

What is Hypnotherapy?

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In order to understand Hypnotherapy we have to start with the state in which these beneficial practices are facilitated: Hypnosis.

Hypnosis is a natural state of awareness and occurs several times a day even though we might be unaware of this. Have you ever been so completely absorbed in an activity, book, movie or daydream that you lose track of time and might even be easily startled? This is the state of hypnosis. It is linked to certain deep Alpha and Theta brain wave activities which is the optimal state for connecting to the subconscious mind. In a therapeutic environment the body is usually deeply relaxed and the concentration greatly focussed and not easily distracted. This allows for work with subconscious programming, dipping into creativity, inner guidance and much more. If only we knew how far reaching the positive effects are and how it can be utilised for our benefit.

The state of hypnosis, or trance, is as old as human kind and was entered into mostly through sensory overload, repetition, expectations and suggestions. Think of tribal dancing, chanting, drumming or rituals that are used to connect to divine powers. The outcome of those ancient (and some modern) rituals is a heightened state of suggestibility in the mind of the subject, creating a receptive environment for emotional experiences. What is perhaps most observable when comparing the use of ancient hypnosis to modern professional techniques, is that people were looking for answers outside of themselves.

During modern hypnosis practices fine-tuned techniques are applied with willing participants to bypass the critical "conscious" mind. This may be one of the official explanations of hypnosis but it is not entirely true and may even add to the fears and misconceptions. The truth is that the critical faculty has not been eliminated but is usually confined to what the focus is set on. To retain our ability to be rational and logical is vitally important since non-medical hypnotherapy relies on the client's ability to re-assess old "programming" and to make beneficial changes.

For the right person this client-centred approach has many advantages since the client is the only expert on his or her life and any decisions made are truly authentic and therefore more easily accepted.

While the state of hypnosis has a tendency to engender relaxation and thus reduce stress, which is very useful by itself, it is the techniques (tailored to suit the needs of the client) that a professional hypnosis practitioner utilises which produce suitable, sometimes near miraculous results.

Today it is generally much better understood that the state of hypnosis does not weaken the will nor is it a sign that the subject is gullible or of low intelligence even though the acts during a stage hypnosis show may indicate otherwise. There is simply a percentage of the population who have fun performing on stage.

While most of us would not be willing to subject ourselves publicly to the suggestions of a stage hypnotist, therapeutic hypnosis is becoming more and more popular because of its valuable results.

Reasons for considering the assistance of a professional hypnosis practitioner range from better known applications like habit control, i.e. smoking cessations, weight loss, as well as motivation, sports (and other) performances and improving confidence issues. Past life regressions have been fascinating people for many years and the application also expands to the mind-body connections with effective results when working with anxiety, fears and phobias, stress, and the lifting of low moods. Help with the psychosomatic aspects of a medically diagnosed symptom as well as pain management for relief with chronic pain, dental issues or easy childbirth are other areas where hypnosis techniques can assist with great results.

Fewer people look at the more proactive advantages of hypnosis practices. As human beings we are always aware of a version of us that we would prefer to be, but don't know how to achieve this version. Working with a hypnosis practitioner may bring clarity to our path ahead.

You may not be ready to seek the assistance of a professional but you may want to harness the power of your mind by learning self-hypnosis. Self-hypnosis is a wonderful tool to gain clarity and insight and to tap into our creative nature. Self-hypnosis can also make meditation practices easier and greatly enhance religious or spiritual experiences.

The fact is that we all have "programs" in our subconscious, some that are good for us and some not beneficial. We act on those programs as if we are set on auto pilot. Learning how we can "upgrade" these programs and even load new ones to enhance our life experience through the state of hypnosis is an exciting skill that we can use in everyday life.