


Hypnotherapy

The Natural Stress Therapy way

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What is Hypnotherapy?

Hypnotherapy is the use of a trance state for therapeutic purposes. All hypnotherapy is really self-hypnosis, as nobody can hypnotise another person against their will. The trance state is often referred to as an altered state of consciousness. Altered simply means changed. What has changed? Our brain waves have slowed down and we are in a more relaxed state. More relaxed physically as well as mentally. This allows easier access to the sub-conscious portions of our mind.

Entering an altered state is a natural and common occurrence. Every night we go to sleep and move into a much deeper altered state. So deep, indeed, that we lose consciousness. Daydreaming is another common example of entering altered states. We all daydream frequently, often not even realising that we have entered an altered state of consciousness for a period of time.

Understanding the sub-conscious mind

For the purposes of our discussion we will divide the mind into two components; the conscious mind and the sub-conscious mind. The conscious mind is used whenever we encounter a substantial amount of new information or we are actively engaged in an activity. The vast majority of our mental workload is performed by the sub-conscious mind. Most of the time we effectively run on autopilot.

As the conscious mind gathers data it adds descriptive comments to assist the sub-conscious mind in the filing process. You can think of it as attaching little yellow sticky notes with instructions on how to store the data for future use.

One of the key functions of the sub-conscious mind is to store all information we encounter. Everything we ever read, see, hear, feel or experience is remembered in our vast memory stores. Many people initially object to this statement because they feel they have a "bad" memory and cannot even remember very recent events. This simply demonstrates our inability to easily recall some (or in some cases lots of) information.

Another key function of the sub-conscious mind is to control the functions of the physical body. How often do you consciously think about breathing or keeping the blood pumping through your arteries? The sub-conscious mind ensures these and many other vital bodily functions are controlled and managed with little or no conscious involvement.

From the above information it should become clear that the sub-conscious mind has enormous power. Our physical health, for example, depends on the effective and efficient functioning of our sub-conscious mind. This in turn is highly dependent on the state of our belief system.

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Belief Systems

Let us now take a look at the formation of belief systems and the key reasons for the introduction of erroneous information.

When we are born into our baby body we have very limited understanding of the world around us, including the use of our physical body. We have inherited basic instincts, which are vital to our survival, but our overall belief system is extremely rudimentary. Through trial and error and lots of data gathering, this very basic belief system is extended over time.

The mind can be compared to a very powerful computer. Much more powerful than any computer humans have been able to build to date, but yet, essentially a computer. The initial set of basic instincts is built into an ever more sophisticated belief system through the use of advanced pattern searching. Similar events are grouped together and an understanding of the likely outcome is gained.

An example is Mum and Dad flicking on the light switch and light emanates from the light globe on the ceiling. As soon as we are big enough to climb on a chair we will test this out for ourselves, just for fun. Then one day the light does not come on in response to the light switch being flicked. Maybe there is a power outage or a fuse has been removed, or maybe the light globe is blown. The belief system is refined as a result to acknowledge that there are exceptions to the general rule that the light comes on in response to flicking the light switch.

Sources of Misunderstanding

There are two key sources of erroneous information being introduced into our belief system. Firstly, information presented to us when we do not have enough reference data to properly evaluate the correctness of the data presented.

Let's look at a simple example, to better understand this. Assume I am talking to a two year old child. "Did you know little Johnny that pigs grow wings when there is a full moon in the sky and they spend all night flying in large circles over the barn? Come daylight they return to the barn, the wings disappear and noone is any the wiser." Most two year olds would believe this little fairy tale if no other adult contradicted my story. They simply do not have enough reference information to filter out incorrect data.

The second key source of erroneous information is stress. This can be physical stress or emotional stress. You may have fallen down or cut your finger or maybe you got separated from your parents in the supermarket and got scared.

When the mind is stressed it can distort information and misinterpret what is really taking place.

