
Treatment Planning, Strategy and Technique Selection in Hypnotherapy

**CLINICAL WORKSHOP
LEVEL 1**

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Treatment Planning, Strategy and Technique Selection in Hypnotherapy

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Learning Objectives

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

- Execute a thorough case assessment to elucidate the information necessary to develop a quality treatment plan
- Design a treatment plan for a patient/client who presents with anxiety
- List at least 4 hypnotic techniques/application that may be best suited to achieve the specific therapeutic goal in the case presented

Treatment Planning is an N-of-1 Trial

You have one client

You have one setting

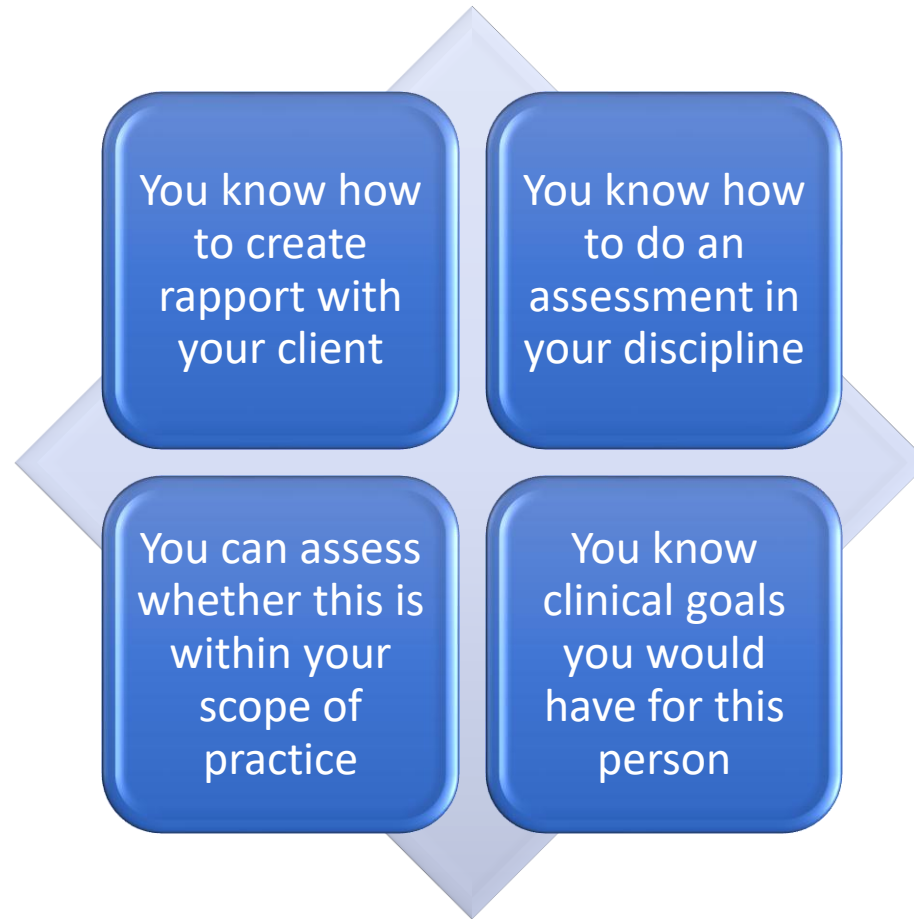
You have one clinical history

You have one set of reactions to monitor



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Start with This Person in This Moment



You are simply going to use hypnosis within the work
you already do...



