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HYPNOTHERAPY

What is HYPNOTHERAPY? Prepared by Sinmarie Pieterse

There are many misconceptions and myths about hypnosis. As a trained and experienced hypnotherapist, I would like to try and clarify and clear up some of the myths by providing some information regarding hypnosis.

What is Hypnosis?

HYPNOSIS IS AN ALTERED STATE OF MIND (EXACT BRAIN WAVE STATES) WHERE OUR FOCUS NARROWS TO ONE SPECIFIC THING AND BECOMES VERY INTENSE, TO THE EXTENT THAT WE ARE STILL AWARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT, BUT IT DOES'NT DISTRACT US.

Hypnosis, therefore, is a natural phenomena we experience in our daily lives especially whenever we focus intensely, such as performing a demanding task, watching a movie, daydreaming in a class or writing an exam.

Every one of us – if we want to - have the ability to be in a hypnotized state. Some people are more creative and imaginative or have greater capacity to concentrate and visualise (features of hypnotisability) than others. Still if a client is ambivalent about change, but attending therapy on the advice (or insistence) of a third person such as their partner or parents, successful outcome will be unlikely. All hypnosis is self hypnosis. We actually spend the majority of our life in a hypnotizable state. We are open (or not) to suggestion. The hypnotherapist guides their client into the trance (relaxing state) by using various induction techniques, according to what is most suitable for their client.

The Power of our Thoughts All our behaviour (bad eating habits, our fears, negative self-image, panic attacks, anger outburst, depressive moods etc) is learnt. We want to unlearn some of it which is uncomfortable or causes us distress. The brain is where our thoughts start. How many times have you heard "...man is what he thinketh..."? Due to our perceptions of what happened in a situation - our interpretation - we start to develop certain negative thoughts about ourselves which causes us to feel certain emotions and then act accordingly...which in many cases isn't the truth. It is proven by quantum physics that thoughts are energy and can become reality if dwelt upon. As Trevor Modlin (well known medical hypno analysis practitioner in Johannesburg) points out in his book, Prisoners of our Perceptions, "...We live lives which keep us in our own mental prisons of who we are, what we can or can't do..."

Right and Left Brain Functioning Our brain consists of two hemispheres...the left brain and the right brain. The left brain is the part of the brain research has shown as been logical, analytical, objective, detailed, factual, practical, linear, reality based and perceptive. Left brain dominant people are able to follow rules and love clearly stated instructions. This is our conscious experience or awareness of everyday life. The right brain is the more creative and emotional part of the brain. The right brain looks at the big picture, is very visual, responsible for creative imagery and imagination. Only one side of the brain can be utilized, at a time. The left brain assumes the dominance. This means that our logical conscious mind is where we function in everyday.

Facts about our conscious and subconscious awareness: The conscious is a creature of habit, it rebels against anything new - even if the new indicates self improvement. Say for instance, a person wants to change a habit, such as eating less. They may start off well and then eventually fall back to their old habits. This is the conscious at play – knowing exactly what to do to accomplish its goal. IT DOESNT LIKE CHANGE. To be able to allow the right brain to execute its abilities of creativeness and imagination, we need to mask or shut down the left brain temporarily. One of the ways to do this is to use deep relaxation, meditation and hypnosis. We need to activate the creative powers of the subconscious. Every memory of what has happened in our entire life is stored in the memory bank in our right part of the brain – our subconscious awareness. Every sight, sound, taste smell or anything we've experienced since birth is stored in this subconscious. IT IS THE MEMORYBANK of our lives. Hypnosis can assist us to come in conscious awareness of our subconscious which causes us to behave in a specific way. Therefore, by guided relaxation, intense inner focussing to achieve a state of heightened awareness - called a trance - the client with the help of their hypnotherapist can focus their attention on specific memories or thoughts or tasks, in the past or present. Erikson considered therapeutic trance to present a setting in which limitations of the conscious mind could be allowed to fall away. He believed that trance was the optimal place for unconscious learning because in trance preconceptions, biases and distractions are less important and intrusive. In regressing, we are able to shut down or mask or block the

left brain temporarily to give the right brain time to work. Through hypnosis regressions, we can recall traumatic events of our past which can be the underlying cause of the presenting problem. The sub-conscious is then de-programmed, faulty thought patterns are deleted and re-programmed and then replaced by positive suggestions and new healthy coping habits or mechanisms. The positive change in behaviour, such as being less anxious, more confident, having a more positive outlook, being able to sleep, can then be seen as the successful outcome of the hypnotherapy. Said simply....the underlying reasons for our problematic behaviour, psychological problems, are stored away in our subconscious. The conscious likes to be in control and doesn't like change. It will rather allow us to have the problem and make us survive in life than to reveal the underlying cause. It will prevent access to the subconscious. It will even protect the problem that we want to resolve.

