

# Removing the Cloud of Depression With IM

Natalie is a 42 yr. old woman with a family history of depression along with a 20-year battle of the disorder of her own, culminating in severe postpartum depression after the birth of her daughter. She has been on many medications throughout this time but the best results from medications have only lasted 2 months before she started going “downhill” again. In addition, Natalie has been given anti-anxiety medications to take as needed. She attends aerobics classes twice a week and makes efforts to schedule activities that force her out of the house including seeing a counselor twice a month. Despite her efforts, mornings tend to remain the worst for her because she wakes up fearing the day ahead.

Prior to Interactive Metronome®, Natalie experienced extreme agitation, anxiety and depression which was quite disabling for her. She was often crying and had a difficult time making basic decisions like, what to eat, where to go and what to do. The benefits of Interactive Metronome® were presented to her because of her constant frustrations with agitation and anxiety.

Interactive Metronome® (IM) is an evidence-based assessment and training tool that helps strengthen the brain's ability to synchronize thought and movement through the use of repetitive actions to a steady metronome beat. Research has shown that programs like IM help with neurotiming, the brain's ability to process information quickly and accurately, leading to better overall outcomes including improvements in language and cognition, ability to focus, and stronger motor control and coordination leading to improved confidence and mood. Through personal experiences with IM, many providers have found that there is evidence of decreased anxiety as a result of IM, which came from training regimens designed for both kids and other adults.

From the very beginning of Natalie's training results showed that IM forced her to focus on something other than

how bad she was feeling and allowed her to experience a relief in her symptoms during the session. The IM exercises also calmed her down from her otherwise pervasive anxious state. Natalie reported that one morning during an anxious moment she happened to think of the familiar and repetitive cowbell (metronome beat) and found that it calmed her down. On another day, she consciously tried to recall the cowbell sound when experiencing anxiety and it again calmed her. At that time, Natalie was well below her goal of allowed daily medication and is using IM to calm her instead of turning to more medicine.

Almost 2 weeks after having her first session, Natalie assessed her symptoms using a scale of 1 – 10 (with 10 being the worst she had experienced at the time she started IM).

- Weepiness: 1
- Agitation/Irritability: 7
- Fearfulness in the morning: 2

Natalie felt that this reflects significant improvement in her symptoms even though there is still a good bit of anxiousness. Her improvement seems to be related to the twice a week IM sessions since she is not close to the therapeutic dose of medication yet. After asking a psychiatrist about the medication they reiterated that it is very unlikely that the small dose of antidepressants would have any impact on her.

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After three weeks, Natalie said that she is feeling pretty normal and that she is “OK,” most of the time with just some mild depression, which is a major improvement from the severe depression she

was facing less than a month ago. However, she was still experiencing some mood swings throughout the day.

Natalie did have a bit of a set back after going on vacation. She started feeling more of her severe symptoms of depression (fearfulness, being overwhelmed) and increased her

medication because of it. After a few sessions of IM when she returned home she was back to feeling “pretty good,” and that her morning anxiety and weepiness were gone.

During a two-week break from IM training, Natalie, reported that she was more focused and was able to

plan ahead which was a very big milestone for her. She even noticed improved balance while at her aerobics class and is happy to be out of “survival” mode and able to tend to the needs of her family. She also stated she is now on a therapeutic dose of her antidepressant medication.

Natalie finished her 16 sessions of IM over a period of 4 months. Her quick recovery from the most severe symptoms of depression was clearly related to her IM since her gains couldn't be attributed to the lower doses of medication she started. While her depression continues to be an issue of concern, she has continued researching and pursuing different medication options and is currently doing well on some additional medications. IM helped her get through a difficult period of time transitioning between medications and the lasting effects of IM enables her to plan for her future career and treatment options.

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