

Hypnotherapy: More Than a New Age Trend

Hypnosis as a form of healing is one of the oldest forms of therapy on the planet and should be an integral part of your wellness offering...

Certain sections of the wellbeing media are calling hypnotherapy the new wellness trend for 2021.

However, many hotels, including the Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong and the Four Seasons New York, have been offering it as part of their wellbeing packages and luxury spa offerings for many years now.

So, it's hardly new. And despite the stereotype of it being a 'fringe' therapy it's hardly new age neither.

The so-called 2021 trend, however, like most things over the past 16 months or so, has been fuelled by COVID-19 and the various stresses and strains it has engendered. But, what exactly is hypnotherapy and how can it help you?

Hypnotherapy is therapy conducted in a state of hypnosis. And there are different therapies for different things, depending on what it is that you would like to achieve. You can have hypnotherapy for stress and burnout, for anxiety or depression, for anger management, confidence building, relaxation, weight control, pain control, stopping smoking and more. You can even cure warts with it.

Whatever the therapy is, the important thing is it is conducted in a hypnotic state. The term itself is from the Greek word 'hypnos,' meaning sleep. But, this is a misnomer as you are not asleep. Hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness, very similar to daydreaming, nodding off, or losing yourself in a really good book.

And it's been around for thousands of years. It was even practised in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. The sick and the weary would take themselves off to sleep temples. Whilst there, temple priests would lull them into a

trance-like state, there to give them positive suggestions, benedictions, and invocations via the gods.

As a more modern form of medical practice, hypnotherapy still has a history going back hundreds of years. Before the advent of anaesthesia, it was the main (and very effective) form of pain control for surgery. It was either that, or a bottle of whiskey and a very big stick to bite on.

Hypnotherapy fell from favour when hypnosis became a vaudevillian form of entertainment (all that bark like a dog and cluck like a chicken malarkey). But hypnotherapy for healing and hypnosis for entertainment are two very different things. But, sadly, for a while, the reputation of the latter tarnished the legacy of the former.

Fast forward to today, and clinical hypnotherapy is an evidence-based practice with many applications. Typing the term into Google reveals oodles of interesting headlines, including "Is your willpower failing? I tried hypnotherapy – and it worked almost too well (The Guardian); "Needle phobia treatment could reduce COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy by 10%" (Happiful Magazine); "Could hypnotherapy for weight loss actually work? Here's what the experts want to know" (Yahoo Style UK); "I feel fantastic after my final hypnotherapy session" (Multiple Sclerosis News Today) and 'Inspired by Olivia Coleman? How hypnotherapy could help you tackle your fears, from flying to spiders" (The Independent).

With all the flight-restrictions still in place, hypnosis is even being used to help take people on virtual holidays. This is not as weird as it sounds as celebrity hypnotherapist Paul McKenna was offering hypno-holidays in a special booth set up in Bluewater Shopping Centre as far back as 2015.

As a form of treatment, hypnotherapy has been endorsed by the British Medical Association since 1892. By way of an update, it issued The Hypnotism Act, which provided hypnotherapy with a legal definition, in 1952. The National Hypnotherapy Society, meanwhile, is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). So, in terms of government legitimacy, it sits right up there with the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

Meanwhile, hypnotherapist Nicole Hernandez, who has been with the Four Seasons Hotel New York Downtown since December 2020, offers reassuringly expensive hypnotherapy journeys, either as bespoke one-offs or as four-session programmes.

Whilst over at the Mandarin Spa, Christine Deschemin offers a very similar deal, and can help you become slimmer, more relaxed and, even, addiction free (for lots of Hong Kong dollars, obviously).

Which rather begs the question: is hypnotherapy part of your wellness offering?

If it isn't, I know of a very skilled hypnotherapist who has been in practice for nearly 20 years, who could help you out in that department.

About the author

Daniel Fryer is a mental health and wellbeing expert and the founder of workplace wellness consultancy, How To Be. He uses rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT), clinical hypnotherapy and positive psychology to help people achieve their goals. Daniel is the author of *The Four Thoughts That F*ck You Up ...And How To Fix Them*, published by Penguin Random House.