

WHAT IS HYPNOTHERAPY?

Hypnotherapy combines deep relaxation with other therapeutic techniques (such as cognitive behavioral therapy, desensitization, brief psychodynamic therapy, and gestalt therapy) to heal negative beliefs about self and others that contribute to anxiety and depression, addictive and compulsive behaviors, and stress related pain and illness. You may feel deeply relaxed; however, you will remain conscious throughout the session.

A typical session can be done sitting or lying on the couch and includes some or all of the following elements:

- Becoming deeply relaxed;
- Identifying a place where you feel peaceful and safe;
- Identifying characteristics of a “Wise Adult.” This can be a part of yourself, another person, or a spiritual teacher;
- Sharing a recent difficult experience and identifying thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations associated with the experience;
- Going back to an earlier time when you had similar thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations;
- Optional: releasing strong emotions through physical movement;
- Identifying conclusions you made about yourself based on the past experience;
- Identifying decisions you have made about how to behave given these conclusions;
- Replacing maladaptive conclusions with healthy ones and a “positive program” for new beliefs and behaviors; and
- Optional: Taking the role of the Wise Adult and offering the new conclusions to the Inner Child.

The sessions can be audio recorded to be used as a self-hypnosis outside of sessions.

Completing the following pages facilitates personalization of the therapy and provides a sense of agency. The pages can be done during a therapy session or on your own. Remember, you are not alone in having these thoughts and feelings. Over time, confronting them diminishes their power so that new beliefs and behaviors can take root. This can take some time; try to be patient and gentle with yourself.

DESCRIBE A SAFE PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT WHERE YOU FEEL MOST YOURSELF

What are the sounds, smells, sights, and other sensory experiences? Are you by yourself or with others? How do you feel about yourself here? Experience it fully.

WISE ADULT

Describe a wise adult. This can be a part of you, another adult, or a spiritual teacher or figure. What are the qualities of the wise adult? What does the wise adult say to you when you are having a difficult time?

BELIEFS I HAVE DEVELOPED ABOUT MYSELF & OTHERS

Please rate on a scale of 0-5 with 0="I never feel this way" and 5="I feel this way most of the time." As you do this, you might feel "of two minds" in that even though your rational mind can dispute the statements, on another level they seem deeply lodged.

- _____ I'm not qualified to do this. I'm an imposter
- _____ Being average is not okay
- _____ I have to be perfect in order to be loved
- _____ If I don't live up to expectations I will be punished or shamed
- _____ I'm inadequate; I'm an idiot; I'm stupid
- _____ I'm a failure
- _____ I've wasted my life
- _____ I'm not acceptable as I am
- _____ I'm damaged, broken
- _____ If people really knew me, they wouldn't like me
- _____ Only a really damaged person would like me
- _____ My thoughts, feelings, and beliefs are less valid than other people's
- _____ I'm a burden/nuisance/disappointment/embarrassment to others
- _____ Other people's needs are more important than my own
- _____ Nourishing myself is selfish
- _____ My existence causes suffering to others and/or the planet
- _____ I am to blame for other people's suffering, illness, death
- _____ I don't deserve to be happy when others are suffering
- _____ I'm not worthy of/allowed to have healthy relationships or happiness
- _____ I'm not allowed to be more successful than my family members
- _____ If I'm successful I will be punished
- _____ I dislike my body
- _____ I'm ashamed of my sexuality
- _____ I don't trust my judgment
- _____ I feel guilty for being angry
- _____ I feel self-hatred
- _____ I'm damned if I do, damned if I don't
- _____ I'm not a good communicator
- _____ If I am assertive I will be abandoned
- _____ If you want something right, you have to do it yourself; I can't count on others
- _____ I am held responsible for other people's actions
- _____ Other people expect more than I can handle and I feel like a failure
- _____ Other people take advantage of my kindness; other people can't be trusted
- _____ People judge me negatively; No one sees my strengths

Use the next page to add others that come to you

DECISIONS I HAVE MADE ABOUT HOW TO BEHAVE GIVEN THE ABOVE BELIEFS

- _____ I never take time to relax
- _____ I work twice as hard as others in order to prove myself
- _____ I don't ask others for help; I'm fiercely independent
- _____ I take on the work nobody else will do
- _____ I expect far more of myself than I do of others
- _____ I'm extremely competitive; I have to win
- _____ I try so hard to please others that my own wellbeing suffers
- _____ I take responsibility for solving other people's problems
- _____ I deprive myself of adequate sleep
- _____ I deprive myself of healthy food
- _____ I punish myself by using drugs, starving, bingeing, or other compulsive behavior
- _____ I numb my feelings with drugs, starving, bingeing, or other compulsive behavior
- _____ I don't even bother to try
- _____ I avoid social contact
- _____ I push people away before they reject me
- _____ When things are going well for me, I tend to get depressed or sabotage myself
- _____ I surround myself with people who take advantage of me
- _____ I keep my feelings to myself
- _____ I try not to stand out
- _____ I tolerate abuse
- _____ Other. Please

describe _____

DO YOU NOTICE ANY SENSATIONS IN YOUR BODY AS YOU READ THROUGH THE LIST?

- _____ Headache
- _____ Brain fog
- _____ Dizziness
- _____ Grinding teeth
- _____ Stiff neck
- _____ Craving for alcohol, drugs, food, sex. Notice how you experience the craving and describe _____

- _____ Urge to engage in compulsive behavior. Notice how you experience the urge and describe _____

- _____ Lump in throat
- _____ Tightening in throat
- _____ Tense shoulders
- _____ Shortness of breath
- _____ Pounding heart
- _____ Tingling fingers
- _____ Sweating
- _____ Clammy hands
- _____ General sense of dread
- _____ "Broken" heart
- _____ "Pit" in stomach
- _____ Nausea
- _____ Abdominal cramps
- _____ Back pain
- _____ Sense of heaviness, exhaustion, fatigue
- _____ Overall muscle pain
- _____ Overall joint pain
- _____ Shakiness, jitteriness, agitation
- _____ Other. Please

describe _____

WRITE YOUR POSITIVE PROGRAM

Imagine that you are free of the above thoughts, behaviors, and feelings. How would you think, act and feel? Example: I am worthy of love, even if I'm not perfect. I make healthy self-compassionate choices. I am physically healthy. I am surrounded by people who love and support me.