Treatment Preparation

Contraindications

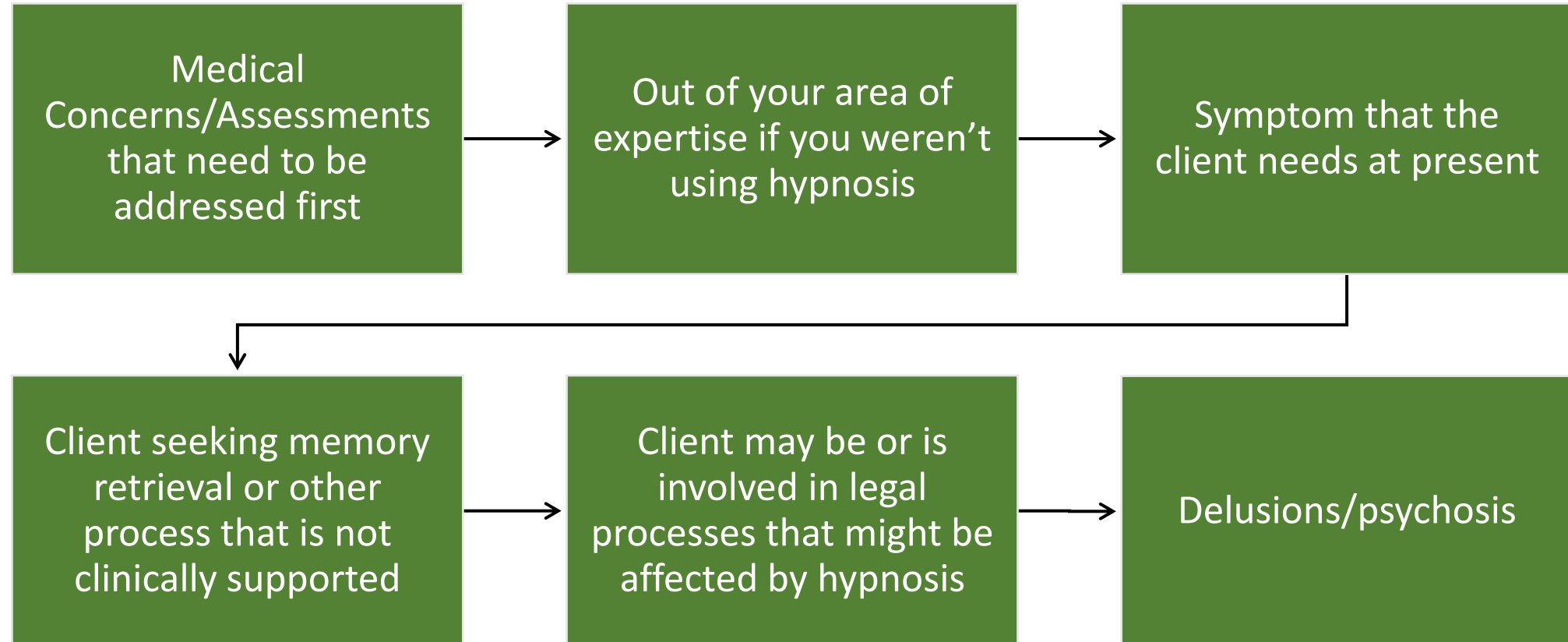
Possible Contraindications

Educate the Client about Hypnosis

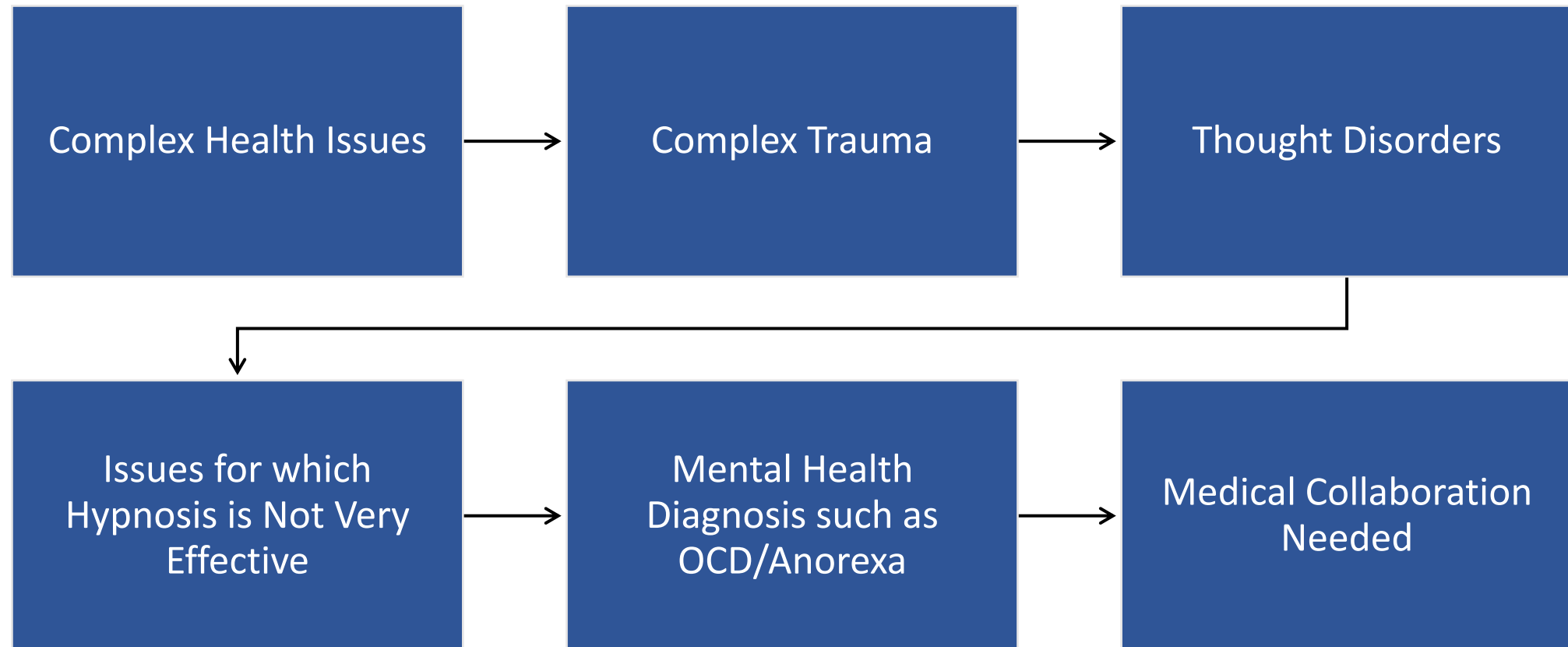
Get Informed Consent

Demonstrate the Ability to Become
Absorbed

Check for Contraindications to Hypnosis



Be Aware of *Possible* Contraindications



Educate the Client about Hypnosis

Have a client friendly way you approach the subject of hypnosis
Remember that talking about the process can increase Rapport as you listen, correct misinformation, and increase expectancy around benefits of hypnosis



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*Demonstrate the Ability to Become Absorbed

It is often useful to start with a small experience of absorption separate from treatment goals.

This will help demystify ensuing experiences of hypnosis and can provide ratification which increases positive expectancy

auditory • visual • body/breath • calm place

This can be a quick experience – much like our first small group exercise.

Discuss their experience and questions to learn more about their abilities/preferences and their modalities.

*Not required but often useful!

Treatment Planning

What Do You Notice in Your Assessment?

What Hypnotic Goals Fit the Symptoms?

What Does this Person Want to Change?

What are the Client's Modalities?

Utilize the Client's World

What Hypnotic Phenomena Might Be Useful?

After A Hypnotic Experience

What Do You Notice in Your Assessment?

PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS*

Shortness of breath

Tachycardia

GI Upset

Headache

Muscle Tension

Sleep Disturbance

