

Why Hypnotherapy?

An overview of the process and practice

SOURCE

Hypnotherapy

Introduction

Clinical Hypnotherapy can be a very interesting and enjoyable way to release people from negative behavioural patterns (phobias, anxiety, etc.). It is effective in breaking down these patterns because it works with the unconscious to reach the underlying causes, which are often buried too deep for people to be able to analyse and understand them consciously.

Hypnotherapy is a safe way to explore and restructure the way someone thinks, guiding the person into a relaxed state, working with metaphor and suggestion to embed positive change in the mind. Depending on the person's level of focus and experience of hypnosis (it's easier to go into a hypnotic trance for someone who has been hypnotised before or who practises regular meditation, for example), the session may resemble anything from a light daydream to a deeper state where the therapist's voice is no longer consciously heard. In fact, it's very similar to the window of drowsiness before falling asleep (hypnagogic), where the brainwaves move from an alert state into Alpha, then Theta.

Standards

As a certified Clinical Hypnotherapist, on the General Hypnotherapy Register, I am committed to upholding high professional and ethical standards. I also undergo regular personal development training (CPD) and attend peer/supervisory group meetings.

Being a Hypnotherapist is an accepted profession these days, and it is common to hear of people who've experienced relief through hypnosis for the issues they've faced. Particularly with the rise in poor mental health globally, more and more people are intuitively drawn to alternative and more holistic approaches, which, at the same time, complement regular therapies and medical care. Training as a Clinical Hypnotherapist on accredited courses takes many months, followed by two years of supervision and ongoing training.

Typically, the conditions treated with Hypnotherapy include, but are not limited to: anxiety; insomnia; low confidence and shyness; obsessive compulsive disorder; pain, loss & childhood trauma; performance blocks (creative, speech, physical, etc.); phobia; panic attacks; sadness & fear; relationship difficulties; smoking and unhealthy eating and drinking habits; and spiritual crisis.

It would be unwise, if not unethical, to use hypnosis with people who have serious addictions, or conditions, such as psychosis, alcohol or drug addiction, anorexia, or with epilepsy, pacemakers and heart conditions, all of which require medical care or psychotherapeutic intervention. It is also not recommended to treat depression with hypnosis, since exploring feelings in this state of mind is best avoided in favour of distractions and fulfilling activities, in which case, wellness coaching (talking therapy) would still be available to help determine what basic needs are not being met in the person's life.

In sum, confidence building and change around issues causing fears and anxiety, also managing conditions that cannot be physically healed, such as pain from permanent physical damage, can all be successfully treated with Hypnotherapy, and I have had direct experience with each of these, as well as my own personal mind-body-spiritual experiences.

Process

It should be noted from the outset that all discussions during therapy are completely confidential.

Treatment typically begins with a look at medical history and asking the client what they would like to achieve and/or change (please note that the therapist may not work with someone with serious addiction, epilepsy, etc., because of the risk factors involved, not least of which could include emotional trauma, seizure, or even physical risk towards the therapist. Managing the symptoms of certain conditions is also not normally part of the Hypnotherapist's areas of expertise). The Hypnotherapist may then delve deeper, to get to the heart of a problem and uncover any secondary benefits that the issue might be bringing (gaining attention, for example, as from a social group for smoking), which can make a mindset more difficult to change.

So, clients can expect to explore their issue(s) with the therapist before being guided into a relaxing hypnosis where deeper work can take place. The guided hypnosis is much like being read a story in which the client is the main character. At the same time, the therapist will make positive suggestions for change around the particular issue(s) or goals agreed upon. During hypnosis, the client may experience thoughts, colours or visualisations, as though in another time or place, although precisely where their mind needs to be. The degree of 'trance' is on a spectrum, however, since everyone is different, with some people more resistant to relaxation than others. As the unconscious mind is 'opened up', beliefs, habits, worries, etc., can be explored from the safety of the therapy chair. Often, this is done by dissociating the client from an experience, as they sit back and observe a memory from a place of objectivity, or it is played

out in a less difficult way (for phobias, for example, which are 'watched' at a distance on a screen during the visualisation). In the mind's eye, intuition and imagination can begin to take over, and greater awareness around an issue might be accompanied by solutions, release or acceptance, allowing the client to heal and move on.

In this way, and as outlined previously, Hypnotherapy can treat the symptoms and various forms of fear, anxiety, hopelessness, tension, grief, pain, habit and compulsion, as well as energy imbalances, issues around pregnancy and childbirth (morning sickness, pain, postpartum sadness, etc.), relationships (including with oneself) and life purpose/spirituality. It can also be used in complement to other remedial techniques, including anchoring, tapping, neural linguistic programming (reframing) and meditation.

Since the part of the mind that is responsible for automatic functions, such as breathing and digestion, as well as the storage of memory, is around 20 times bigger than the logical, conscious mind, it works away in the background like a computer program, without our even thinking about these processes at all. This is a rather large part of the mind, which influences our choices and behaviours unconsciously. To reprogram the unconscious beliefs and suppressed emotions adversely affecting someone's life, entails planting new sets of ideas to instil new, healthy habits (mental and physical), but also that the client then acts upon these in their own time, e.g. with changes in lifestyle, to practise and so embed the positive changes suggested. If, however, after an hour with the therapist, the client then spends 23 hours in the same behaviours or environment as before, the work will undoubtedly take longer or wear off.

It's important to note that a Hypnotherapist is not a magician nor a mystic, but a guide to help people get back on track within a clinical framework. In the trance state, the visualisation of an improved situation can be invoked and/or the hidden reasons for a problem brought up for clearing. The process is gentle, but can feel a bit strange, although in a thought-provoking and interesting way. Throughout this guided state of relaxation, the client will stay completely aware and in control (unless sleep is induced, which is uncommon). So, at no time are they led to do something against their wishes, unlike stage hypnosis, which is not therapy, but organised fun with willing participants. In the days, weeks and months following the session, the suggestions may continue to sink in, with emotional release as they do so (trapped energy does need to come out; in the form of crying, unexpected emotions, or brief muscle twitches, for example). As the mind comes to realisations also, this can lead to revelation, transformation and a change in direction. However, change may feel so spontaneous and natural that the client may think that they were going to do it anyway. Ultimately, since change comes from within the individual, it really is all down to them, although the support of a therapist can significantly help speed their journey along!

In the end, as long as the client is guided to a new level of understanding, which helps them to restructure their unwanted thoughts and behaviours, then the objective for the hypnosis can be said to have been achieved.

Summary

If you are suffering from anxiety or have a phobia or challenging problem keeping you awake at night, hypnosis can be a very interesting, enjoyable and effective way to release you from the negative thought patterns at the root of the issue. Hypnotherapy is effective at breaking down these patterns because it works with your unconscious mind to reach the underlying cause, which is often buried too deeply for you to be able to consciously analyse and understand. It is a safe way to explore and restructure the way you think, working with metaphor and suggestion to embed positive change in the mind. By simply relaxing and observing your thoughts, you will be guided towards clarity and resolution, so that you can finally get on with your life.

Please get in touch if you have any questions, or to book a free consultation today.

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Best wishes,
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