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**Clinical Hypnosis**

**By Paul Gustafson**

**Clinical Hypnosis by Paul Gustafson RN, BSN, CH**

Clinical Hypnosis

Did you know that Americans spend as much out-of-pocket for holistic solutions such as hypnosis as they do for inpatient hospitalizations? The Eisenberg studies of 1991 and again in 1997 shocked the mainstream medical community with these findings. The authoritarian approach to western medicine assumes that health and wellness comes from others. This minimizes the importance of our own natural ability to not only enhance the healing process but to avoid illness to begin with.

If the rapid assembly line of traditional healthcare has clinicians overwhelmed, what about the emotional state of those being cared for? How are the patients coping with their situation? What expectations do they have for recovery? Do they see themselves as temporarily side tracked or powerless? Do they believe there is a role for them to play in their own recovery or do they feel totally dependant? This article describes how hypnosis works and reviews some of the clinical applications.

What is Hypnosis?

The word "hypnosis" is a Greek derivative for "sleep" coined by scientist James Braid in 1843. It was an unfortunate choice of words because hypnosis is not sleep at all. Nearly all hypnosis clients hear and remember everything during a session. Hypnosis is better described as a combination of deep physical relaxation and heightened awareness.

It is the process of bypassing conscious thought and stepping into the subconscious, which is our body's control center and also where all of our habits, values and beliefs reside. The subconscious mind is like the hard drive of a computer, it is where all the programming is stored. Hypnosis not only helps you step inside of this powerful place, but it also empowers the client to initiate positive changes supporting improved health and thoughts of future success.

A hypnotist/hypnotherapist uses soothing music and paints peaceful verbal images enabling clients to shift from conscious to subconscious thought. Once this is accomplished they are directed with carefully phrased suggestions, affirmations and imagery supporting the desired goals. The client subconsciously integrates the information and puts it into action.

## Clinical Hypnosis

### Clinical Hypnosis

Clinical hypnosis applies to medical concerns. There are dozens of applications of this holistic technique in the acute care setting and scientific research is building an impressive case supporting its effectiveness and cost saving merits. Here are some examples:

**Intensive Care:** Clients can block out distractions and reduce discomfort, which improves their ability to get quality rest and speed up recovery time. Clinical hypnosis reduces stress, balances blood pressure and heart rate, which minimize complications. It can also be used to reduce secretions, bleeding, improve immune response and make procedures more tolerable.

**Oncology:** Hypnosis lessens stress, anxiety, pain, nausea and vomiting. It reduces respiratory distress

and even helps prevent hair loss. It increases confidence and self-image. Clinical hypnosis helps ease the acceptance of physical restrictions or even coping with end of life transition.

**Pediatrics:** What better gift to give a frightened child than control during a time of crisis. Children have active imaginations and respond very well to hypnosis. It can melt away fear; increase their relaxation and focus making it easier for them to understand and tolerate procedures and treatments.

**Surgical:** Clinical hypnosis can reduce anxiety, pain, stress and bleeding. It promotes rapid healing and improved immune response. These clients can better manage post-op pain and nausea. They use less medication and avoid the side effects that go with it. Those who are relaxed going into anesthesia are relaxed coming out of it. They have fewer complications and have a shorter length of stay.

**Mental Health:** Hypnosis relieves symptoms of despair or sadness, fears, phobias and even addictions. It puts the client in control. They get to play an active role in their own recovery, which adds to an increased sense of fulfillment ensuring long-term success.

**Dentistry:** Hypnosis helps minimize anticipatory anxiety, bleeding, gagging, pain, excess salivation and distorts time perception making procedure seem to go by quickly. Hypnosis can also help establish a positive association with dental care promoting routine care.

### Summary

Clinical hypnosis offers clients an oasis of relaxation and control when they need it most. They have a shorter length of stay, use less medication, have fewer complications and feel like they were a part of the team. Hypnosis can blend nature and science with dramatically positive results. And clients who go on to become self-practitioners of this relaxing technique can make positive changes in many other areas of their lives as well.

Paul Gustafson RN, BSN, CH runs [HealthyHypnosis.com](http://HealthyHypnosis.com) of Burlington, Massachusetts. His 11 years of acute cardiac and hospice experience offer a solid foundation supporting his clinical approach to hypnotherapy. Visit [HealthyHypnosis.com](http://HealthyHypnosis.com) or call toll free at 888-290-3972.

## How Hypnosis Works

By Loni Gordon

Long thought of as a stage show or act of trickery by many, and as a dangerous practice which left the mind vulnerable to some, hypnosis is finding a new popularity among people these days. The growth of the use and acceptance of alternative treatments in the use of the 21st century individual has seen a corresponding surge in the number of people who are using hypnosis to treat problems. Hypnosis patients overwhelmingly use hypnosis in areas where they need a boost in will power to achieve a specific goal. The two most common areas for the use of hypnosis are among people who want to either quit smoking or lose weight.

Hypnosis should not be confused with cartoon depictions of sinister Lucifer like characters droning "You are getting sleepy" in monotonous while swinging a pendulum. There is no circling of the pupils, and in fact the subject does not actually fall asleep. Hypnosis uses a method that most people already know about, and that has been in use by various companies since the advent of radio– the principle of subliminal messaging.

Many people have seen documentaries of images of Coke or popcorn flashed too fast for the mind to register on a movie screen. The result is an increased desire for the patrons, whose eyes were fast enough to register the image but who do not actually remember it. While distracted by the movie, they were open to subliminal messages.

The same process is how hypnotism works. Anytime a person is concentrating hard on a given task– whether it be reading, driving, or watching television– she is open to messages quickly and unobtrusively projected at her. Hypnosis seeks to implant a message in the brain while it is vulnerable to unobtrusive data.

For this reason, the phenomenon of self–hypnosis is gaining in usage. It is possible to design a program wherein the subliminal message "ignore your cravings" or something along that line is planted firmly in a subject's mind. Again, this process has been common knowledge for some time, as most people have known the strategy of placing a cassette under a pillow while asleep to help achieve a certain purpose.

Hypnosis is just like any other treatment– sometimes it will work, and sometimes it will not. There are many routes to go, whether you choose self–hypnosis, clinical hypnosis, or the use of a professional showman such as Romein. Any of these usages could result in success in terms of your goal, or failure.

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