People sometimes berate themselves for lack of willpower when they fail to stick to their resolutions or to achieve goals. The problem is not the lack of willpower, but the "will" of the subconscious mind being stronger than the will of their conscious. Hypnosis works when the conscious mind relaxes its control and allows access to the subconscious where hypnotherapy can then target the problem from the source.

THE PROCESS

The first session (1 ½ hour duration) is spent getting to know the client, their history and the nature of the presenting problem. The client will set goals for his/her therapy. Hypnosis will be explained and a first introduction of trance experience will be executed. Remaining sessions will be 60 minutes each.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) ABOUT HYPNOSIS Is it difficult to be back in the present? Will I remember what has occurred during hypnosis? A person can be brought to the present in a very gentle way and will be back in the present in a few seconds. One won't get stuck in hypnosis, it is self-induced, remember. ALL HYPNOSIS is SELF HYPNOSIS. Will I remember afterwards what has happened during hypnosis? In the lighter stages of hypnosis a person usually remember everything that occurred. At times in the deeper states a person may have only partial remembrance. From what age can hypnosis be offered? Whilst hypnosis can be done with children, in our practice, we prefer to only offer hypnosis to clients from the age of 10 years onwards.

FEARS AND MYTHS ABOUT HYPNOSIS

Many people feel that being hypnotised means becoming unconscious, losing control, have your mind been taken over. A person is always in control. You cannot be forced to reveal deep innermost secrets that you would prefer not to. In no way are ordinary rules of human behaviour, or ethical rules of any other therapy method, suspended. As for stage hypnosis, it is common knowledge that the person will behave in strange ways or even make fools of themselves. Anyone who volunteers to participate in stage hypnosis, has already consented to this as they leave their chair, and is not being made to do anything against their will. Anyone who doesn't want to be made a spectacle in public won't be up there. A common fear of religious people is that in hypnosis (trance) evil spirits or demons can enter their minds. If considered that hypnosis is a natural phenomena and is a natural part of everyday life, it would then mean that the same can happen when we concentrate intensely in various daily situations, which we know is untrue. Also it is not the hypnosis that might be a fault. Rather it is the person who executes it. Is the person behaving in an ethical and professional manner? That is more of a concern.

When is HYPNOSIS not suitable or advisable? It might not be suitable for a person who has psychotic symptoms, such as hallucinations and delusions, or for someone who is using drugs or consuming excessive amounts of alcohol. It should be used for pain control only after a doctor has evaluated the person for any physical disorder that might require medical treatment or surgical treatment. It is also not advisable to use hypnosis for mental disorders such as dissociative disorders - as using unintended suggestions can create false memory.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM HYPNOSIS?

Any of the following can be addressed with hypnotherapy:

- Fears of flying, insects, exams, heights, driving and socializing.
- High levels of anxiety, panic attacks, performance anxiety
- Sleep disorders
- Depression
- Career Development to improve public speaking abilities, assertiveness and confidence
- Ease pain and heal faster, like childbirth
- Eliminate bad habits, weight loss, smoking, nail biting and controlling anger issues
- Personal Development
- For attaining goals, increasing confidence, building a positive mental attitude, enjoying life and being happy!
- Sexual dysfunction such as erectile dysfunction.

In this world we are supposed to live healthy and happy lives and make use of all our unlimited potential within us. As Bastarache (2009; XV) says, "...All the knowledge that you need to relax, renew health, to be successful, or be more

confidant, less anxious, is already within you...” Why not consider hypnotherapy to facilitate living a life of unlimited potential?

Bibliography & Recommended Reading:

Prisoners of our perceptions. Trevor Modlin

Self-Hypnosis. Rene A Bastarache Jeanette Dreyer.

Website Dr Sonja Gildenhuis.

