

8. Stress Management Using Hypnotherapy

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Abstract:

Despite the fact that hypnosis and hypnotherapy have grown in popularity recently, it is unclear whether hypnosis affects how stressed people feel. In the fast-paced world of today, stress is a common problem that affects people from all areas of life.

Significant physical and emotional strain might result from work-related stress, personal difficulties, or even societal issues. Hypnotherapy has become a very popular alternative to conventional stress-reduction techniques like counseling, physical activity, and medicine. We will talk about it in this paper. Stress Reduction Using Hypnotherapy.

Keywords:

Stress Management, Hypnotherapy, Work Pressures, Personal Challenges, Societal Issues, Enhanced Relaxation, Strengthened Immune System, Self-Hypnosis, Cognitive-Behavioral Hypnotherapy, Neuro-Linguistic Programming.

8.1 Introduction:

- **Stress:**

When we feel overburdened and unable to handle the pressure, we experience stress. Long-term stress has a negative impact on our physical and emotional well-being.

[1]

- **Hypnosis:**

Deep relaxation and concentrated attention are hallmarks of hypnosis, also known as hypnotherapy. Complementary therapy is what it is. In order to address diseases or concerns, you may undergo these therapies in addition to standard medical or psychological treatments. Increased focus and concentration are hallmarks of hypnotherapy. You will be guided by a qualified and experienced hypnotist or hypnotherapist.

During hypnosis, you can be more receptive to recommendations for altering your memories, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, perceptions, or sensations in a way that is healthy. Improved attention and concentration are made possible by hypnosis, which is an altered state of awareness and enhanced relaxation. Another name for it is hypnosis. Under the supervision of a medical professional, hypnosis is often performed utilizing mental imagery and verbal repetition. Most people feel at ease and comfortable when under hypnosis. People are usually more receptive to ideas for behavioral adjustments when under hypnosis. [2]

Techniques for managing stress are becoming crucial in healthcare settings. Contemporary therapeutic hypnosis and hypnotherapy have gained popularity and attention globally in recent years.

"A state of consciousness involving focused attention and reduced peripheral awareness characterized by an enhanced capacity for response to suggestion" is the definition of hypnosis. "The use of hypnosis in the treatment of a medical or psychological disorder or concern" is the definition of hypnotherapy. It also involves therapeutic dialogue with hypostatic language and an attitude that is resource-activating and solution-focused. The ability of a person to undergo hypnosis and experience indicated changes in physiology, sensations, emotions, thoughts, or behavior is known as hypnotizable.

8.2 Hypnotherapy for Stress:

In reality, every man's mentality is his own. Our thoughts are the seeds in the garden that is our mind. We can either pick weeds or flowers. Happiness blossoms like flowers when we think positive things. Like the unwelcome weeds, negative thoughts can cause strain and stress, which ruins the garden and the plants. The word "stress" is derived from the Latin word "stringere," which meant to compress or remain taut. Every day, millions of individuals worldwide experience stress for a variety of reasons. A person's physical, physiological, and psychological well-being are all impacted. Stress causes a person to feel different and changes both their body and mind.

Stressful episodes occur to everyone at some point in their lives. Stress is not caused by the circumstances, but rather by how an individual respond to and handles them. What an amazing thing the human mind is. The more intricate human body is commanded and controlled by it. Thinking positively is uplifting and increases self-confidence. They aid in achieving intended objectives. Destructive ideas lead to mood swings, low self-esteem, and other disastrous consequences. Stress can therefore build up and eventually explode like a bottle of compressed gas that was never released if it is not managed in its early phases. [3]

The goal of hypnotherapy is to replace unhealthy thought patterns and stress-related reactions with more constructive ones. The subconscious, the area of our minds that functions automatically and without our awareness, is used to accomplish this.

The art of releasing problematic emotions and feelings is known as hypnotherapy. It is a condition of deep relaxation and attention, similar to a trance. Under hypnosis, the subject is in a subconscious state. When a person is in this subconscious state, their desired objectives or mental state are brought into focus. The individual continues to regurgitate those prescribed notions.

Stress Management

After hypnotherapy, your approach and responses will be different the next time you encounter the same stressful events. A person cannot be hypnotized without their knowledge and agreement, despite popular perception. A hypnotist can help determine the reasons behind stress, how an individual responds to it, provide stress-reduction strategies, and alter the individual's future stress-handling style. It also aids in boosting one's ego.

