

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

with
Michael D. Yapko, Ph.D.
Webinar Section 8 of 12



Michael D. Yapko, Ph.D.
www.yapko.com

Hypnosis to Manage Anxiety

Principal targets are:

- Catastrophic thinking (“something terrible will happen I can’t handle”)
- Global thinking (“it will **always** happen that way”)
- Anxiety expectancy (“I won’t know what to say or do and I’ll freeze”)
- Risk assessment patterns (overestimating risks)
- Self-efficacy (underestimating personal resources)
- Avoidant coping style
- Tolerance for ambiguity

*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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Hypnosis to Manage Anxiety: Strategies

- Imagery scenes of relaxation spots; a garden, a cloud, a pool, an island
- Deep breathing exercises, mindfulness
- Increasing self-efficacy (accessing and contextualizing resources)
- Asking "what if?" --and *answering* it
- Breaking seemingly overwhelming global issues into manageable components
- Recognizing and tolerating ambiguity
- Detachment (dissociation)

For Next Time

- Go to Google scholar and type in "Hypnosis, anxiety" and read at least two or three articles on the subject
- Read through any scripts provided for ideas about structure and content
- Notice how many times per day you face ambiguity
- Practice the recognizing and tolerating ambiguity strategy as much as you can

Michael D. Yapko, Ph.D.
www.yapko.com

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Thanks for your kind attention!

Michael D. Yapko, Ph.D.

Website: www.yapko.com

Email: michael@yapko.com



Michael D. Yapko, Ph.D.
www.yapko.com

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