

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CLINICAL HYPNOTHERAPY TECHNIQUES

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# WHY HAS HYPNOTHERAPY BECOME A SIGNIFICANT FIELD OF CLINICAL INTEREST?

Presumably, you are interested in the field of hypnotherapy to augment your practice of the healing arts. Many others in our profession are, too. Hypnotherapy is a rising star in the areas of integrative medicine, addictions treatment, habit management, and the treatment of anxiety, fears, phobias, depression, and PTSD. Additionally, hypnotherapy is accepted as an evidence-based intervention.

This guide is intended to give you a comprehensive overview of the modern field of hypnotherapy and the techniques in use today. To start, let's discuss the practical applications of clinical hypnotherapy.

## HYPNOSIS IS NOW COMMONLY AND EFFECTIVELY USED TO TREAT

- PTSD and Trauma Resolution (rape, physical and emotional abuse)
- Anxiety and Stress Management
- Depression (dysthemic disorder)
- Sports and Athletic Performance
- Smoking Cessation
- Obesity and Weight Loss
- Sexual Dysfunctions (erectile dysfunction, pre-orgasmic)
- Concentration Difficulties, Test Anxiety and Learning Disorders

*"It's hard to find a field that hasn't used hypnosis successfully, everything from quitting smoking to IBS." - Good Morning America, 9/10*



# THE MOST COMMON CONDITIONS TREATED WITH HYPNOTHERAPY TODAY

Hypnotherapy is becoming a more and more common practice for treating some fairly prevalent health and psychological issues. Industry trends indicate that hypnotherapy techniques are being acknowledged as the most effective method for treating some of these common ailments, rather than the use of basic hypnosis, which tends to only provide a temporary solution that does not get to the root of the underlying issue. Below are treatment areas where hypnotherapy has proven to be a highly effective treatment option.

## **ADDICTIONS**

Hypnosis can be useful in modifying self-destructive compulsive or addictive behavior patterns, but usually the change is temporary unless the underlying motivation is addressed. Hypnotherapy promotes the resolution of the issues that caused the addictive behavior in the first place. Addiction to gambling, sex, alcohol or over-eating is driven by a deep unsatisfied need and an existential fear based on that unmet need: an individual may over-eat as a defense against feelings of loneliness and fear of abandonment. Through age regression hypnotherapy we can go back to the source of the person's fear of abandonment as a lonely child of three, for example, when she was separated from her parents for extended periods of time. Healing that trauma dissolves the tremendous life-or-death feeling that attached to the experience of loneliness, and thus lessens the extent of defense she has been using to cope with it.

## **ANXIETY AND STRESS MANAGEMENT**

Hypnosis is potent in the treatment of anxiety, stress, phobias and fears because it is such a powerful anti-anxiety agent. The nervous system under hypnosis is relaxed. Hypnosis can also be useful in alleviating somatic conditions that can be causing anxiety, such as chronic pain. Of course, as with addictions, the anxiety in an individual's current life may be the result of earlier trauma, and so hypnotherapy can be a powerful technique to resolve the trauma and relieve the anxiety.

## **PTSD AND TRAUMA RESOLUTION**

Hypnosis is now firmly associated with the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Hypnotic phenomena and the symptoms of PTSD are similar. Physical trauma produces a sudden discontinuity in cognitive and emotional experience that often persists after the trauma is over. This results in symptoms such as psychogenic amnesia, intrusive reliving of the event as if it were



## THE MOST COMMON CONDITIONS TREATED WITH HYPNOTHERAPY TODAY

recurring, numbing of responsiveness, and hypersensitivity to stimuli. Hypnosis is a powerful tool in the treatment of PTSD because it provides controlled access to memories that may otherwise be kept out of consciousness; it allows restructuring of intrusive memories through corrective re-experiencing of the trauma; hypnosis promotes access to somatic awareness and at the same time effective filtering of environmental stimuli. Through hypnotherapy one can go back to source traumas and resolve the interrupted nervous system reaction that is causing current PTSD symptoms.

