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“Hypnosis: The Clinical Applications of Absorption”

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Pervasive Myths and Misconceptions About Hypnosis

- People in hypnosis lose control
- Hypnosis only affects weak-willed or gullible people.
- Hypnosis reliably enhances the accuracy of memory.
- Hypnosis always entails relaxation
- Hypnosis depends primarily on the skill of the hypnotist.
- Hypnosis is a sleep state
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Characteristics of Hypnosis

1. State or consciousness "Altered "from usual awareness.
2. Absorption, heightened concentration -not sleep.
3. Suggestions are acted upon more readily (if appropriate).
4. Enhances Right brain versus left-brain functions:
Creative, imagistic, intuitive, synesthetic, emotional.
5. Can enhance body's own state of healing:
Normalize metabolism, create equilibrium in nervous system, opposite of "fight or flight response".
6. Naturalistic, flexible state that we spontaneously go in and out of many times a day.

Consecutive Components of a Clinical Hypnosis Intervention:

-Hypnotic Induction:

An introduction to hypnosis in which the patient is guided through suggestions to relax, concentrate, and/or to focus attention on something in particular.

-Hypnotic Utilization -Suggestions

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The client is guided to undergo changes in experience of physical sensations, perceptions, thoughts, behaviors and feelings. Many kinds of direct and indirect suggestions strategies are available.

-Post-hypnotic suggestions:

Important to take learning out of the office and “on the road” into life.

-Reorientation.

Re- alert, refocus on present milieu and get ready for next activity.

How is Hypnosis Ideally Suited for Mind/Body Treatment?

1. Moderation of physical discomfort
Alteration of physical sensations through hypnotic phenomena afford pain relief, comfort etc.
2. Enhance Ego Strengthening, Self- Esteem
Stimulate Proactivity and Mastery versus Helplessness
3. Alleviation of Emotional Distress
 - a. Nurturing aspects of hypnotic relationship
 - b. Psychological work to alleviate emotional distress associated with illness
4. Unconscious Impasses Blocking Healing
Access Significance of Symptom/Condition to Patient
5. Facilitation of Organic Healing
Psychophysiology of the trance state plus hypnotic suggestions

Some Applications of Clinical Hypnosis

Psychological:

Anxiety disorders,
Dissociative disorders
Hypnoanalysis: accessing, integrating unconscious processes
Mood stabilization and regulation
Phobias, panic
Self-image, body image, low self -esteem
PTSD
Psychological conflicts

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Behavioral:

Enuresis
Insomnia
Nail biting, thumb sucking
Self-care and adherence to prescribed regimen
Sexual dysfunctions: impotence, inhibitions, premature ejaculation
Smoking, weight control, eating disorders
Stress reduction
Stuttering
Tics
Trichotillomania

Mind/Body:

Accelerated healing: burn control, surgical wounds, etc.
Allergy, asthma
Analgesia, anesthesia in obstetrics, surgery, dentistry
Cardiovascular disorders: Hypertension, psychogenic cardiac disorders
Dermatological disorders, eczema, warts, herpes, psoriasis
Gastrointestinal problems: Colitis, peptic ulcers, nausea and vomiting
Immune-related diseases: cancer, autoimmune diseases
Pain, Headaches
Rehabilitation
Sleep disturbances

Enhanced Performance and Self- Development

Concentration for study skills, learning
Creativity; inspiration and performance
Enhancing self-esteem, self-control, empowerment,
Goal setting
Mental rehearsal for desired outcome behavior
Meditation, spiritual awareness
Sports performance

Why is it important for Clinicians to learn about hypnosis?

1. Hypnosis can be utilized to advantage in an integrative fashion with other psychological and medical modalities to further many clinical goals.
2. Mental imagery and goal setting in a focused state of awareness are more vivid and takes root more than verbal goal statements.
3. Hypnosis provides an inroad into the inner life and mental functioning that is not available through other therapies.

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4. Trance states afford many mind/body benefits such as reduced reactivity and enhanced healing
5. Hypnosis is empowering. Helps patients access resource states.
6. Patients are already in a natural state of trance in medical and therapeutic situations. Avoid "Toxic Suggestions".

Better Communication Strategies ~Even Without Intentional Hypnosis

1. Be aware that what you say may well be internalized as hypnotic suggestions.
2. Use invitational rather than authoritarian communication to bypass defensive resistance.
3. Formulate communication using a positive verbal frame (don't reinforce pathology, rather build expectancy of change) instead of saying " I hear you have a serious eating disorder" , you could say: I wonder how your life will be different when that eating disorder is behind you?"
4. Be mindful of how you deliver your words~ use cadence, volume, pacing to:
 1. focus the patient's attention
 2. introduce suggestions.
5. Always assume your client has been in a hypnotic or "trance" state so be sure to re-orient your client well before the end of the session.
 1. Allow time
 2. Say: "now it's time to come all the way back to the office, feeling refreshed and alert"
 3. Check in to make sure they are back and interview about how they are feeling.

Education in Clinical Hypnosis for Professionals-Two Professional Societies

-American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH) multidisciplinary
<https://www.asch.net/>

-Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis (SCEH); multidisciplinary, international
<https://www.sceh.us/>

Two Recommended Texts:

-Elkins, G. (Ed.). (2017). Handbook of Medical and Psychological Hypnosis: Foundations, Applications, and Professional Issues. New York: Springer.

-Yapko, M. (2018) Trancework: An Introduction to the Practice of Clinical Hypnosis (5th Edition). New York: Routledge. (Previous editions also useful).

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Carol Ginandes' Bibliography

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