepare you for a completely new way of looking at the business of changing your emotional self.

When you come along for your first session, you will be asked if you are comfortable with the ideas expressed here. In particular, you are asked to pay **close attention to the "checklist"** at the end of these pages.

Please enjoy reading these few facts, and we look forward to meeting you at our first appointment.

### The Fundamental Idea

**Af-x** is about how we *feel* as human beings as opposed to how we think we feel. There's a very important and fundamental difference between the two, and we're interested only in those feelings that were learned well before we developed the ability to think in "word" form.

- *What's this business about "no talking"?* -

This accounts for the "privacy" aspect in our work. It is why we know that it is not productive to go into the usual descriptions and discussions about your symptoms and problems; where you or any therapist might think they "came from" or what they were caused by.

As you read on, you will understand why this sort of analysis and interpretation is discouraged.

### Your Emotional History

We all learn our feelings at a time in our development long before we learn words and how to "think" in a narrative (word-oriented) way.

Science has discovered that when we learn feeling information (or, affect, as we say) the potential for misinterpreting what's really happening around us is very great, and often, our feeling learnings are not able to be connected to conscious memory "facts".

- How do we "start" our emotions? -

As an early person (birth to 18 months) we can't think as such, and we begin to learn what feeling responses work for us, at a purely emotional level.

This information is stored by the limbic brain (amygdaloid-hippocampal complex) and is there to be used when next we need an emotional response. When that happens, we'll simply use what has worked before.

This is what is technically called *neuro-encoding* and at this early age (just like when we are older), there is only one way we can instantly experience our feelings the way we all do, without consciously thinking about it; and that is by unconsciously "bridging back" to an original encoding and automatically repeating earlier learned patterns of response at the emotional level.

This is a purely subconscious process.

In this way, we initially build a habit of feeling that eventually grows into our own sense of self, or our core emotional matrix (emotional sub-personality). This can often be based on negative feelings and learnings, and at this early age we can very often misinterpret what is going on around us.

Feeling responses of fear, anxiety or anger can all seem to get positive results, even though they often don't "match" the events taking place in our environment.

### **Our Emotional Matrix**

Research shows that, just as a tiny seed grows into a complex tree, this early affect "core" sense of self – or our individual emotional matrix – influences us for the rest of our lives. It forms the foundation for how we will emotionally respond to everything from those early days into adulthood.

When a part of our emotional matrix is based on negative feelings and learnings and these are not naturally re\_framed or re-learned as inappropriate as we grow and develop, then they will remain well entrenched at an unconscious feeling level.

- How does that affect me? -

It means that underneath what we "think" and "reason" with our conscious minds, there may still exist a part of our personalities that is strongly influencing how we feel and does not, and can not gel with our "talking selves." This means we are never quite sure that what we can self-assess about ourselves, particularly our feelings and emotions, is entirely authentic.

Subsequent negative feeling responses and un-consciously driven emotional reactions can then affect our whole being in the way we develop mental, emotion-al, behavioural, attitudinal and even biological (psycho-somatic) problems and symptoms – or states of "being." And this deeper influence may not be anything that we can exactly describe.

### **Mind-Body Systems**

Feelings are not abstract separate entities but rather part of the complexity of our bodies and minds. People do not "feel" things with their brains, or even their "minds".

We humans have an extremely complex neural and chemical network that delivers messages to the body about how it should experience "feeling" at any given moment.

These feelings are the result of immediate emotional stimulus or long conditioned "sense of self" emotional patterns stored at limbic brain level. Our bodies do the "feeling" for us.

- *But how do our **bodies** do the feeling?* -

These networks are largely driven by the autonomic nervous system (part of the central nervous system) that is the vehicle for information being sent to the body's organs, sub-systems and other systems of function (blood, skin, lungs, liver among many others).

So the body is the final "showing" of our emotional states, whether they are obvious emotions like (for instance) depression or anger, or subtle shadow emotions as generated by our early learned sense of self. These more subtle feelings can generate problems like low self-esteem, shyness, and any general sense of low self-opinion.

