

Hypnosis

Psychology



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Hypnosis Hypnosis as a peculiar practice has been known since the ancient times, when priests of the east used it for spiritual and religious purposes, but medical application of this practice is much younger. Hypnosis itself is generally defined as the altered state of mind combining signs of wakefulness, sleep and dreaming. In other words, hypnosis is the state when opposite forms of self coexist. However, many hypnotherapists and researcher define hypnosis differently; while Eriksonian hypnotherapists perceive this practice as drawing unconscious hidden in an individual's psyche to the surface. Green et al. (2005, p. 262) state that during the session of hypnosis "one person [...] is guided by another [...] to respond to suggestions for changes in subjective experience, alterations in perception, sensation, emotion, thought, or behavior». Generally, there are two approaches towards explaining this phenomenon, altered state and non-state theories: the former implying that hypnosis is a state of trance and the latter understanding it as peculiar type of role enactment in imagination. Nowadays, hypnosis is widely – and often successfully – applied in psychotherapeutic and clinical practices for treating both adults and children. Hypnotherapy allows for driving a patient into the state of trance, which enables modification of thoughts, behaviors, and perceptions (Gold et al., 2007, p. 744). Hypnotic induction is thereby the regular procedure including a special set of suggestions and instructions on the part of the hypnotherapists, which is deployed in order to induce the state of hypnosis. Moreover, this method is often applied both for diagnostics and for treatment of a range of psychological, mental and even physiological disorders, including complexes, phobias, sleep disorders, pain management, various types of addictive behaviors (e. g. smoking and drinking) and many others.

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Hypnotherapy is the application of hypnosis in the field of psychotherapy for treating anxiety, eating disorders, depression, sleep disorders, posttraumatic stress and deal with such addictive behaviors as smoking, substance additions or compulsive gaming. In other words, within Eriksonian framework, hypnosis is used for drawing the unconscious to the surface, identifying blocks and fixations underpinning the disorders and removing them. For treating people suffering from obesity, the psychotherapist uses hypnotic state to reduce appetite and thus enhance metabolism. It is also well known that emotional component produces the significant impact on development of allergic reactions and asthma; therefore, hypnotic interventions might be used to relieve the state of the person during an asthmatic or allergic fit.

Pain-managing function of hypnosis finds its application in a range of other fields of medicine. Particularly, this method is often applied for calming and relieving anxiety in patients who have fear of dental work, i. e. dental phobia. Moreover, hypnosis has played a significant role in development of psychoprophylactic relief of natural childbirth: more than a century of clinical practice shows that hypnotherapy produces a favorable effect on labor and pain accompanying childbirth process. Moreover, suggestive hypnotherapy – use of suggestion towards a person driven into the state of trance – has been rather efficient in relieving pain in terminally and severely ill patients, managing pain in Parkinson's disease and oncology.

Success of hypnotherapy in terms of habit control has also been proved, though the degree of its efficiency varies. In anti-smoking hypnotherapy, a patient can be suggested to envision and imagine possible negative or unpleasant outcomes of smoking. Although efficiency of hypnotherapy for

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smoking cessation is rather debatable in terms of scientific studies, there are still anecdotal stories and evidences presented by people who managed to quit smoking with help of suggestive hypnotherapy.

Reference list

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