ASCH
ERF

Self Hypnosis: How and What to Teach the Patients

CLINICAL WORKSHOP

LEVEL 1

September 18-20, 2026

©2026 American Society of Clinical Hypnosis Education and Research Foundation. All rights reserved. No reproduction or use without written permission of ASCH-ERF and the author.

Linda Thomson, PhD, APRN

LindaThomson@Hypnovations.com
HypnosisforHealthandHealing.net
802-558-9055

Linda Thomson is a Nurse Practitioner and Approved Consultant in Clinical Hypnosis, a Diplomate of both the American Board of Medical Hypnosis and the American Board of Hypnosis in Nursing and a Fellow of ASCH. Linda is a past president of ASCH and was awarded ASCH's Lifetime Achievement Award.

She has lectured and taught workshops across the country and around the world. She is passionate about teaching health care professionals how to incorporate hypnosis and hypnotic language into their practices.

©2025 American Society of Clinical Hypnosis Education and Research Foundation. All rights reserved. No reproduction or use without written permission of ASCH-ERF and the author.

Continuing Education & Accrediation Statement

- This program has been approved by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis Standards of Training Committee to be used toward Membership and Certification requirements.
- The American Society of Clinical Hypnosis-Education and Research Foundation (ASCH-ERF) is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.
- ASCH-ERF designates this enduring material for a maximum 22 CE of AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.
- This session is approved by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis and as such is an approved continuing education course.

©2026 American Society of Clinical Hypnosis Education and Research Foundation. All rights reserved. No reproduction or use without written permission of ASCH-ERF and the author.

Disclosures (No Financial, No AI)

- ASCH and ASCH-ERF jointly provided this program.
- No staff or committee members involved in the development, planning or execution of educational content have any financial relationships or conflicts of interest to disclose.
- Dr. Thomson has had no significant financial relationships or conflict of interest from the past 24 months to disclose.
  - *For an in-depth definition of what constitutes a financial relationship, please visit the ACCME at https://accme.org/rule/identify-mitigate-and-disclose-relevant-financial-relationships/*
- Dr. Thomson has not used AI in the development of this program/materials.

©2026 American Society of Clinical Hypnosis Education and Research Foundation. All rights reserved. No reproduction or use without written permission of ASCH-ERF and the author.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session the participant will be able to:

Define self-hypnosis and explain the difference between self-hypnosis and hetero hypnosis.

Describe at least three therapeutic applications of self-hypnosis in clinical practice.

Explain how to teach self-hypnosis to a patient.

©2026 American Society of Clinical Hypnosis Education and Research Foundation. All rights reserved. No reproduction or use without written permission of ASCH-ERF and the author.

"All Hypnosis Is Self-Hypnosis"

Milton Erickson, 1948

Or is it ????????

- Spontaneous Hypnosis
- Hetero-Hypnosis
- Self-Hypnosis

Definition of Self-Hypnosis

- Patient initiated private, internal, experience of hypnosis independent of therapist for the purpose of achieving the individual's goals of relaxation, self-control or self efficacy
- Includes
  - focused attention
  - inner absorption
  - communication between conscious and unconscious

Advantages of Self-Hypnosis

- Empowering, develops a sense of self-mastery, control (when/how to do hypnosis), ego-strengthening, independence.
- Allows patient increased control of timing of symptom diminution, cessation.
- Highlights the patient's active role, responsibility and agency in their own treatment.

More Advantages

- Reduced demands on clinician by diminishing number and frequency of sessions. It can also reduces the reliance on hypnotic aids, like recordings when practiced.

- Can increase the patient's confidence as they can feel more equipped to use hypnosis on their own without needing the clinician (i.e. with sleep, tummy pains, etc.).

My goal? - Work myself out of a job

Why Should You Learn Self-Hypnosis?

- Authenticity
- Developing a repertoire
- Sensitivity while "doing hypnosis"
  - to our own states of awareness
  - to patient/client's states of awareness
- Help ourselves cope!

Helping Ourselves

- Self Care - Relaxation
- Getting back to sleep
- Coping with clinical schedules & problems
- Changing our own habits
- Alleviating symptoms of stress
- Remembering to do hypnosis
- Rapport, rapport, rapport

Patient- Specific Goals for Self-Hypnosis:

- Psychoneuroimmunology
- Smoking Cessation
- Weight Loss
- Sports / Music / Acting Performance
- Test Taking
- Self-Confidence
- Self-Exploration
- Relaxation - Self-care

Patient- Specific Goals for Self-Hypnosis:

- DECREASE:
  - Stress / Tension
  - Jaw Clenching / Teeth Grinding
  - Fears / Anxieties /Phobias
  - Pain
  - Habits
  - Allergies / Asthma
  - Skin Problems
  - Sleeping Problems

Kid -Specific Goals for Self-Hypnosis:

- Better manage anxiety
  - use their imagination for good stuff
  - calm their gut / self-soothing
- Improve pain management skills
- Imagine future success

When learning hypnosis, remind patient:

- Hypnosis is a natural ability/naturally occurring process (i.e. spontaneous hypnosis).
- Hypnosis is a talent (although we all don't share the same talents, we all have them).
- Hypnosis is a skill (that improves with practice). It's helpful to be compassionate and patient with themselves as they learn.

