

Hypnosis



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??? What is hypnosis??™ Describe the psychological and physical aspects of hypnosis and discuss the role of relaxation in Hypnotherapy. Psychological therapies aim to assist clients in finding alternatives to their present unsatisfactory ways of thinking, helping them to become more accepting of themselves. Hypnosis is a state of deep relaxation in which your mind is focused allowing connections between thoughts, feelings and behaviours become clearer. Hypnosis therefore allows the hypnotherapist to guide the client in finding alternatives ways of thinking and responding. Hypnosis is defined not as a therapy but as a procedure by means of which therapy is delivered. This procedure typically involves an interaction between two people, the hypnotherapist and the client and is known as the hypnotic induction. During the hypnotic induction, the hypnotherapist usually requires the client to be in a relaxed state, both mentally and physically. The aim of hypnosis is to achieve a hypnotic state and to attain this hypnotic induction follows a set of principles.

These principles include selective attention which involves narrowing the client??™s attention to a selective range of stimuli, usually feelings and imagery as opposed to external stimuli. It may also help for the client to focus on internal stimuli such as their breathing; this in-turn reduces the client??™s awareness of their surroundings and external stimuli. Secondly, suggestion is a key to hypnosis; the hypnotherapist presents positive suggestions for imaginative experiences to the client (Micheal Heap). The client is guided by the hypnotherapist to respond to these suggestions in an involuntary manner; a well known example of this involuntary response is the finger locking test.

The hypnotherapist suggests that on the count of the three the client will not be able to separate their fingers. Suggestion conveyed from the hypnotherapist to the client can be used more extensively to move back in time (age regression) or move forward in time (age progression) (Josie Hadley). Hypnosis also involves the notion of expectancy and the effects on the client's responsiveness to suggestions. The hypnotherapist builds up an expectation in the client's mind of how they should think, feel and respond to suggestions (Micheal Heap). For example, relaxation plays an important role in hypnosis and thus the client is required to be in a relaxed state. One of the characteristics of feeling relaxed is the desire close your eyes, and so prior to the feeling of this desire, the hypnotherapist suggests that the client will feel increasing strain around the eyes and will find their eyes blinking. Once this occurs, this is reinforced with suggestions such as "your eyelids will become increasingly heavy and you will have the desire to close your eyes". The client believes that the first sensations have come true and therefore become more susceptible to accepting further suggestions.

In turn, the client is slowly guided by the hypnotherapist into the desired hypnotic state (Hellmut Karle). However, the client may not enter this hypnotic state for a considerable length of time, and may even be prevented from entering it by existing expectations or beliefs of hypnosis. Thus, it is important to correct these expectations during the initial consultation and ensure the client that they will remain conscious, capable of voluntary action and are even capable of rejecting any suggestions made by the hypnotherapist; therefore the client leads the course of the session. The

client usually will remember the session and have full control over their speech and actions throughout.

A high level of rapport between the therapist and the client may be helpful as it could help to alleviate fears and anxieties. Additionally, a high level of rapport is important as it is useful as hypnosis undoubtedly involves a level of compliance to suggestions the hypnotherapist presents. More specifically, if the client has entered the hypnotic state they will involuntarily respond to the hypnotherapist's suggestions, on the other hand if they have not entered the hypnotic state, the client may voluntarily respond as they feel the need to conform to the wishes of a professional. Thus, a high level of rapport is likely to decrease this feeling of needing to conform. Another principle of the induction is imagination; the client is focused on their imagination which is normally directed by the hypnotherapist.

The client may find it useful to think of a favourite place in which the therapist can guide the client through suggestion to help him/her become relaxed and enter the hypnotic state (Hellmut Karle). Therefore, it is important to discuss with the client beforehand any fears that should be omitted from imagery during the induction and deepening process. These techniques help the client to relax by clearing the mind of anxieties or worrying thoughts allowing them to be gently carried to the desired state. It is also important to note that suggestions directed by the hypnotherapist are beneficial to the client as they aim to be in the direction of change of the client's desires.

The aim of suggestions is to trigger responses that affect the client's™ behaviour and so repetition of suggestions in multiple sessions of hypnosis is needed for effects to be long-lasting. As already mentioned, relaxation plays an important role in hypnosis and it is required that the client is in a relaxed state both mentally and physically. As the client becomes more relaxed they will drift into a different level of consciousness (Michael Heap and Wendy Dryden). There are different levels of functioning/ consciousness range which are based in depth scales and are characterised by differing behavioural and physiological responses. These levels of consciousness range from an alert state to a sleep state and it is within the middle levels which the client is likely to enter a hypnotic/trance state.