### WEIGHT LOSS

We prefer to use the term *weight release* rather than *weight loss*, because many people avoid loss, but are willing to proactively release what no longer serves them. Weight release is usually best achieved with proper diet and adequate exercise, and hypnosis can be instrumental in motivating an individual to commit to such a healthy regimen. People who need to release excess weight usually have some self-sabotaging behavior patterns, i.e., emotional eating, such as eating to soothe loneliness or maintaining extra weight to keep from attracting attention from members of the opposite sex. Age regression hypnotherapy is a technique that allows access to these underlying hidden motivations, the secondary gains from continuing self-sabotaging behavior.

### COMMON MEDICAL CONDITIONS TREATED WITH HYPNOTHERAPY TODAY

Hypnosis is now commonly used to treat medical conditions such as:

- Sleep Disorders
- Gastrointestinal Disorders (Ulcers, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Colitis, Crohn's Disease)
- Dermatologic Disorders (Eczema, Herpes, Neurodermatitis, Psoriasis, Warts)
- Surgery/Anesthesiology (As an adjunct to medication, or as the sole anesthetic for surgery)
- Acute and Chronic Pain Management (back pain, cancer pain, dental anesthesia, headaches and migraines, arthritis or rheumatism)
- Burns (Hypnosis is not only effective for the pain, but also reduces inflammation and promotes healing)
- Nausea and Vomiting associated with Chemotherapy and Pregnancy
- Childbirth (At least two thirds of women have been found capable of using hypnosis as the sole analgesic for labor)

"The purpose of hypnosis as a therapeutic technique is to help you understand and gain more control over your behavior, emotions or physical well-being." – The Mayo Clinic, 12/03



## THE MOST COMMON CONDITIONS TREATED WITH HYPNOTHERAPY TODAY

- Hemophilia (self-hypnosis can control vascular flow eliminating the need for blood transfusion)
- Allergies, Asthma
- High Blood Pressure (hypertension)
- Broken Bones (reduced healing time)

For a thorough review of research citations on hypnosis and hypnotherapy in both medical and psychological treatment, please refer to “Hypnosis & Hypnotherapy Citations”, a 140 page compendium indexed by presenting issue or medical condition. [*Journal of Heart-Centered Therapies*, 2010, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 3-142]: [http://www.wellness-institute.org/images/Journal\\_13-1\\_Hypnosis\\_and\\_Hypnotherapy\\_Citations.pdf](http://www.wellness-institute.org/images/Journal_13-1_Hypnosis_and_Hypnotherapy_Citations.pdf)

### MANY HOSPITALS INCORPORATE HYPNOTHERAPY/HYPNOSIS INTO THEIR INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE MILIEU

#### **The New York Times**

April 15, 2011

#### **“Using Hypnosis to Gain More Control Over Your Illness”**

“Hypnosis is now available to patients at some of the most respected medical institutions in the country, including Stanford Center for Integrative Medicine, the Cleveland Clinic, Mount Sinai Medical Center and Beth Israel Medical Center in New York.”

[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/16/health/16patient.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/16/health/16patient.html?_r=0)



April 9, 2012

#### **“Medical Hypnosis: You Are Getting Very Healthy”**

“Scientific evidence is mounting that hypnosis can be effective in a variety of medical situations, from easing migraine headaches to lowering blood pressure, controlling asthma attacks, minimizing hot flashes and diminishing side effects from chemotherapy.”

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303815404577333751488988824.html>



# MODERN HYPNOTHERAPY TECHNIQUES: BEST PRACTICES

The most effective hypnotherapy practices have evolved from a set of psychotherapy techniques that have been demonstrated successfully in a clinical setting. The following group of advanced methodologies represents the most effective techniques used during modern hypnotherapy sessions.

