

LSVT BIG

LINDSAY DANIELS

What a positive and life-affirming experience the LSVT BIG physiotherapy programme is.

I now have a significantly increased awareness of how Parkinson's impacts on my life (which I didn't have before). The exercises I do every day will enable me to manage my symptoms and slow the progression of PD.

I was impressed with the high level of professionalism my LSVT BIG physiotherapist Tara Martin from On the Go Physio demonstrated when working with me. Tara is a fully qualified LSVT BIG expert. She was willing to share her considerable knowledge about Parkinson's with me, and her skills as a physiotherapist were unsurpassed. Tara was tolerant, insightful, patient, focused and empathetic. Having the therapy in my home was a real bonus.

What on earth am I talking about? Well, here is a brief explanation. LSVT (Lee Silverman Voice Training) was developed to help Lee improve her communication with her family. LSVT LOUD has now been used by speech language therapists for 20 years. LSVT BIG has recently been developed to help people with Parkinson's improve their movements. It is based on the plasticity of the brain and its ability to create new pathways.

The programme is based on a set of activity-dependent neuro-plasticity principles (intensity, complexity, repetition, salience, timing and specificity). The fundamentals underpinning LSVT BIG are BIGNESS (amplitude – producing large movements); MODE (– intensive and high effort); CALIBRATION (– sensory, internal cueing) to bring about neurophysiological changes in the brain, and correct the mismatch between how people with Parkinson's perceive their movements and how others perceive them.

I've learned to challenge the Parkinson's auto-pilot which keeps on wanting me to think SMALL in my movements and switch it off by thinking and acting BIG in everything I do.

The first visit with Tara was to discuss how the disorder was impacting on my life, to fill out some questionnaires and to identify a set of short and long term goals. It was also an opportunity for me to ask questions about the programme. Then I had intensive LSVT BIG physiotherapy – four consecutive one hour sessions each week for four weeks. I was taught 13 exercises which I practised twice a day for the four weeks with Tara, along with homework which was focused on my short term goals. I now practise my maintenance exercises every day.

The four weeks intensive therapy is designed to establish new pathways in your brain and the maintenance

programme is designed to reinforce those new pathways.

I would recommend this course of therapy to everyone with Parkinson's. It has made a real detectable improvement in my movements and I am sure it will do the same for you.

While the course is expensive (\$1920.00), it is very good value for money.

Here is a web site you might care to visit: www.lsvt.co.nz. If you type LSVT BIG into the search box of your search engine, you will find many interesting sites.

Thank you Tara and On the Go Physio!