So, many of the symptoms (including the physical symptoms) that you will read about later in this information, have a direct relationship with how you learned to respond on the emotional level at a time early in life – and this is still there!

### **Af-x**

One of the fundamental things about how human beings operate is that we all have the capacity and ability to re-learn anything that we've previously learned (it's called "changing our minds"), and we can all do it.

In fact we all DO do it, all of the time. We just haven't done it (changed our mind) at the level we refer to in Af-x.

- *Why is "changing my mind" relevant to this?* -

**Af-x** is all about helping you to use resources and abilities that you already have, but perhaps have forgotten how to use. In our work, the aim is to help your subconscious re-learn those negative and uncomfortable feeling responses that were encoded at a pre-verbal stage of development.

The re-learning is simple, gentle and ongoing. It's a process that you CAN effectively do with just a little help – a little guidance.

### **Self-attention**

During our sessions, we will be doing a little work that we call "self-attention" work. Technically, this is called paralogical – or bicameral – processing, but all that means is that it's allowing both the conscious and the subconscious parts of your mind to receive helpful information.

Many people liken it to simple guided meditation, or even just mental relaxation. It's a very simple process that everyone is capable of and really it's just an opportunity for you to "note" or pay attention to YOU in the present moment.

### **Your Sessions**

Experience and feedback research has shown that three carefully structured contact sessions is the optimum format for this clinical approach.

In your first session we will spend some time talking about the therapy. This will ensure that you are comfortable with the process, that your expectations are realistic and that you are fully ready for positive change. We'll also do a little bit of that self-attention work, and that's only to help you see how simple and easy it is.

Our second and third sessions involve less discussion and more subconscious work, and it is in these sessions where we will help you with that relearning at the subconscious feeling level.

This reframing procedure is done relatively quickly and easily at subconscious level, but it is important to note that this is just the beginning of an ongoing process of change that will happen in a way that is appropriate for you.

### **Monitoring Your Success**

Because we encourage you to trust your subconscious mind and accept that these sessions are the **START** of the process, then we really do need to know about the success rate of our work in the long term.

Over the last ten years, every Af-x client has been asked to participate in a unique feedback system.

Brief questionnaires are sent out to participating ex-clients 5 months after their sessions. A research organisation collates the results and forwards this confidential and anonymous data to us. So you can be assured that no names are associated with any of the results.

The information gained from these questionnaires serves three purposes.

Firstly it provides valuable **information** about the sorts of problems people resolve with **af-x**, and the individual variations in time and experience. This information has been used to modify and improve the therapy as it has evolved over time.

Secondly it is used by the Centre for Affectology Studies (CAS) to **monitor** the performance and professionalism of its practitioners (this feedback research system is compulsory for CAS members). This means that you can be assured that a practitioner who displays the "**af-x**" registration has a good history of success with their clients.

Thirdly, and most importantly, it has shown that (in the thousands of feedback questionnaires received) people have reported significant positive benefits in many areas of their lives.

So, we know that **this therapy, and the way that we do it WORKS in the vast majority of cases.**

### **Summary of Differences**

#### **Cause not symptoms:**

The most significant difference between **af-x** and conventional forms of therapy and counselling is that it goes straight to the feeling cause of your emotional discomfort, regardless of the "symptoms."

#### **Non-narration:**

Your presenting 'symptoms' or 'problems' are not discussed in therapy sessions at all. We do not attempt to solve problems for you or give advice.

Rather, we respect the ability and the inherent resources of your subconscious mind to

start the necessary changes in an appropriate way and time frame for you as an individual. **af-x** Practitioners always work from a fundamental and primary understanding that you are already perfect; just in need of a little "affect re-learning."

**Feelings not events:**

Many people believe that a particular event or experience that occurred either in their childhood or adult life is the cause of their present difficulties; that they were "all right" before the event.

- *Why aren't memories of these events important?* -

**af-x** Practitioners know that it is the way we un-consciously respond to events that is important, rather than the nature of events themselves.

In understanding Af-x, we must concede that any conscious memory of an event is always preceded by a learned feeling reaction, guaranteeing that no two people can possibly react in identical ways to the same event.