## EGO STATE THERAPY OR PARTS THERAPY

Ego state therapy, sometimes referred to as parts therapy, is based on the idea that our personality is composed of a number of various parts. Our personality parts each have their respective jobs or functions in the inner mind and the outer world. Each of these parts is a specialist: one is a parent, one a lover, and another specializes at our job or career. Some parts are less mature, however, and these may specialize in anger, or in compulsive worry. Hypnotherapy provides direct access to these various parts of one's personality.

Ego State therapy is a vital component of hypnotherapy. We know that beginning at conception there are certain tasks the baby must acquire in order to have all the tools they need to sail through their lives. Unfortunately, there are many reasons why we, as humans, are not always able to gain mastery over the healthy lessons we need in each developmental stage. This is where hypnotherapy is most effective in treatment of many dysfunctional patterns in our lives.

We learn from Dr. Eric Berne that we all need a loving, nurturing parent within us rather than a critical one. We learn that we need to have a strong, vital adult within who is “driving the bus” so to speak. We do not want a child at the wheel. And yet that is what gets most people into trouble. The child ego state is running the show. We also know that it is preferable for our child ego states to be spontaneous, creative and fun loving. Because we have not received the proper emotional and physical care as children, we often have worried, fearful and inhibited child parts within us.

Through effective hypnotherapy, we can access these ego states, resolve the unresolved issues and receive all the gifts we needed internally and perhaps did not get. We can become the loving nurturing parent within, have a healthy adult to make clear choices for us and then to protect and love the child parts within. This is the beauty and the gift of clinical hypnotherapy facilitated by trained professionals.



### DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Most neurotic symptoms can be seen as age-inappropriate behavior, exhibiting a developmental deficit or unresolved developmental stage. That is, the client is relying on behaviors that were the best choice available among limited options at an earlier developmental stage, but used in his/her current life constitute a repetition compulsion. For example, an adult who avoids intimacy in relationships despite an acknowledged need for it may be continuing the pattern initiated as a child to avoid an abusive caregiver.

Conceptualizing personal growth and healing as completion of unresolved psychosocial developmental stages was the hallmark of Erik Erikson's work. He stressed that "In childhood we see the actual trauma; in maturity we see the behavioral consequences of such disturbances." Hypnotherapy provides an ideal vehicle to explore the original traumatic developmental stages, and to correct any deficits.

### AGE REGRESSION

A hypnotized subject is given suggestions that he or she is of a younger age so that the subject can relive and repair certain traumatic experiences from their past and/or re-experience events from a more resourceful state. We ask the client to go to the source of the conflict that they are working on in a session, and their own unconscious mind determines what experience they regress to. Then we are able to assist that age-regressed ego state (the six-year-old or newborn) to create a corrective experience that helps heal the damage done by the trauma.

It is imperative that age regression be guided by a well-trained professional. During age regression, the client becomes vulnerable as they regress to what is in need of repair within them. We always begin with whatever triggers may have come up for them. A trigger is any stimulus, another person or a specific situation, that prompts a physical or emotional reaction. A trigger can be as simple as a friend telling you she has to cancel the dinner date you agreed upon, your spouse or child not returning at the previously specified time, someone cutting you off on the freeway or even something you see on TV or in the news.

The way you know it is a trigger is by noticing your physical and/or emotional reaction. Perhaps you feel annoyed, angry, hurt, scared or humiliated. It is most important to notice your physiological responses. These may be heart beating fast, thoughts racing, sweating, heart pounding, heavy breathing, tightness in stomach or chest, etc. These triggers bring us vital information about what is unfinished or incomplete within us. It notifies us about what is stored in our subconscious mind and our body that causes us to react, that leads us to conflict, and that prevents us from moving forward in our lives.



A hypnotherapist will use these or any triggers as a jumping off point to notify your subconscious mind that we are about to do the “Google Search.” That we are requesting information which will most directly lead us to what this reaction is telling us. The Google Search must be done in a precise manner, using the exact words of the client in order to lead to the exact time and place in our psyche that can bring the most healing. A well-trained clinical hypnotherapist is essential here so that the deepest healing can take place.

### TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

A school of psychology that studies humanity’s highest potential, transcendent states of consciousness, the spiritual aspects of the human experience, and those that transcend the egocentric perspective. Transpersonal experiences may be defined as experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos.

Components of transpersonal experience: transcendence, personal meaning and mission in life, sacredness, material values, altruism, and high ideals, awareness of the tragic, and fruits of spirituality. In hypnotherapy, we have access to the unconscious mind and therefore to these aspects of a client’s psyche. Particularly relevant in transpersonal hypnotherapy are Jungian dream-work and shamanistic soul retrieval.



### BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

One behavioral technique that is extremely effective in the trance state is extinguishing an unwanted symptom, a form of systematic desensitization. Another important behavior treatment is *modeling*, or social reinforcement. One of the most important behavior modification techniques used in our hypnotherapy is that of anchoring, based on the process of *paired associates*. All behavior modification techniques are more powerful change agents when they are applied directly to the unconscious mind rather than to the cognitive mind alone.

### VISUALIZATION/GUIDED IMAGERY

Guided imagery and visualization are techniques used to help you imagine yourself being in a particular state. When utilized within a hypnotic trance, the effect is much more powerful than it is





## MODERN HYPNOTHERAPY TECHNIQUES: BEST PRACTICES

in the everyday state of consciousness. *Visualization and guided imagery techniques are examples of the difference between hypnosis and hypnotherapy.* Visualization techniques can be successfully used for relaxation and as a resource state for the client to discover a relaxing place as a starting point. Many people use these techniques and call it hypnotherapy.

If no age regression is used, however, and no inner conflict is identified and resolved, then visualization techniques are actually only defined as hypnosis. They are, however, very effective for relaxation and creating a familiar, safe place to which the client can return before and after hypnotherapy is completed. Another important aspect to be aware of is that only 60% of people mentally process by visualizing. Others are often more in alignment with auditory or kinesthetic experiences. In other words, they may not be able to see their favorite place at the beach, but they may be able to relax by hearing the sounds of the ocean waves (auditory), feeling the gentle breeze on their skin (kinesthetic), and/or smelling the fresh ocean air (olfactory).

### THESE COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY FIT TOGETHER SEAMLESSLY



# UNDERSTANDING THE MOST EFFECTIVE HYPNOTHERAPY MODALITY: THE HEART-CENTERED HYPNOTHERAPY MODEL

Based on our thirty years of experience in psychotherapy, we recommend a specific model of hypnotherapy: *Heart-Centered Hypnotherapy*. It is the most comprehensive methodology we are aware of, combining hypnotherapy best practices and proprietary techniques that deliver maximum value to clients. This particular modality seamlessly combines all of the following components:

**Ego State Therapy** provides one of the structural pillars of *Heart-Centered Hypnotherapy*. We discover a given ego state through its signature set of emotions, body sensations, and specific expression through language. By having the client go to a recent stressful experience, he/she is able to describe the emotions, sensations, and language unique to that exact moment in time. For example, one might recall being in a heated argument with one's spouse the previous day, and become acutely aware of the fear, anger, and hurt that surged up in body sensations of heat in the chest and butterflies in the stomach: "I feel dominated and discounted, and I could just strangle her."

**Developmental Psychology** informs us that this current ego state is a habituated child state, and can be seen as age-inappropriate child behavior, exhibiting a developmental deficit. That is, the client is relying on behaviors that were the best choice available among limited options at an earlier developmental stage, but used in his/her current life constitute a repetition compulsion. So the emotions of fear, anger, and hurt, and the body sensations of heat in the chest and butterflies in the stomach, and the feeling of being dominated and discounted, were developed as a coping strategy at a critical period in childhood. We use hypnotherapy as an ideal vehicle to explore the original traumatic developmental stages, and then to correct any deficits.