Hypnosis can be utilized for anything from basic relaxation to more complicated issues like labor pain alleviation. It lowers stress and anxiety, promotes healthy sleep patterns, and provides painless relief from a variety of issues. It also helps people overcome bad habits like smoking, drinking, drug addiction, and overeating, as well as alter behavior and lessen phobias and dread. It increases one's self-confidence and fortitude to confront future challenges head-on. Muscles that are gradually relaxed can aid to restore breathing, sweating, pulse, and blood pressure.

Hypnotherapy is used to treat a variety of mental health issues, including asthma, autoimmune diseases, gastrointestinal irritations, sexual dysfunction, and many more. [4]

Compared to yoga and meditation, hypnosis is a lot faster, simpler, and less expensive practice. It is a very delicate and soothing way to relieve stress. The problem determines how many hypnotherapy sessions are needed. It only takes one hypnosis session to quit smoking. In contrast to herbal treatments, it has no negative side effects, produces long-lasting results, offers a wide range of benefits, and can treat multiple issues at once.

Traditional hypnosis techniques such as Ericksonian approaches, NLP techniques, and neuro-linguistic programming continue to be the foundation of modern hypnosis. By employing metaphors to induce relaxation, the Ericksonian approach produces and intensifies hypnosis. It prepares the subconscious mind for favorable experiences by calming it.

The NLP technique is a more effective way to induce calm by altering the thoughts and situations that typically create tension. Irrational self-inflicted beliefs can be replaced with logical ones with the aid of rational emotional behavioral therapy, or REBT. It is an adjuvant to hypnosis and a very effective way to handle stress.

8.3 Benefits of Hypnosis for Stress Management:

Numerous stress-reduction advantages of hypnosis include increased resilience, sharper attention, and profound relaxation. Hypnotherapy aids in the development of healthy coping strategies, delays the onset of stress, and lessens its physical manifestations by treating the subconscious triggers.

There are several advantages to using hypnosis to relieve stress. People can experience profound relaxation during hypnosis, which makes them feel more at ease and concentrated.

This profound relaxation helps lessen the physical signs of stress, such tense muscles and elevated heart rate. Additionally, by increasing resilience, hypnosis can help people manage a variety of pressures. [5].

8.3.1 Practical Benefits of Hypnotherapy for Stress Management:

A. Including hypnotherapy in a stress-reduction regimen has several advantages:

- **Improved Relaxation:** Stress's physiological effects are offset by hypnosis, which creates a profound state of relaxation. Better sleep, less tense muscles, and an overall feeling of peace can result from this.
- **Better Coping Skills:** Hypnotherapy helps people create healthier coping strategies by gaining access to the subconscious mind. A more optimistic perspective and enhanced emotional resilience may arise from this.

- **Improved Emotional Health:** Hypnotherapy can assist in the processing and release of pent-up emotions that lead to stress. A more balanced emotional state and a stronger sense of wellbeing may result from this.
- **Enhanced Focus and Clarity:** Hypnotherapy can help people focus and think more clearly, which will help them deal with stress in their daily life more skillfully.
- **Enhanced Immune System:** Hypnotherapy can help reduce stress, which strengthens the immune system and increases the body's resistance to diseases and infections.
- **Support for Behavioural Change:** Hypnotherapy is also useful for promoting stress-relieving behaviours like better sleep habits, less substance abuse, and the adoption of healthier lifestyle choices. [6]

8.3.2 Hypnosis Used to Treat Stress:

An initial evaluation, multiple hypnosis sessions, and support are all common components of a stress-reduction hypnosis treatment program. People may be questioned about their experiences, both past and present. A therapist would probably inquire about any previous or ongoing treatments because persistent stress can be a major medical and mental health problem. This allows the therapist to work with other specialists as necessary.

The individual will next collaborate with the therapist to develop a treatment plan and hypnotic suggestions that will best promote stress release using all of this knowledge.

The actual hypnosis sessions come next. Each person will require a different number of sessions. After one or two sessions, some people see positive benefits, while others gain from further treatment.