Website Callie Hattingh: Fundamentals of Eriksonian Hypnosis.(Course)

Testimonials from clients:

“My healing journey with the help of Sinmarie – Sinmarie would play soft background effects (either nature or music) whilst gently putting me completely at ease in a trusting/relaxing mode, gently talking through what we are about to do. I would slumber off so that she can tap into my subconscious mind, bringing to the fore a problem, breaking down the barrier of unwanted negativity and old habits and way of thinking and give rise to hope for the future through asking questions where I find the solutions within and she guided me through the various processes; what kind of choices I have in order to bring about positive changes for the future. The relaxation was pleasant and we were able to clarify and move forward through my journey of recovery by firstly looking at why I needed healing, what my goal for therapy was: To converse with men in an open, friendly and safe way.

The homework I received was to prepare for the next session, but also to help me through my journey while I work on my own at home through “The Courage to Heal & Workbook” by Laura Davis and Ellen Bass which I purchased.

We looked at my life from birth, whether my mom and I bonded; growing up in a dysfunctional family; what gives me hope; when the abuse started; my relationships thereafter with men in general; those in authority; and ultimately, my failed marriage.

We delved into what will ultimately make me happy; starting of the actual healing itself and managing my life in this period; taking care of myself; discarding coping mechanisms not needed any longer, and looking at new and positive ways in living my life.

We spent a number of sessions on anger and releasing it. Then sadness washed over me and I find myself being a little girl again – confused and scared. Sinmarie was an enormous support through her kindness and compassion. I shared with her a dream I had of 3 little girls, also being abused by a male female member and how I stood up for them. I realised that I had my voice back. Nobody was ever going to hurt me again. Sinmarie indicated that she is not surprised by my body’s reaction to my rage, but when we deal with Forgiveness and Letting Go, my Frozen Shoulder will start to become functioning again.

It was not the actual sexual act that was painful, it was the fact that the adults whom I trusted and who were supposed to nurture, protect and care for me, had exploited me for their own gratification, power and control.

I have learnt that I can safely let some people exit my life, in order to allow new people in so that I can grow more confidence.

We looked at my talents; what healthy relationships look like; what I can do to protect myself; and what I would like to do in the future.

The journey is coming to its end and an important factor was the Releasing, Forgiving and Letting Go of the people who inflicted pain in the past. I struggled with this part and felt it needed another session. I can easily do this during yoga sessions and when I do my final releasing rituals. So, this journey isn’t finished yet, but it will be soon.

Lastly, Sinmarie eased me into deep relaxation where we came full circle where we started: what was my goal for therapy? I’ve joined an online dating site where I chat with and meet men on a daily basis. Even though I find it overwhelming, I’m enjoying every moment of it. I can easily discern which of them are safe to converse with longer term, others I disconnect from very fast.

I would like to add though, not everything that happened to me in my childhood was bad. Sinmarie has helped me to set firm boundaries, making choices, using my voice and ensuring that I’m being heard. I will not give myself the pleasure of ever becoming a prisoner of my own feelings.

Sinmarie, I am immensely grateful to you for leading me on this path of my journey, for pushing me gently and awakening the healer within. I trust that others would find hypnotherapy as encouraging as I had. It really is an amazing tool to help people heal and recover fully.

I’m a survivor!!” SDC

"If I knew about this sort of "treatment" and that my daughter's lack of confidence in herself is treatable, I would have taken her for hypnotherapy around Grade 10 and not only in Grade 12. I was nervous and worried at first but I made the appointment and after our first interview, I immediately knew you were going to be able to help my daughter overcome her fear of not believing in herself! What we have come to see after her few sessions, is that she has immediately become more outspoken. Please note: it is not that she was a quiet little girl sitting in a corner not uttering a word, it was just a normal girl being scared of failing when she starts something. She has more confidence in herself and with confidence comes inner strength and she automatically "speaks" with a louder voice! Thank you for being such a wonderful therapist" BF

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"I cannot believe the change in my son. Since we picked him up on Saturday, he has been laughing and chatting non stop. Yesterday got off to a bad start because I was angry with him for not preparing an oral (his worst) that he had two weeks to prepare and as usual had left it to the last minute. He is so shy to stand up in front of the class. Well, he did surprise me. I was greeted at the door last night – him with a certificate he had received for sport and he proceeded to talk and tell me about his day at school. He had said his oral – surprised me because he repeated the oral to me and I couldn't believe he had actually spoken on how a cricket ball is made and had actually had stuff to say....The school must surely notice the difference...the teacher was so negative about hypnotherapy, I guess they will be sending the whole school now, if they notice the changes." SV

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"Hi Sinmarie, just to say I had a good flight! Was nervous before, but it went well, luckily very smooth flight too! Thank you!!!" LA

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"Thank you for all the support you have given me and my family. We are indeed on a road of recovery, the entire family. Thank you for your input, it was of great help" VM

SCHOOL READINESS

WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT

Prepared by Sinmarie Pieterse

Today we know more than ever before about how young children develop and about how to best support early learning.