Teach Self Hypnosis

Separate
learning hypnosis
from the presenting problem.

Remind patient to only use hypnosis/ self-hypnosis when their attention isn’t needed on something else and that with more practice their skills can increase.

Introduction of Self-Hypnosis

- After orientation to hypnosis
- After positive trance experience

- After exposure to hypnotic phenomena
- After development of elicitation/intensification skills

Operator/Coach can:

- Manage expectations
- Emphasize skill-building
- Be permissive
- Collaborate on suggestions
- Develop positive suggestions
- Give permission to correct suggestions as needed
- Elicit feedback about hypnosis experience

“ There is no such thing as a failure.”

Brown/Fromm, 1986

Types of Patients who do well with Self-Hypnosis

Internal Locus of Control vs External

Autonomous vs Therapist Dependent

Risk Takers vs Guidance Seekers

Enjoy Fantasy vs Enjoy Reality

Ego-Receptive vs Ego-Active

open to info from unconscious vs seeking structure

independent, self-reliant vs certainty & control

Hypnosis

Rapport
Input: determined by suggestion
Concentration: increases
Memory: increases
Time: distortion, pro/regression
Stress: reduction

Meditation

Independent
Focus deliberately on meta-attention, let everything pass by
Concentration: increases
Memory: inactive, focus on present
Time: focus on here and now
Stress: reduction

Teaching Self-Hypnosis

- Imagine doing it again

  "In your mind, *imagine* yourself doing this later today, tomorrow, next Tuesday…"

  "*When* you do this again for yourself where will you be the most comfortable?

  "*How* will you do this next time?

With kids, I always start with breathing

Possible Elicitation

- Belly Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Eyes Open and Close with inhalation & exhalation
- Eye Roll
- Magnetic Fingers
- Anchoring object (established in hetero-hypnosis)

Teaching Self-Hypnosis

- Ask patient/client to "review" how to do it

  "Before you finish imagining for now, replay in your mind how you did what you did to feel how you do now."

Teaching Self-Hypnosis

- Explain that it "can be different"

  "Of course, when you do this on your own and you don't have to wait for me to talk and ask you questions, it ***can*** be different."

  "Since you are the boss of your imagination you can ***decide*** to imagine different stuff each time you do this at home and school.

Teaching Self-Hypnosis

- Offer to make a recording.

"If an audio recording of what we talked about today will help you get started, I can make one for you. Recordings are like training wheels. They are good to help you ride on your own, but eventually they slow you down. So you take them off…when you want to."

Anchors
aka Soveniers

Doing self-hypnosis at home

IS AS EASY AS

1 - 2 - 3

Stages to Teaching Self-Hypnosis

Operator fully coaches all steps of hypnotic experience for patient

Operator only gives reminders of steps

No Operator involvement – Patient self-guides hypnotic experience

Teaching Self-Hypnosis

- Ask the patient to do it again…

  "Go right back"

- Provide ego-strengthening suggestions

  "You learn quickly." "You are good at this."

- Exude faith in the patient's ability

  "I wonder what you will come up with on your own to tell me about when you come back next time?"

- Have FUN…or it won't be worth doing.

References

- Cheek, D.B. & LeCron, L.M. (1968) Clinical Hypnotherapy. NY: Grune & Straton. ISBN 0-8089-0097-8.
- Coué, É. (1922) Self Mastery Through Conscious Autosuggestion. Malkan Pub Co., NY, NY
- Eimer, B.N. (2002) Hypnotize Yourself Out of Pain Now! CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.
- Garver, R.B. (1984) Eight Steps to Self-Hypnosis. American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis 26 (4): 232-235.
- Hammond, D.C. (1992) Manual for Self-Hypnosis, 10th Printing. IL: ASCH.
- Sorkis, D. (1986) Teaching Self-Hypnosis: An Introductory Guide for Clinicians. NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Zarren, J. & Eimer, B. (2002) Brief Cognitive Hypnosis. NY: Springer.

Linda Thomson,

PhD, APRN, ABMH ABHN, FASCH

131 Thomson Drive
Ludlow, VT 05149

www.HypnosisforHealthandHealing.net
LindaThomson@Hypnovations.com