Fatigue

Tremors/Shaking/Sweating/

Restlessness

Cognitive Slowing

Racing Thoughts

Future Orientation

Concentration Difficulties

Hypervigilant

Rumination

Cognitive Distortions (catastrophizing,
all-or-nothing)

*From the ASCH Treatment Planning Handout

What Goals Fit the Symptoms?



Be specific with one or two central goals – it will help you with initial planning and make the process easier. It also leaves time for repetition during hypnosis which is helpful for learning.

What Does this Person Want to Change?

The closer you stay to their words, goals and modalities the more quickly you get alliance and rapport. Even vague goals can be useful.

- “**Something** that will **soothe** it”
 - *And you can imagine something that will going into that place... bringing comfort...soothing... perhaps cool? Warm? Colorful? Imagine it now...*
- “**Seeing** what the **problem** is and fixing it”
 - *And it will be comforting to imagine the faces of the team... all working together to fix the problem... seeing what they are doing...their confidence... you can see them here with you paying close attention...*
- “I want to **feel** better”
 - *And you can remember a time in the past when you went through a challenge... do you remember that now?...yes... feeling how difficult it was....(etc) and I don't know... but you know... what happened to help you begin... just the beginning... of feeling something shift... of the possibility of feeling better.... Something you did? Something you discovered?.... Something you thought? Something you heard?.... Something you felt?....Saw?...*

What are the Client's Modalities?

