

**Phil Parker Summary and Response to:
Experiences of young people who have undergone the Lightning
Process to treat Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Myalgic Encephalomyelitis
A qualitative study**

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British Journal of Health Psychology 19.9.12

Summary

Independent qualitative study conducted by Harvard University and Kings College, London researchers carried out in 2007.

They interviewed 9 Lightning Process participants, aged 14-26, and the 3 parents of those under 18, who had a diagnosis of CFS/ME. The participants volunteered in a response to an advert on the AYME website.

7 of the 9 young people reported that they were satisfied and much improved and 2 of the young people reported dissatisfaction and no improvement.

The 3 parents reported satisfaction with the course.

The paper included 2 case studies, one where the Lightning Process was not helpful and one where it was.

Response to the article

As we have had no conversations with the authors at this point, we have not been able to respond to some of their interpretations.

Most, but not all, participants found the experience helpful. Some participants, and the researchers, had some criticism of elements of the Lightning Process course structure, approach and in one case the practitioner.

Any feedback from participants is useful and so over the years, since the study was conducted (2007), we have addressed the following areas:

Length of seminar – one participant reported that the seminar lasted from 10am-7pm. This is not standard LP practice and the issue of longer than normal delivery has been addressed with specific individuals. All practitioners are expected to all follow the same teaching pattern of seminars of between 3-5 hours.

Feeling of blame (the paper comments that this is also found in other CFS trials with those who don't succeed) – the Lightning Process asks individuals to take responsibility for their own learning, this differs from blame for not succeeding. Additionally, the Lightning Process, along with many other approaches, discusses how the concepts of 'feeling guilt' or that 'you are to blame' prevents change and progress. This is the concept behind the development of the verb 'dû' and is central to the book introducing that verb. Not 'getting' this pivotal concept would indicate that they had yet to grasp one of the cornerstones of the LP approach, and then the practitioner, as any good trainer would do, would not blame them for this but work with them to find better ways to re-explain it.

Secrecy – The Lightning Process isn't shrouded in secrecy. Phil Parker is happy for observers to watch Lightning Process seminars and for participants to discuss the Lightning Process with anyone they wish. He does not give permission for his materials and

intellectual property to be available to those without a licence to use them. The training to become a Practitioner is intense and if someone was to use the materials without the underlying knowledge and training there may be safety issues.

Limits and illness – The authors suggest that the Lightning Process denies limitations of illness but this is an inaccurate description of the Lightning Process' perspective. Suggesting people ignore symptoms, without addressing any of the physiological limitations to exertion would be detrimental to them and have no therapeutic value. The Lightning Process does not ignore the illness or its limitations instead it teaches people how to improve their physiological function, using the link between CNS function and physiological change, first before attempting to increase their exertion. These points might have been clarified by referencing any of the published materials on the intervention, which were notably absent from the bibliography.

Sample - The study also has a number of quality issues; the selection of the sample via ME/CFS charities creates a population unlikely to be representative of those who have taken the LP, as those who experienced recovery from ME/CFS are less likely to continue to be members of such patient groups.

Speed of recovery – Although the Lightning Process seminar is three days, the Lightning Process starts from the initial interaction with the LP practitioner and continues until no further support is required by the client. Many people report that they are better after three days, but for others this takes longer as they embed the principles and practices of Lightning Process and build their stamina to reach their goals.

Effects of different practitioners – Lightning Process practitioners are taught to present the Lightning Process in a standardised format. They will obviously bring their own personalities to the presentation. It is important to select a practitioner that you feel you will have rapport with. The practitioners now all have stringent requirements with regard to their Professional Practice, Continuing Professional Development and have to be involved in supervision.