You were always a "person" before you can remember being a person.

**Giving power back to you, the client:**

In our Western culture, we tend to think that the therapist holds the most knowledge and has the most power to help the client. After all, don't therapeutic professionals spend years at universities learning how to "interpret" you and your sub-conscious after just a couple of sittings? Isn't that a worry?

**Af-x** Practitioners know that therapists could never consciously know the TRUE CAUSE of your problems. Your ability to change old emotional (feeling) learnings and your knowledge of how to change is all held by you **at subconscious level**.

- *So, why can't I do it myself?* -

By definition, we can never be "consciously" aware of "subconscious" processes and the unconscious mechanisms that make us behave in certain habitual feeling ways.

So, this means we can never really know what's going on at subconscious level, nor can we simply "give it instructions" through things like positive thinking or having a therapist "tell your subconscious" what to do using word-based instructions.

However, we do know by observation and feedback that we all have the ability to change and to self-repair at subconscious levels if we are prompted in just the right way. That "prompting" is the role of the clinical Af-x practitioner. A matter of being re-minded, at deeper level, of the process of re-learning.

**What You Can Change**

**af-x** Practitioners do not claim to have ownership of the universal panacea – a "fix-all" – but past clients *have* reported great success with many and varied symptoms, often many in combination.

It's a matter of simply **allowing** our bodies and minds to heal in the way we know they can. But first, we must gently relearn some of the earlier impediments to health and happiness.

Symptoms and conditions that people have reported on can be divided into four main categories:

**Emotional** – Anger, emotional fragility, guilt, low self-esteem, low confidence, shyness, jealousy, unresolved grief, negative relationship patterns.

**Mental** – stress, insomnia, anxiety, depression, post natal depression, phobias, panic attacks, eating disorders, memory and concentration problems, disturbing dreams and nightmares, performance and creative blocks (e.g. sexual, sport, art, study).

**Behavioural** – Unwanted habits including nail-biting, gambling, drinking, smoking, over-eating, teeth grinding, nervous twitches, stuttering, aggression and other uncontrolled behaviours.

**Body/Mind** – (where there is no known organic cause) – migraines, eczema, psoriasis and other skin problems, allergies, asthma, muscle tension, chronic pain, morning sickness, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, fatigue, and other stress-related problems that are often called psychosomatic.

In addition to resolving the underlying cause of these and other symptoms, many clients report that their general sense of well-being and self-worth is greatly improved after their three sessions.

### Some Limitations

**af-x** has led to some truly remarkable changes in people's lives. But there are some limitations to what it can help you achieve and there are a small number of conditions for which it is not appropriate.

**Physical illness** - This therapy does not "treat" specific physical conditions or diseases. Client feedback has shown, however, that by dealing with underlying emotional stress, many conditions, including those labelled psychosomatic or emotional-stress-related often show significant improvement.

In any case, **af-x** can help you deal more gently with the emotional weight of chronic illness.

**Mental illness** - While **af-x** has been shown to be of great benefit for mood and anxiety disorders such as uni-polar depression, panic attacks, phobias, etc, it is not always an appropriate treatment for deep-seated psychoses such as manic episodes and schizophrenia.

Talk to your **af-x** Practitioner if doubt exists.

**Relationship problems** - **af-x** is about assisting you to change your own feeling responses for the better. Having this therapy yourself cannot change other people in your life. Many people find, however, that if they begin to have different responses within their relationships, then others also start responding differently in that new situation.

**The ups and downs of life** - **af-x** can help you develop more positive feeling responses to events in your life. Life will, however, continue to have its ups and downs, and there may still be times when you experience disappointment, sadness, grief, short-term "blues," and so on.

The difference will be in how well you handle challenging situations and be able to flow through emotional ups and downs without becoming "stuck" beyond their usefulness, in any one state.

## Other Notes

While some people do experience rapid changes after their three **af-x** sessions, for others it can take some time - so be patient!

There's a good reason why our feedback research takes place some months down the track. You must be allowed to let your subconscious do its own re-framing work, and grow to trust in its ability to do just that.

