

Can Hypnosis Help You?

What Is Hypnosis?

Hypnosis is a set of procedures used by health professionals to treat a variety of physical and emotional problems. Generally attained by an induction procedure, hypnosis is an altered state of awareness. Although there are many different hypnotic inductions, most include suggestions for relaxation, calmness, and well being.

People respond to hypnosis in different ways. Some describe their experiences as a state of deepened awareness, others as a normal state of focused attention, in which they feel very calm and relaxed. Most people describe the experience as very pleasant. The hypnotist acts as an agent or facilitator to help the patient achieve this pleasant state.

Hypnosis is not a treatment in and of itself but is used as an adjunct in psychology, medicine, and dentistry. It is used, for example, to:

****** control smoking, weight, bad habits, and pain both acute and chronic.**

******treat anxiety and phobias, depression, and insomnia.**

******help with the process of childbirth.**

On the improvement and development side, it can be used to:

******enhance self-esteem, creativity, memory, and concentration/focus.**

******increase performance (sports, school, etc.)**

Some therapists make recordings for their patients to take home to use by themselves.

Myths About Hypnosis

One of the popular myths about hypnosis is that a person loses consciousness. No one becomes unconscious in the altered state of hypnosis, nor do they go to sleep or lose all memory of the procedure. Instead, you are aware of who you are and you remember what has transpired if you want to remember it.

Likewise, your will and control over your behavior are not lost. Just the opposite -- your ability to control your life is enhanced. You will not be made to do anything against your will, and you can at any time end hypnosis by opening your eyes.

Memories of the past can be recovered during hypnosis. However, there is no way to tell if these memories are true or false unless there is evidence outside of the hypnosis.

Clinical hypnosis should only be used by properly trained and credentialed health care professionals (licensed clinical psychologists, social workers, physicians, and dentists) who have also been trained in the clinical use of hypnosis. Hypnosis may not be useful for all psychological problems or for all patients or clients. Complications in legal matters may result from using hypnosis -- ask your therapist about this. If hypnosis is being used in addition to your primary therapy, your primary therapist will be kept informed of your progress. You will be asked to sign a release of information.

If you are looking for a qualified psychologist, social worker, or medical doctor who uses hypnosis, contact Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis, The American Society for Clinical Hypnosis, APA Division 30, or The International Society of Hypnosis.