Let us look at another little example to illustrate. Little Lisa has cut her finger for the very first time in her life. The pain is excruciating and she is extremely scared about the blood flowing from her finger. She runs into the kitchen where Mummy is just preparing dinner. "Mummy, help, help, I'm dying!". At this very moment the phone rings and one of the pots is boiling over. Mum is awaiting an extremely important phone call and she doesn't want the stove to catch on fire. So she turns down the stove and answers the phone before attending to little Lisa. After all, it is only a little cut.

Little Lisa could potentially misinterpret this little scene and question the closeness of her relationship with her Mum. She is an only child and considered herself the centre of the universe. So why is Mum paying more attention to those stupid pots and that old phone than to her?

It must be understood that the "distortions" that are introduced via stress or lack of reference data are generally only minor aberrations, not life changing beliefs that instantly turn our life upside down. If these "distortions" are so small, how can they be important. Many of these "distortions" will sort themselves out, but others can remain for long periods and grow substantially.

We must remember that once a belief is part of our belief system it will have an impact on all related information that we encounter from that point forward. It is like we have an invisible filter and all information has been pre-processed by our (mostly sub-conscious) beliefs before our conscious mind is presented with the (modified) data. In this way, a small aberration can over time grow significantly larger. Often it can take ten, fifteen, twenty or more years before the “distortion” becomes large enough that we notice its impact on our life.

Of course the change in our behaviour and attitude has been so gradual that we identify with it as a part of us. Identifying with our belief systems is a major error. They have nothing to do with who we are. They are simply a tool we have created to make sense of the world around us. Changing incorrect beliefs can greatly assist us in becoming more successful in every aspect of life.

Now we have a better understanding of how incorrect beliefs can get introduced into our belief system and sabotage us sub-consciously.

Let us return to our analogy of the mind as a computer. Using this analogy, it is important to remember that the mind itself (the computer hardware) is usually working fine. Most problems are caused by aberrations that have been introduced into our belief systems (similar to software bugs or programming errors).

Creating a better future

We can use the power of the mind to correct “distortions” in our belief system at incredible speed. How is this possible? Basically we are asking the mind to perform self-diagnostics. This is a very familiar task. The mind performs similar house keeping functions every night when we are asleep. During contemplative meditation the mind also performs corrective diagnosis on its existing belief system to arrive at a more coherent set of beliefs.

In a hypnotherapy session, the focus is on a specific issue and the hypnotherapist provides explicit instructions that assist the mind in reviewing existing beliefs and correct misunderstandings.

The key to understanding this process is in remembering the key sources of our mental distortions. The first is lack of reference data when new information is encountered. As mentioned earlier, our mind remembers everything that has ever happened to us. During the hypnotherapy session, the mind can now use all of this accumulated knowledge, and view childhood experiences from a much more mature point of view. This provides a very different perspective and will result in very different interpretations of many life experiences. As a result, the conclusions drawn from early childhood life experiences are modified and contribute to a more coherent life view.

The impact of reviewing important key events goes far beyond just reinterpreting these isolated events. Remember that the conclusions drawn from these experiences influenced subsequent experiences in related life areas. As our understanding of these key events is improved, the mind also understands that it needs to review the flow on effect and reinterpret other experiences that were impacted by the understanding of the key event. The result can be a significant and far reaching reinterpretation of our understanding of a major life aspect.

The second cause of “distortions” in our belief structure is stress. During the hypnotherapy session, the client is very relaxed, both mentally and physically. The relaxed mental state has two significant advantages. First, our mental efficiency increases significantly as we relax. This means our mental supercomputer will be functioning at maximum capacity and can work much faster than normal. The second advantage of the relaxed mental state is that all data is viewed objectively. As prior experiences are reviewed, the mind will correct any distortions that were stress induced. Once again, an improved interpretation of the experiences being reviewed (and the flow on effects) is the result.

This has been a very simple description of a very powerful technique, which allows us to guide the mind to review any life aspect and improve its understanding in this area. The result is a more coherent worldview, reduction in “negative” belief structures which slow us down and a much more optimistic outlook on life.