**Age Regression** techniques are employed to follow these identified bridges of awareness (affective, somatic, linguistic) back to the source trauma that formed the genesis of the dysfunctional behavior pattern. The client's own unconscious mind determines what experience they regress to, using the words and



## UNDERSTANDING THE MOST EFFECTIVE HYPNOTHERAPY MODALITY: THE HEART-CENTERED HYPNOTHERAPY MODEL

sensations as keywords in a Google search. Then we are able to assist that age-regressed ego state (the twelve-year-old or six-year-old or newborn) to create a corrective experience that helps heal the damage done by the trauma. Through corrective experiences such as saying “No”, or pushing an abuser away, or asking for and getting help from a trustworthy adult in the child’s life, clients can repair these traumatic experiences from their past. And new empowered healthy experiences are implanted to replace the old ones.

We utilize **Neuro Linguistic Programming** techniques and **Behavior Modification** techniques to extinguish cravings, shame, or fear, and to anchor the new resource states to make it easier for the client to recall them when they are stressed or threatened, and tempted to resort to the old dysfunctional pattern.

We also employ **Transpersonal Psychology** techniques as the individual’s sense of identity or self extends beyond the child’s original limitations. There are also parts of the child that split off, or dissociated, at the time of the trauma: he/she needs to reclaim those parts while in the original ego state that was traumatized. So the client can experience a return of innocence or courage or self-confidence; this follows a shamanistic technique often called “soul retrieval”.

Finally, **Visualization** techniques are used after the reparative therapeutic interventions have identified and resolved old dysfunctional beliefs and behavior patterns to assist the client to imagine himself implementing new healthier beliefs and behaviors.

### **The emphasis in *Heart-Centered Hypnotherapy* is on integrating specific, proven hypnotherapy techniques into your psychotherapy practice:**

- the psychosocial stages of ego development (Erikson, Mahler, Vaillant)
- the psychobiology of state-dependent “body memories” (Rossi, Cheek, Lowen)
- the development of ego states (Hartmann, Assagioli, Berne, Kohut, Watkins)
- the intrapsychic interaction of complexes, shadow and persona (Jung)
- the influences of pre- and perinatal imprinted trauma (Grof, Janov, Emerson)
- the imperative for “ego strengthening” and “ego surrender” (Fromm)
- the transpersonal realms of experience (Jung, Maslow, Assagioli, Grof, Goleman)
- the wisdom of the body (Levine, Rothschild, van der Kolk)



# GETTING STARTED WITH HYPNOTHERAPY TRAINING

At [The Wellness Institute](#), we specialize in training Masters and PhD level professionals who want to incorporate hypnosis and hypnotherapy into their practice. Our dynamic “training experience” programs are intended to provide a strong foundation in hypnotherapy using traditional as well as new and highly innovative techniques to access the inner working of the subconscious mind and, ultimately, help you achieve better client outcomes in your practice.

The best way to begin your path towards certification in hypnotherapy is with the Wellness Institute’s **“Accelerated Six Day Hypnotherapy Training”**. This is a comprehensive, six day clinical hypnotherapy training program that focuses on heart-centered hypnotherapy techniques and their implementation into your therapy practice.

To learn more about our six day training program and receive a \$100 Wellness Institute gift certificate that can go toward your initial training, [follow this link and fill out our form](#).



# HYPNOTHERAPY TERMINOLOGY (GLOSSARY OF TERMS)

## **AGE REGRESSION**

A hypnotized subject is given suggestions that he or she is of a younger age so that the subject can relive certain experiences and/or re-experience events from a more resourceful state.

## **ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

Hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness similar to relaxation, meditation, and prayer. Once in these altered states, access is provided to deeper levels of the psyche (expanded perspective, i.e., “the big picture”; spiritual experience; previously suppressed memories; conscious regulation of somatic functions). These states can be quantitatively measured with biofeedback equipment.

## **DISSOCIATION**

Dissociation is a split in the mind in which there can be two independent streams of consciousness occurring at the same time, allowing some thoughts and behaviors to occur simultaneously with others. According to some, dissociation is the foundation of hypnosis - the hypnotized person is able to maintain awareness on one level while at the same time having access to the deeper unconscious.