The therapist will put the patient into a hypnotic state during the first session, assisting them in being deeply relaxed and aware of their surroundings. A therapist can utilize a variety of methods in addition to the ones listed above to alleviate symptoms and deal with the root causes of worry and stress. [7]

8.4 Advantages & Disadvantages of Hypnotherapy for Stress:

There are benefits and drawbacks to using hypnosis to alleviate stress, just like with any other treatment.

Before starting treatment, it's critical to consider and comprehend the advantages and disadvantages.

A. Advantages of Hypnosis for Stress Include:

It is entirely natural: Pharmaceutical therapies are not necessary for hypnosis, which is a natural condition of mental and physical calm. Sleep disruptions, sexual side effects, and dependence are just a few of the unpleasant and sometimes serious side effects that can result from using medications for stress and anxiety.

It works quickly: When undergoing hypnosis treatment, people frequently experience instant alleviation from the symptoms of stress. Stress normally fades when the body and mind are calmed and relaxed. Hypnotic techniques like anchoring, progressive relaxation, and focused breathing can be used to treat them again as needed, even if they recur after a session.

It can fix fundamental problems: As previously said, stress may stem from prior experiences. These incidents may involve mild or large traumas brought on by mishaps, wounds, or abuse. A psychological cure for the root reasons of stress can be found through hypnosis, either by itself or in conjunction with other therapies, depending on the problem. [8]

B. Disadvantages of Hypnotherapy for Stress Include:

Results differ: Not everyone will see the same outcomes from any treatment. Although many people can benefit greatly from hypnotherapy's person-centered approach, the treatment may not always be as successful as it could be. Therefore, if a person is not happy with the first result, they might need to look for more than one hypnotherapist.

Absence of global norms: Hypnotherapy is not governed by any rules. Consequently, hypnotists may offer a range of services and therapies. However, the majority of practitioners follow professional and ethical guidelines. Make certain that your hypnotist is a member of a respectable trade association, such the National Guild of Hypnotists.

Lack of insurance coverage: Treatment using hypnosis may not be covered by many insurance companies, which might lead to out-of-pocket expenses [9].

8.5 Home Uses of Hypnotherapy Techniques:

Self-hypnosis and hypnotic suggestion techniques have become more popular as "life hacks." Self-hypnosis techniques are frequently recommended by hypnotherapists and media sources as a quick way to relax and increase self-confidence.

High degrees of suggestibility are not required for these straightforward methods to be effective, according to researchers, and they occasionally recommend using them in conjunction with specialized therapy at home Trusted Source.

Children's novels are among the unexpected contexts in which hypnotic suggestion has been employed. One book, written by a psychologist with a wealth of experience, uses suggestion tactics to help young infants fall asleep without any further fuss. [10]



Figure 8.1: Nowadays, even some children’s books use suggestion techniques to help the little ones to fall asleep. (Source: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/>)

Many of the mechanics behind hypnosis are still unknown, even though the discipline has been practiced for almost 200 years.

As is frequently the case, the brain is the key, even though its effects could seem to verge on the otherworldly. However, we may still have a way to go before we completely comprehend this fascinating tool known as "hypnosis." [11]

8.6 Types of Hypnosis:

Numerous forms of hypnosis are included in hypnotherapy, each having a distinct method and use.

Traditional hypnosis, Ericksonian hypnosis, and self-hypnosis are the three primary forms of hypnosis, according to Garba, M. H. & Mamman M. et al. 2020, "Hypnosis and Hypnotherapy: The Role of Traditional Versus Alternative Approach."

1. Traditional Hypnosis:

In traditional hypnosis, the patient is placed in a peaceful, trance-like state and given direct instructions and suggestions. This simple technique is frequently applied to problems like addiction, quitting smoking, and changing bad habits. To achieve the intended alteration in behavior or thought patterns, the hypnotist gives authoritative, unambiguous instructions.

2. Ericksonian Hypnosis:

Ericksonian hypnosis, so named in honor of Dr. Milton H. Erickson, induces a trance and encourages transformation via the use of metaphors, stories, and indirect suggestions. Compared to traditional hypnosis, this technique is more nuanced and adaptable, allowing it to be customized to each person's particular experiences and viewpoints. It works especially well for treating more serious psychological problems and fostering introspection and personal development.

