


**Foundations for Integrating Hypnosis
into Your Therapies for Treating Anxiety,
Depression, and Pain**

with
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Webinar Section 7 of 12



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**Relaxation Training for Anxiety:
A 10 Year Review and Meta-Analysis**

- In a meta-analytic review of studies published between 1977 and 2007 regarding various forms of relaxation training, including self-hypnosis, for anxiety, it was found that:
- There is a “consistent and significant efficacy of relaxation training in reducing anxiety”
- Both psychological and psychosomatic patients gain more benefits from relaxation training than medical patients
- The potential of the training increases with its intensity; the most effective trainings are long-lasting and include at-home practice exercises

Manzoni et al., *BMC Psychiatry*,
www.medscape.com/viewarticle/575821

Hypnosis to Manage Anxiety

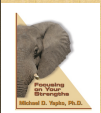
- Relaxation inductions can (temporarily) replace feelings of anxiety with relaxation
- Anxiety affects more than 19 million Americans; common co-morbid condition with depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, etc.
- Social anxiety is the most common form, but also GAD, phobias and PTSD
- Hypnosis targets anxiety-producing patterns of thought, behavior

Examples of Cognitive Style Patterns

- Global vs. linear cognition
- Expectancy
- “Believed-in imagination” (Sarbin, Hilgard)
- Tolerance for ambiguity
- Abstract vs. concrete thinking
- Cognitive flexibility vs. rigidity

Global Cognitive Style is a Key Factor

When you can't see the trees for the forest...



Examples of Global Style in Client Self-Reports

- “I just want to be happy”
- “I just want to feel normal”
- “I **am** my anxiety”
- “I'm just so overwhelmed”
- “I get so bad I just can't think”
- “The symptom just happens to me”

Global Thinking *in the Symptom Context* Virtually Precludes the Ability to:

- Compartmentalize (e.g., contain anxiety)
- Think linearly, sequentially
- Maintain good boundaries
- Make key discriminations

The Cognitive Cornerstones of Depression and Anxiety Comorbidity

Negative thoughts involving an:

Overestimation of danger, threat and fear
and an

Underestimation of one's abilities to cope with threats

This is true both for adults and children

Key Point:

Hypnosis can be used especially well to help people make key distinctions and lead them through *specific effective sequences* of thought, feeling and behavior for applying these sequences skillfully

Depressing and Anxiety-Provoking Questions

- “What’s wrong with me?”
- “When will I ever...?”
- “Why can’t I ever...?”
- “What if I fail?”
- “Why is this happening to me?”
- “What am I going to do with my life?”
- “What if I never get better?”

Any other such questions you can think of?

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Asking “what if?” can lead to catastrophizing.
 The problem, though, isn’t asking “what if?”
It’s not answering the question!

Ambiguity is a Risk Factor in Both Anxiety and Depression

- People strive to understand and make “meaning”
- Ambiguity raises, while certainty lowers, anxiety; projection as a coping device
- Cognitive distortions represent efforts to reduce, eliminate ambiguity
- A therapeutic goal is to learn to both RECOGNIZE and TOLERATE ambiguity

The Skills That Go Into Tolerating Ambiguity

- Recognizing ambiguity in and across situations
- Recognizing multiple possible meanings (flexibility in perspective)
- Recognizing no clear evidence is obtainable or readily forthcoming
- Accepting "I don't know" as a valid, blameless conclusion

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A Generic Structure for Hypnotically Facilitating Recognizing and Tolerating Ambiguity

- Orient client to hypnosis
- Induction process
- Build a response set regarding uncertainty ("You don't know what I'm going to say...")
- Introduce the process of inference ("We all make guesses about the meanings of things we observe or experience")
- Suggestions/metaphors regarding inferences ("When you were told the classic stories, did you wonder what they meant?")

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A Generic Structure for Hypnotically Facilitating Recognizing and Tolerating Ambiguity

- Introduce **the value of knowing** ("It can inspire confidence to know you made a good decision based on the facts")
- Suggestions/metaphors regarding "knowing" ("I wanted to buy a car with really good gas mileage so I read studies comparing models...")
- Introduce **the value of not knowing** ("There are some questions we cannot answer, fortunately...")
- Suggestions/metaphors regarding "not knowing" ("When I began college and I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life, it allowed me an openness...")

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*A Generic Structure for
Hypnotically Facilitating Recognizing and Tolerating Ambiguity*

- Reframing and reinforcing “not knowing” as desirable in some contexts; the merits of saying “I don’t know”
 - Cues for identifying when “not knowing’ is desirable (e.g., there is no way to know)
- Post-hypnotic suggestions for integration (“So when you find yourself making an interpretation about the meaning of some event, you can remind yourself...”)
- Closure
- Disengagement

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The ability to detach from your own thoughts and other aspects of your internal experience is essential to transforming it

The dissociative qualities of hypnosis provide a means of therapeutic detachment

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**Consider the Role of
Compartmentalization in Different Therapies**

Detach from:

- the pain in order to manage it
- the emotion and be more rational
- the past and be more present
- the fear and do it anyways
- situational triggers and react differently
- the wish and be more accepting of the reality
- the inner critic and be more compassionate

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Thanks for your kind attention!

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