## **FUTURE PROJECTION**

A hypnotic process of progression into the future rather than regression into the past. This can be useful for exploring the future outcome of a current decision, or for allowing access to a more general lifetime perspective for the client.

## **GESTALT THERAPY**

Developed by Fritz Perls, this type of therapy combines the psychoanalytic perspective of bringing unconscious feelings to awareness with the humanistic emphasis of “getting in touch with oneself” in order to help people become more aware of and able to express their feelings. In addition, it is not enough to just become aware of these feelings, Gestalt Therapy also helps people realize the importance of taking responsibility for their feelings, projections, and actions.



### **HYPNOSIS**

Hypnosis is a temporary altered state of consciousness which results in an increased receptiveness and response to suggestion, and a state of heightened relaxation. One may become so focused that he/she experiences events stored in long-term memory as if they were happening in present time.

### **HYPNOTHERAPIST**

A psychotherapist who utilizes hypnosis as a primary tool for assisting clients to achieve their goals, to increase motivation, or to alter behavior patterns. A hypnotherapist often differs from other therapists by focusing on the role of subconscious behaviors and influences on the client's life.

### **HYPNOTHERAPY**

In the hypnotic state, with the facilitation of a clinically trained hypnotherapist, a client can resolve long-standing issues. He/she can regress to actually re-experience early traumas, inform the naïve inner child of the truth, install resource states for continued healing, and complete unresolved developmental tasks by establishing an internal loving nurturing parent.

### **HYPNOTIC PATTERN**

The stream of words, including many repetitions, that the hypnotist maintains to create relaxation, age regression, and healing.

### **HYPNOTIC SUGGESTIONS**

Form effective hypnotic suggestions by using present tense verbs, stating them as already accomplished facts, being positive (not "You are not a smoker anymore" or "You don't lose your temper now"), using dramatic and colorful language, including a strong positive emotional charge, making them uniquely personal and exciting to the creative unconscious mind.

### **HYPNOTIST**

A person skilled in the technique of inducing and managing the hypnotic state in others. Hypnotists are not necessarily trained mental health professionals, and may not be qualified to facilitate psychotherapy or hypnotherapy with the client who has been hypnotized.

### **INDUCTION**

A technique used to hypnotize a person, utilizing eye fixation and verbal instructions. The verbal pattern used can be either maternal (indirect) or paternal (directive).

### **INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE**

A collaborative approach to medical care that utilizes mind-body approaches to preventing and treating chronic disease and promoting health and healing, integrating the highest quality academic medicine with complementary therapies.



### **NEURO LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING**

NLP maximizes patterns of effective human communication. This includes the way people take in information from the world, how they describe it to themselves with their senses, filter it with their beliefs and values, and act on the result.

### **POST HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION:**

A suggestion given to a hypnotic subject in trance for a thought or behavior to be triggered after waking from the trance state.

### **POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

Posttraumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder in which a particularly stressful event, such as military combat, rape, or a natural disaster, brings in its aftermath intrusive mental images of experiencing a traumatic event, emotional numbness and detachment, estrangement from others, a tendency to be easily startled (hypervigilance), nightmares, recurrent dreams, and otherwise disturbed sleep.

### **SELF-HYPNOSIS**

A hypnotic state that is self-created, as contrasted with hetero-hypnosis.

### **UNCONSCIOUS**

The 90% of our mind that is mostly below the level of our awareness. The part of our mind responsible for reflexive action, ideomotor responses, and contains the positive and negative associations we've made throughout our life.



# About The Wellness Institute

The Wellness Institute is an internationally recognized organization, located in Issaquah, Washington, committed to offering the highest quality hypnosis and hypnotherapy training available.

With over 25 years of education experience and 5,000 graduates in Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the U.S., The Wellness Institute is one of the oldest and most respected providers of hypnotherapy certification. If you are looking for new skills, want to earn more money, and dramatically increase your effectiveness with your clients, this is the certification for you!

This guide was co-written by the founders of The Wellness Institute: Diane Zimmeroff (LMFT) and David Hartman (LCSW).

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