People quickly tell you in their descriptions
Are they more Kinesthetic? Auditory? Visual?



Utilize the Client's World

What does the client do well, or what is familiar?

Parenting/Relationships

Work

Creative activities

Sports/Physical abilities

Animals

Places/things they like



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What Hypnotic Experiences May be Useful?



PHYSICAL CHANGES

Learning to calm the body and with it the mind

COMFORTABLE PLACE

Practicing healing emotional states

AGE PROGRESSION OR REGRESSION

Using a positive past experience

Using imagination of a future positive experience

ANCHORS/CUES

Connecting a feeling/thought to a physical experience

SLOWING THINGS DOWN or a STOP SIGN

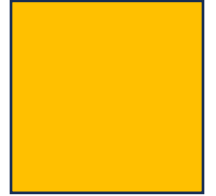
Practicing stopping before reacting

WHITEBOARD AND ERASER

Writing and erasing something that is no longer needed/wanted

POST-HYPNOTIC SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions to feel/think/do something after hypnosis

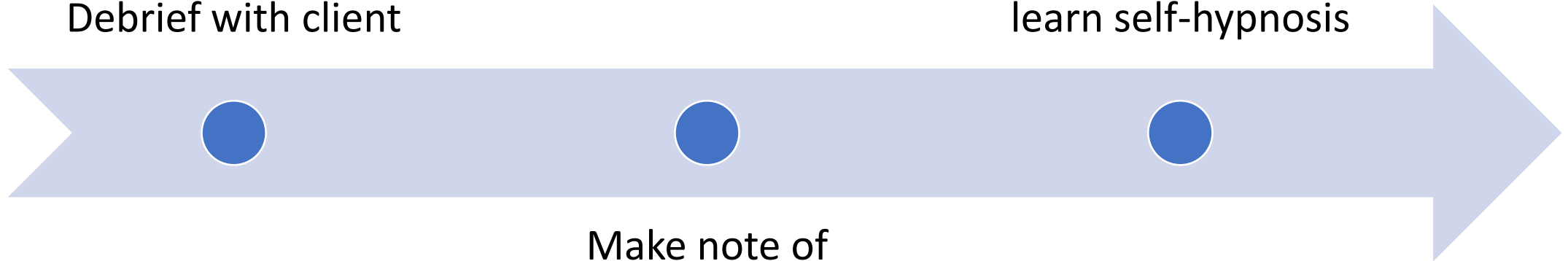


After Hypnosis

Debrief with client

Consider whether
they are ready to
learn self-hypnosis

Make note of
anything that would
be useful for another
hypnotic experience



Case Examples: Anxiety

- Anxiety is a common factor in the work of many disciplines
- Hypnosis is very useful with anxiety treatment in different types of situations



Case Example – Anxiety & Rumination

- Woman in her early 40s
- In the process of divorce
- Having trouble sleeping and working due to thinking about divorce, self, kids
- Feels like she is doing things “wrong” and wants to do things “right”.
- Strong connection to her children, “when I see their little faces I light up” – describes cuddling using arms and body
- Strong women friendships from distressed childhood – all learned to handle things themselves

Case Example: Anxiety

Assessment Concerns

1. Rumination
2. Negative self-evaluation

Hypnotic Goals

1. Notice ruminating and access comfortable place to calm
2. Accessing a sense of mastery, competence, resilience

Client

Goal (their words): "What am I doing wrong?" "I want to do this right"

Modalities: Visual (faces in particular), kinesthetic (positive touch)

World/Strengths/Likes: Scrappy and resilient, Parenting/children, strong friendships, funny

Hypnotic Experience - Ideas

1. Noticing thoughts as if they are visitors intruding, refusing them easily (competence) by shifting focus
2. Accessing a memory of calm and comfort (children faces and touch/cuddling)
3. Embodying this experience of mastery/competence, connecting to an anchor