The first five years of life are critical to a child's lifelong development. Young children's earliest experience and environment set the stage for future development and success in school and life.

Early experience actually influence brain development, establishing the neural connections that provide the foundation for language, reasoning, problem solving, social skills, behaviour and emotional health. Therefore it is of utmost importance that we prepare and develop our children's potential and ability to learn to the utmost in this phase.

SCHOOL GOING AGE A child is obliged to go to school in the year that they turn 7, whether it is 1 January or 31 December unless they obtain school exemption for the year.

WHAT IS SCHOOL READINESS? A child's readiness for school is multi faceted, encompassing the whole range of physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive skills that children need to thrive. School readiness is a measure of how prepared a child is to succeed in school, cognitively, socially and emotionally.

It also implies that the child has reached a certain stage in their development where formal education will be advantageous to the child.

"Readiness is a stage where a child's development is when they can learn easily, effectively and without emotional disturbance. It can not be defined in a point of development, however, because growth is a steady continuous process, always ongoing. Rather it is a condition, or state indicating that the child is ready to learn."

Parents, day-care providers, paediatricians and pre school programs play an enormous role in the preparation of a child for school. Research shows that learning begins long before a child enters Nursery school. No child becomes ready on their own. It is a process. The child needs to be educated. Initially it is the parents responsibility to provide the necessarily stimuli. Infants and young children thrive when parents and families are able to surround them with

love and support and opportunities to learn and explore their world.

School Maturation on the other hand refers to a biological process in the development when certain aptitudes appear before they start school. This implies physical as well as mental maturity. The maturation process cannot be hastened but the appropriate facilitation, comprehension and support thereof can.

Parents can improve the quality of the maturation. This can be achieved by stimulating the effective use of senses, language and co-ordinated muscle control.

The maturation process can be delayed by the lack of sufficient stimulation or neurological dysfunction as a result of brain injury before, during or after birth.

The maturation process includes physical maturity, as the child needs to be physically fit to enable them to deal with the demands of formal maturation.

Usually this kind of maturity is reached by children at about the age of six. But it must be added that, from a pedagogical point of view, this kind of maturity is not a guarantee of success at school, because even if a child is sufficiently mature one can still find that they will not be able to meet the demands of formal teaching.

THE DOMAINS OF SCHOOL READINESS These domains are separate and distinct, but interact with and reinforce each other. The need for children to develop across all five domains is supported by pre- primary school teachers.

1. Physical and Motor development and physical health 2. Emotional and social development 3. Cognitive development 4. Language development

1. PHYSICAL, MOTOR DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH

- i.
- ii. Gross motor development Co-ordination should be well developed. The child should be able to perform a variety of gross motor acts including climbing, walking, running, skipping, catching a ball and standing on one leg.
- iii.
- iv. Fine motor development The child should be comfortable to be able to use a pair of scissors, pencils, crayons, cutlery and simple implements.
- v.
- vi. Perceptual development This will enable them to interpret in a meaningful manner. The child must be able to perceive and reproduce correctly on a visual-motor level. They must be able to conceptualize and perceptualize. These perceptual abilities are extremely important. Visual perception is particularly important in writing, reading, copying, pasting etc. Auditory perception is important in listening; a child must not only be able to hear, but also to listen.
- vii.
- viii. Self-care The basic self care skills such as dressing oneself, tying shoelaces and buttoning up should be developed as should hygiene routines such as toileting, washing of hands and face.
- ix.
- x. Physical health The child should be physically healthy in order to attend and perform within the school environment. The following should be carefully monitored and where applicable the necessary intervention should be implemented by a suitable or qualified person.
 - Allergies
 - Attention deficit disorders with or without hyperactivity
 - Nutrition and growth deficiencies
 - Immunisations
 - Blood disorders
 - Visual, dental and auditory problems

2. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT Young children's social and emotional development is the foundation for their cognitive development. Children are more likely to do well in school when they have a positive sense of personal well being, developed through consistent, caring relationships in their early years. Emotional support and secure relationships build a child's self confidence and the ability to function as a member of a group. Research indicates that a child's emotional and social skills are linked to their early academic standing. Children who are emotionally well adjusted have a significantly greater chance of early school success, where children who experience serious emotional difficulty face grave risks of early school difficulty. Specifically, emerging research on early schooling suggests that the relationships that children built with peers and teachers are based on children's ability to regulate emotions in pro social versus antisocial ways and that those relationships then serve as a source of provision that either help or hurt children's chances of doing well academically. Children who have difficulty paying attention, following directions, getting along with others, and controlling negative emotions of anger and distress do less well in school.