Although Af-x can sometimes work well in concert with other therapies, providing the 'missing link' to deeper change, it is best to discuss with your intending Af-x practitioner should you want to continue with other work.

If you are trying to rid yourself of a physical addiction, please try to refrain from taking any addictive substances (prescribed medications excepted) for some time before your appointments. Addictive substances, by their very nature mask underlying feelings!

## In Summary

**af-x** is a highly successful and **proven** approach to change, and works with your own subconscious processes to restore physical and emotional balance by re-framing and re-learning old feeling responses.

The gift is already given. The role of **af-x** Practitioners is to help restore that gift.

It only involves three contact sessions and a simple follow-up questionnaire that is anonymous and confidential. **af-x** has helped many thousands of clients with a range of psychological, emotional, behavioural, physical and other difficulties, and is a leading therapy for positive life change.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q: "What are the ideal time intervals between sessions?"**

In theory, and indeed often in practice, any interval between sessions is OK, but an "ideal" would be anything between a day interval and a week.

**Q: "How long are the sessions?"**

Your first session may take anything up to 90 minutes with subsequent sessions taking 50 to 60 minutes.

**Q: "Can I drive after a session?"**

There are times when you may like to spend a few minutes "pensive and private" time following a session. This therapy can be a "deep" process and you may need to allow the process to gently go ahead.

**Q: "Is this hypnotherapy?"**

Clinical hypnotherapy relies almost entirely on a therapist's assessment of a client's symptoms and subsequent "re-programming" of the sub-conscious in an authoritative way that pays no respect to human innate re-balancing abilities.

As you have previously read, **af-x** strives for the opposite. The experience of unconscious re-framing is one of gentle guidance to allow, rather than insist on selective attention to affect states: - not unlike selective meditation, prayer, or even daydreaming. Simple and gentle, yet effective.

**Q: "Some other therapies claim that the "emotional release" in THEIR therapy is**

**what is required for change. What makes your approach different?"**

af-x is VERY different. True, there exist some similarities in CONTENT, but vast differences in the CONTEXT of approach to the therapy. All successful therapy relies on a client taking back responsibility and empowerment, and the reflective, non-narrative nature of this work ensures that like no other.

**Q: "Can I stop my medication?"**

That's entirely up to how YOU eventually feel about that, perhaps in line with your doctor's opinion.

A responsible registered **af-x** Practitioner will not interfere with the relationship between you and your medico, but always be aware that if you seek clarification from the same doctor that prescribed that medication for you, it is not in his or her best interests to admit that your medication will no longer be needed.

**Q: "What do I have to do after the therapy?"**

Nothing. You will be encouraged to "let it happen" and discouraged from trying to analyse the sessions' proceedings.

**Q: "What if I don't think I experience RELEASE during the therapy sessions?"**

A popular misconception in our therapeutic society is that "release" must be experienced during session work. **af-x Therapy** works on the basis that the unconscious learns its own private reframing and re-learning skills without necessarily focusing on any consciously-registered "release".

In fact, it has been shown that the desire to consciously experience release has in some cases been the very thing that sabotages subtle and ongoing change at subconscious level

**Q: "Will I have flashes of painful old memories?"**

Not necessarily so, and if you seem to, it may be the conscious awareness only of an aspect of self that wants to AVOID change. In reality, most people proceed through this therapy experiencing little more than subtle feelings during session work.

**Q: "Is this therapy good for my .....?"**

If there is ANYTHING in your life about which you are uncomfortable, or you realise you are being prevented from reaching your full potential in any way; this can almost always be attributed to early learned emotional response patterns.

Many people have been surprised at the changes experienced to areas of their life OTHER THAN what they originally sought therapy for. Sports people and other performers have "freed-up", executives have been able to make better stress-free decisions, and even those with true physically-generated symptoms and problems have found greater acceptance and peace.

In short, the above question has no definitive answer other than, **"who of us has not learned habitual responses in our lives that could do with re-learning?"**

Checklist For Therapy  
"Mind Over Chatter"  
(Are You Suited To This Approach?)

