



# The UK College of Hypnosis & Hypnotherapy

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## Client Factsheet: Hypnotherapy

The more you understand hypnotherapy, the more effective it is likely to be. If there are any points below which you don't agree with, or don't understand, please discuss them with your therapist.

- Hypnosis is a special way of using natural psychological and physiological processes in a special focused way. It's a collaborative process in which you allow yourself to follow the guidance of the therapist by using your imagination to evoke positive emotions and rehearse behaviour change and new beliefs.
- Everyone can experience hypnosis. It's helpful if you relax, think positively, and imagine the things being suggested.

A relaxed and somewhat playful attitude is helpful! Think of hypnosis as a time to play positive ideas in your imagination – but in a highly focused way.

- Hypnotic “trance” can be an unhelpful idea. It helps to think of hypnosis simply **as focused attention on suggested ideas** given by the therapist (or by yourself in self-hypnosis)
- Hypnosis is definitely **not** a state of sleep or unconsciousness. 90% of people report being aware of everything that happens, and some relaxation can help but is not essential to hypnosis.
- Hypnosis is definitely **not** mind control. You cannot be made to do anything against your will. On the contrary, normally you must *want* to accept suggested ideas and *actively* imagine responding to experience their effects.
- Hypnosis is completely safe when used in a responsible and professional manner. Nobody has ever been “stuck” in hypnosis.
- Comedy stage hypnosis has very little to do with hypnotherapy and can lead misconceptions which prevent people from benefiting from treatment. Do not believe everything you see on television.
- Hypnotic suggestion is a means of experiencing certain helpful ideas at a level profound enough to directly influence our emotions and behaviour.
- Psychological and emotional problems can be seen as the result of negative thinking (a sort of “negative self-hypnosis”), whereas hypnotherapy aims to encourage (“suggest”) positive ideas (thoughts, images, emotions, behaviours) which lead to improvement.
- Hypnotherapy usually requires more than one session. However, it is probably one of the briefest forms of therapy, the average number of sessions is typically 4-6.
- Hypnotherapy can help with a wide range of different issues. Research tends to provide most support for its use in,

1. Anxiety management.
2. Pain management.
3. Overcoming sleep disorders
4. Treating psychosomatic or stress-related illnesses.

Hypnosis is also used to conquer habits such as nail-biting or smoking cigarettes, and for personal development in areas such as sports performance, public speaking, or creativity.

There is strong evidence that adding hypnosis to CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) improves results over CBT on its own. Research has shown CBT to be probably the most effective psychotherapy – especially for anxiety.

- Thousands of positive experimental and clinical research studies on hypnosis have been published. It was recognised as an effective treatment by many professional organisations like the BMA, the BPS, the AMA, APA (for obesity) and the NHS (NICE guidance for IBS)
- Hypnosis is essentially a simple, down-to-earth, common sense therapy. For example, by relaxing, thinking positively, and imagining your goals, hypnosis can help you to progressively improve your habitual feelings and behaviour.

### References

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