Ideas – Anxiety and Rumination

Elicitation & Intensification

Breath and progressive muscle relaxation

Suggestions:

You can notice when you are saying “what am I doing wrong” and notice the sensations

You can see how the words “what am I doing wrong” try to knock you off course

You can easily let those words fade away and turn your attention to a memory with the children (faces, touch)

You can feel the feeling of “doing it right” and enjoy it

Post Hypnotic Suggestions:

Anchor: OK sign

When you make the OK sign it will remind you that you and the kids are ok, you are “doing it right”

Script example – Anxiety and Rumination

- Elicitation & Intensification: Breath and progressive muscle relaxation
- After relaxation and signs of trance, become aware of distress, and words “What am I doing wrong.” Nod when she is able to feel that
- “That’s right... those words will come to visit sometimes... and as you notice that sensation in your body... feel that now... and the words “what am I doing wrong,” notice where they sit in your body. That’s right... notice the sensations... the words... notice how they try to take over your body and mind.... trying to knock you off course...”
- “But you are strong ... you know how to take care of yourself... and your family ... and you might find it curious... funny even... how these words disappear easily... you can make them fade now... noticing your breath... that’s right... inviting the shoulders to relax... yes... the neck... and allowing yourself to remember something good from this week... a time with the kids when there was calm... or laughter... or cuddling... or you handled a tricky problem... nod when you have that... that’s right... and let that feeling fill your body... exactly... seeing their faces... feeling the love....”
- “Remembering that you want to do it right... just as you have so many times... notice their faces... and the feeling inside of doing it right... nod when you have that feeling...that’s right... feeling good as a parent... loving...cuddling... laughing... and let your thumb and forefinger come together to make an “ok” sign... just like that... that reminds you that they are ok... you are ok... see their faces... feel the ok sign... and when you make this sign with your fingers it will remind you that they are ok... you are ok...and you are able to do it right....”

Can Hypnosis Make a Difference?







Dr. Dr. Gary Elkins

Case Example – Anxiety & Claustrophobia

- 16-year-old boy
- Injury in sports
- Anxious about doing an MRI
- Somewhat claustrophobic, “I don’t know if I can do it”
- Enjoys music, being with friends, parents note he spends a lot of time in his room and can tune them out when they try to talk to him. He notes it is calming to lie under a lot of blankets in his bed and listen to music or watch YouTube.
- Generally competitive, plays traveling soccer, follows a professional soccer team
- “I just want to get back to playing soccer”

Assessment Concerns

- 1.
- 2.

Hypnotic Goals

- 1.
- 2.

Client

Goal (their words):

Modalities:

World/Strengths/Likes:

Hypnotic Experience - Ideas

- 1.
- 2.

Case Example: Anxiety

Assessment Concerns

1. Claustrophobia - MRI
2. Motivation

Hypnotic Goals

1. Relax in MRI
2. Positive Expectations of process and future

Client's Goal, Modalities, World/Strengths/Likes

Goal (their words): "I just want to get back to playing soccer"

Modalities: Kinesthetic, Aural

World/Strengths/Likes: Soccer, Music, Bed, Friends, YouTube

Hypnotic Experience - Ideas

1. Practice listening to music in MRI and tuning out the process
2. Time Distortion - Envision future self, back to playing soccer.

Ideas – Anxiety and Claustrophobia

Elicitation & Intensification:

- 1.
- 2.

Suggestions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Post Hypnotic Suggestions/Anchors:

- 1.
- 2.

A Current Client/Patient

- Choose a current client or patient in your practice. If you don't have one, make up a situation that is common in your area of expertise.
- Use the format to briefly jot down assessment concerns, hypnotic goals, client goals/modalities/strengths, and hypnotic ideas.



Assessment Concerns

- 1.
- 2.

Hypnotic Goals

- 1.
- 2.

Client

Goal (their words):

Modalities:

World/Strengths/Likes:

Hypnotic Experience - Ideas

- 1.
- 2.

Ideas – A Current Client/Patient

Elicitation & Intensification:

- 1.
- 2.

Suggestions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Post Hypnotic Suggestions/Anchors:

- 1.
- 2.

Questions

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