Everybody thinks they know that they want to get better. Whilst there is no denying that people would not come to therapy if on some level they did not want to achieve a successful outcome, **af-x** Practitioners are trained to respect the client's non-conscious desires as well as obvious, conscious needs.

Your practitioner should not proceed unless certain imperatives are understood, and you are comfortable with them. So the following checklist is included to give you an idea of those imperatives, and perhaps gauge your suitability for this work and your desire to proceed.

Remember, **af-x** is about "planting the seed of change" at subconscious level.

Read it, and honestly appraise your likelihood of being comfortable with the following:

**Am I comfortable not talking about my woes?**

Conscious-level discussion about you and your problems will be kept to a bare minimum. This respects your ability to know about, and deal with, presenting issues at non-conscious level. This is an "affect-oriented" therapy, not a "word-oriented" therapy. Your practitioner will explain why this is important in view of the reflective, non-intrusive nature of this approach.

**Can I accept that my subconscious knows all?**

This is cause-oriented work, rather than symptom-oriented. Don't be surprised if your practitioner leads conversation AWAY from your symptoms and problems. This is NOT disrespect for you; rather, it is respect for your subconscious mind.

**Can I accept that any conscious memories I have may not be relevant?**

This is a "feeling" therapy, not a "fact" therapy; recalled memories, if they are evident, will be kept at your private level and not discussed with your practitioner.

**Will I be able to let go of the need to try to make things happen?**

You must be prepared to give up the effort of trying to "make change happen". Your practitioner is skilled at guiding and helping you to achieve a permissive "let it happen" level of operation. This is the appropriate way to allow for long-term subconscious change.

**Will I be able to accept that I will not be asked for any "on-the-spot verification" of any changes brought about during the session?**

After session work has been completed, your practitioner will not seek to immediately know about the outcome. This therapy introduces a new response learning at unconscious level; the results of this learning need to be observed over time.

**Can I let go of the conditioned belief that therapy has to go on and on until a therapist says it's time to quit?**

This new learning through reframing is usually gentle, rapid and permanent. In almost all cases, this requires only three contact therapy sessions.

**Will I be comfortable with the idea that the subconscious re-learns in its own way, and that I must trust my subconscious to bring about change?**

Your experience within the sessions may be profound and consciously recalled, or it may be subtle and below awareness, or somewhere in between. It is for this reason that immediate ratification is not sought, and why the ex-client feedback studies are so important to the ongoing nature of the long-term success of this work.

**If you are comfortable with most, or all of the previous information, then there is no reason why af-x Therapy cannot be highly successful for you.**

**If there are any of the above imperatives that you are not sure about, your practitioner will be happy to fully explain their importance.**

### A Caveat

While statements have been made regarding modern medicine and psychology, these in no way repudiate the importance of many formal treatments and therapies. The approach of the **af-x**® Practitioner is born of the utter belief that the human being is not just a "sum of the parts", the conglomeration of a huge number of interesting and vital organs and systems. We leave that premise to Mary Shelley and Frankenstein. And to the medical mechanics.

We are amazed at how "modern medical science" has ignored the scientifically proven role that "feeling" (affect) plays in the body's manifestation of those feelings, whether as dis-ease (emotion) or disease (symptom).

We seek to redress that serious flaw in contemporary science, and head back onto the road where the human being is treated as a whole; - feelings and emotions included.

When we consider the hundreds of thousands of years that human beings have lived, it is modern medicine and psychology that are the "New Age" doctrines: they are the "alternative therapies" of only the last century or two. Our species is superbly equipped to self-heal and self-regulate, always has been, and the role of the responsible therapist is to remind the mind/body system of its inherent wisdom, its abilities and its ever-present resources.

People are already perfect.

This aside, the responsible registered **af-x** Practitioner will NOT act or advise against any medical or psychiatric professional. It is our job to ADD the dimension of self-responsibility in the unconscious task of self-healing, and to help bring about the balance required to allow for that healing without the burden of emotional or "feeling" obstacles.