Is hypnotherapy right for you?

This approach can be used to assist with many conditions both “physical” as well as “mental”. Remember that the sub-conscious mind is the control centre of our physical body and has enormous power in influencing our state of health.

Hypnotherapy is not magic, nor is it a cure for every condition. However, it is a highly effective natural healing modality, which can yield astonishing results across a wide variety of conditions.

The aim of hypnotherapy is simply to return conscious control over every aspect of our life, rather than being driven by sub-conscious belief structures, which are often highly destructive.

Today is the first day of the rest of your life!

Why not make an appointment today to discuss your particular situation and how hypnotherapy can assist you to create a healthier, more successful future. There is no charge for the initial discussion and absolutely no obligation to proceed with a session if you feel for whatever reason that it is not the right therapy for you.

Common Questions & Answers about Hypnotherapy

Can everyone be hypnotized?

Everyone can enter the hypnotic trance state if they want to. The key obstacles people encounter are lack of comfort with either the process or the therapist, fear induced by misinformation about the hypnotic state or trying too hard to relax.

What does it feel like to be hypnotized?

It is very difficult to describe a hypnotic state exactly as it feels slightly different for everyone and at different times we can experience quite different sensations while in the trance state. Anyone who meditates will be very familiar with entering a trance state and the feelings experienced during a hypnotherapy session will be similar to the feelings experienced during meditation. In general, it can be said that the experience is very relaxing and enjoyable for most people.

The state you will enter during the session is probably similar to waking up in the morning. The alarm has just gone off and you have come up from a deep sleep state to a level just below the fully conscious state. You turn off the alarm and turn over to relax for a couple more minutes and wake up more slowly. At this point you are aware of everything around you but your focus is still on simply relaxing. If an emergency occurred and someone shouted that the house was on fire you would wake up very quickly in response. Generally, however, your focus is simply on enjoying the relaxed state a little longer.

Can I be programmed to do something against my will?

The basic answer is that it would be quite difficult to program your mind against your will, despite what you may have seen in the movies. The mind has its own defence patterns. While in a trance state you are also closer to your spiritual centre and as a result your moral standards tend to increase, which further strengthens the defences against any actions you consider immoral.

Will I remember the session details afterwards?

Most of the time the answer is yes. It is possible to go into a deeper state and lose conscious awareness for a period of time. This would generally only occur once you are extremely comfortable with both the process and the therapist. From a therapeutic standpoint there is little or no difference in effectiveness between a light and a deep trance state so usually a light trance state is used.

How many sessions will I need?

There is no definite answer to this question because everyone is different and nothing is absolutely certain. As a guide however, most clients only require two or three sessions, depending on the issues being worked on. Quit Smoking usually only requires a single session. Our focus is always to provide you with the best results in the shortest possible time frame and at the lowest cost.

Will I understand the cause and effects of my issues after the session?

This will depend very much on your sub-conscious mind. Sometimes the answer is yes and at other times you are none the wiser, the problem simply disappears. It must be pointed out that the majority of the therapeutic work is performed at a sub-conscious level. This is essential to achieve efficiency. The sub-conscious mind has enormous capacity compared to our conscious mind. The key determinant however is whether the sub-conscious mind feels it is beneficial for you to have conscious awareness of the cause and effects. The main reason for not making you consciously aware of the underlying issues is probably that it would be painful to deal with the associated emotions. While complete healing can only be achieved once all the suppressed emotions are released, the majority of the problem can usually be resolved without consciously confronting painful experiences.

How do I choose a Hypnotherapist?

The key is really to choose someone that you feel comfortable with and that you believe is competent. Referrals are often the best source of finding a good practitioner in any modality. Make sure the therapist is open to your questions and concerns and takes the time to explain the process to you. The more you understand about the mind and the therapeutic process to be used the more effective it will be. Awareness is after all the key to enlightenment.