The first level is that of an alert state in which functioning is normal. The next level, daydreaming, is the lightest trance state characterised by relaxation of the body, slowed breathing and pulse, attention is directed to imagery or dialogue and withdrawal into the self is evident. Generally, in this level of consciousness, if the hypnotherapist directed the client's™ imagination to playing a game of tennis through suggestion, the client would be vaguely thinking about it. Imagery intensifies however with a moderate trance, a moderate trance is characterised by losing awareness of surroundings and internal functions such as heartbeat, closing of the eyes and literal interpretation of speech (responding to the hypnotherapist). Within this level of consciousness the client is likely to imagine they are playing tennis rather than just be thinking about it. The deepest form of trance entails limpness of limbs, further narrowing of attention and as a result increased suggestibility.

It is usually within this level of consciousness that the client would actually feel as though they were playing tennis. The last level of consciousness is sleep in which conscious thought is lost and therefore the client would be dreaming of playing tennis. Each individual responds differently, but it is within the middle three levels that the client is most susceptible to appropriate hypnotic suggestions made by the therapist (Josie Hadley). The hypnotic state is an altered state of awareness and is not the same as the sleep state.

The sleeping person is unconscious whereas a client that is being hypnotised is fully awake and interactive, the client would just experience a loss of awareness of their surroundings and their mind being focused on imagination. The hypnotised person therefore only behaves in ways they are willing to do so. As mentioned, hypnosis occurs usually in the middle three levels of consciousness which are based around the subconscious. The subconscious is linked to the automatic nervous system (ANS) and the ANS controls bodily functions such as breathing. In the hypnotic state you are able to concentrate easily compared to that of the normal conscious state, this is because your conscious is quietened, as so to speak and your subconscious is more accessible. This is one reason why within the hypnotic state you are more open to positive suggestion and are more willing to respond.

On the whole, the principles described introduce the body to the hypnotic state. However, deep relaxation is the key to achieving hypnosis, and so anyone who can feel relaxed or spends a lot of time daydreaming are quite capable of being hypnotised. Not everyone may enter a deep state of

hypnosis but even a light state can be effective. Hypnosis is a natural state in which many people experience several times a day. Relaxation is important in hypnosis as when the client feels sufficiently relaxed the mind becomes more focused and in-turn losing awareness of surroundings and going within themselves.

Therefore, the induction starts with a relaxation technique allowing these principles to take place and a typical form of induction is called the progressive relaxation process. The sole aim of relaxation is to focus on the mind and the bodies muscles. There are many different forms of relaxation such as breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, imagery, etc. Relaxation techniques focus upon the body's muscles aiming to send a message to the nervous system to relax the body's muscles and releasing tension. Often, the client is guided through each part of their body starting from the head down to the toes; clients may be guided to draw more attention to places such as the shoulders or eye lids as these hold the most tension.

Relaxation techniques may involve verbal suggestions such as "Take a deep breath in and out, in and out, close your eyes and feel every muscle in your body relax", such verbal instructions guide the client to focus on the internal sensation, narrowing their attention and decreasing awareness. It is due to the state of relaxation that leads to breathing and the pulse slowing, with the notion of selective attention leading to the client going within themselves. Deeper relaxation allows the mind to relax further and thus increasing susceptibility to suggestions allowing the mind become more imaginative and willing to accept suggestions. The word "deeper" is <https://assignbuster.com/hypnosis-2/>

emphasised during the induction helping the client drift into a deeper trance. However, if the client is not relaxed the occurrence of this is unlikely as they are less likely to feel a difference in their body sensations. For example, when the body is relaxed the shoulders drop and they feel less tense, and so if the client hears the words ??? feel a heavy, heavy weight being lifted off your shoulders??™ their attention is drawn to the sensations of their shoulders and will notice and feel a difference and this difference will support the suggestion that a change is taking place.

In summary, it is the relaxed state that leads to psychological and physical changes such as slowing of the heart rate, a reduction in blood pressure, slowing of the breathing rate, decrease in muscle tension and allowing the subconscious mind to think, shutting out the conscious mind. Clients can benefit in many psychological ways for example; improved concentration, increased confidence and self-esteem and a feeling of satisfaction and inner balance. The hypnotic induction typically begins with a relaxation technique focused on releasing tension from every muscle in the body leading the body and mind into a relaxed state. Relaxation techniques are used within the initial consultation to introduce the client to hypnosis. The hypnotherapist may suggest to the client to go to their favourite place and that when the hypnotherapist again says ??? go to their favourite place??™ they instantaneously go to this place. Thus, on the next session the client can easily slip into the relaxed state. Lastly, it is all important for the client to discuss with their hypnotherapist any anxieties, previous conceptions of hypnosis and fears in the initial consultation. This builds up a rapport and in-turn trust within hypnosis, thus allowing the client to find alternative ways of

thinking, feeling and behaving in response to problems such as smoking, stress and self confidence for example.