- i. Social maturity as a criterion for school readiness refers to a child's ability to adapt to social situations whether in a group or individual context. A child who is socially immature, irrespective of whether

they have the cognitive abilities to cope with formal education, will experience considerable adaptation problems that in turn will hamper scholastic performance. The following are a few questions you can use to identify if your child is socially ready: He/she likes to play with a friend. He/she can easily integrate with a group. He/she can easily carry on a conversation with a friend. He/she is willing to share toys He/she is willing to help a friend.

- ii. Emotional maturity implies that a child has reasonable control over their emotions. Emotional maturity influences important aspects such as self confidence, which are pre-requisites for learning. When a child is evaluated for school readiness it may become apparent that they are physically and cognitively ready but socially and emotionally not. School readiness depends just as much on emotional maturity than on scholastic ability. Therefore it is one of the most important aspects of school readiness. This is partially influenced by parenting but also depends to a large extent on a natural development process and will increase with time. How do you know if your child is emotionally mature enough to go to school? Here are some guidelines:

Independence: Can your child complete most tasks on his or her own, or are they constantly running to their teachers' side for approval or assistance?

Confidence: Is your child confident enough to speak up in a busy classroom when he or she is uncomfortable or needs help? Children also need to let the teacher know when they need a bathroom break, are feeling ill, or need something.

Separation: Does your child separate easily from you when drop them off in the morning or are the good byes long and teary? Some crying in the beginning few weeks are normal and even expected but should stop after a while. Teachers don't have the time to console a tearful child the rest of the day. Responsibility for his belongings: Does your child remember to put their box back in their bag after school, do they remember their jersey, school clothes etcetera? Or is their teacher constantly running after them with their belongings? Problem solving: Is your child able to solve the majority of basic little problems that pop up on a daily basis? For example, will they know to borrow a ruler from a friend if they don't have one or ask their teacher to phone mummy?

3. COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT This domain refers to thinking and problem solving, knowledge about particular objects and the way the world works. The cognitive skills that grow out of a child's everyday experiences are what help children to acquire new knowledge. From these experiences children learn to observe, recognise differences and similarities, ask questions, and solve problems. The best foundation for later learning is provided when children have multiple and varied opportunities to interact with their environment and are encouraged to learn from their experiences. Cognitive development encompasses mathematical knowledge, thinking, creative expression reasoning and problem solving. Creativity

The child should be able to use drawings, play, and various objects to express themselves creatively.
The child should be able to actively involve themselves in role playing, drama and story telling.
They should be able to creatively express their understanding of the world around them.

4. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT This includes communication and literacy. Communication includes listening, speaking, and vocabulary. Language proficiency is a key predictor of school success. Early literacy skills (size of vocabulary, recognizing letters, understanding letter and sound relationships,) at nursery school are good predictors of children's reading abilities throughout their educational careers. Language and literacy skills enable children to develop cognitive skills and knowledge and to interact effectively with peers and adults. Here are some indicators:

- The child should be conversant in their mother tongue.
- The child should be able to both comprehend and express themselves fluently and meaningfully.
- He/She should be able to remember details from stories in a logical sequence.
- The child should have an expansive vocabulary and be able to describe the attributes (size, shape and colour) of objects.
- The child should be able to recognise letters particularly those in their name. Comprehend concepts of time as before and after.
- The child should be able to identify the differences and similarities between objects.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO DETERMINE WHETHER YOUR CHILD IS READY FOR SCHOOL.

The demands placed on the grade 1 child are high. A child who enters the grade 1 classroom without the necessary

skills is likely to develop problems emotionally, behaviourally or academically.

Knowledge of the child's strengths and weaknesses when they enter grade 1 may be beneficial for understanding the academic performance of the child throughout their academic career. This knowledge may also be utilised to develop strategies to facilitate effective learning in the child.

THEREFORE HAVE YOUR CHILD ASSESSED FOR SCHOOL READINESS AT THE CLAREMONT PRACTICE AND KNOW WHERE HIS/HER STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES LIES.

Please contact our practice for more information on the school readiness assessment process and the tests we use to assess for school readiness.

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