3. Self-Hypnosis: Self-hypnosis is the process of achieving a hypnotic state without a hypnotherapist's help. To reinforce beneficial changes, this strategy calls for learning specific relaxation and suggestion techniques that are consistently used. Self-hypnosis enables people to actively participate in their own healing process and is especially helpful for pain management, stress management, and self-improvement. [12]

8.7 Other Types of Modern Hypnosis Include:

1. Cognitive-Behavioral Hypnotherapy (CBH):

Hypnosis and the concepts of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) are combined in cognitive-behavioral hypnotherapy. This method integrates behavioral treatments, hypnotic suggestions, and cognitive restructuring to address both the conscious and unconscious parts of an issue.

CBH is useful for treating anxiety, depression, and a variety of phobias because it assists patients in altering their thought patterns and behaviors through both conscious effort and subconscious reinforcement (Sadat Madani, S. A. & Tavallaii Zavareh, A. et al. 2018, "The Effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Hypnotherapy in Reducing Symptoms and Treatment of Anxiety").

2. Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP):

The process of comprehending and reprogramming the subconscious mind through language and sensory-based methods is known as neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). Although not quite hypnosis, NLP frequently uses hypnotic components to accomplish its objectives. NLP aims to improve communication skills, alter limiting beliefs, and boost individual performance (Serman, C. M. et al. 1990, "Neuro-Linguistic Programming in Alcoholism Treatment"). NLP methods are frequently applied in therapeutic, business coaching, and personal development contexts.

3. Guided Visualization:

Through the use of specific, evocative language, guided visualization produces vivid mental images that promote relaxation and therapeutic transformation. Although guided visualization is comparable to classical hypnosis, it places more emphasis on the development of mental imagery in order to accomplish particular goals. This technique, which makes use of the power of imagination and visualization to bring about change, is frequently utilized for stress reduction, performance improvement, and trauma recovery.

4. Rapid Transformational Therapy (RTT):

According to Raveendran, S. et al. 2021, "Rapid Transformational Therapy (RTT): An Emerging Non-invasive Therapeutic Modality," RTT is a hybrid therapy that blends hypnosis, psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and natural language processing. It has an 80% success rate after three sessions. Designed by Marisa

Peer, RTT seeks to achieve long-lasting transformation by identifying the underlying reasons of a problem in one or two sessions. In order to reinforce the beneficial changes made during the session, the client listens to a customized hypnotic audio every day. [13]

8.8 Applications of Hypnotherapy:

Through the use of the unconscious mind to promote positive transformation, hypnotherapy has a variety of therapeutic applications. Hypnotherapy is a successful treatment for a number of psychological, emotional, and physical disorders by promoting a state of deep relaxation and increased suggestibility. It changes thought patterns, lowers stress, and improves coping mechanisms, making it a flexible tool in the mental health and medical fields (O'Keefe T. et al. 2020, "Clinical hypnotherapy for stopping drug and alcohol addiction: building resilience in clients to reduce relapses and remain clean and sober").



Figure 8.2: Applications of Hypnotherapy (Source: <https://olympicbehavioralhealth.com/>)

- **Anxiety and Stress Management:** By encouraging relaxation and treating the root causes of these issues, hypnotherapy aids in the reduction of stress and anxiety.
- **Depression:** By assisting in the modification of negative thought patterns and the enhancement of mood, it supplements conventional treatments for depression.
- **Phobias and Fear:** Through reprogramming the mind's reaction to particular triggers, hypnotherapy effectively reduces illogical fears and phobias.
- **Chronic Pain Management:** By enhancing pain tolerance and changing how pain is perceived, it aids in the management of chronic pain.
- **Sleep Disorders:** By encouraging relaxation and creating healthier sleeping patterns, hypnotherapy treats insomnia and other sleep disorders.
- **Weight Loss:** By altering bad eating patterns and boosting motivation for a healthy lifestyle, it helps with weight management.
- **Self-Esteem and Confidence:** Through the reinforcement of positive self-beliefs and the reduction of self-doubt, hypnotherapy increases confidence and self-esteem.
- **Trauma and PTSD:** By offering a secure environment for recovery, it aids in the processing of traumatic memories and lessens PTSD symptoms.
- **Physical Health Issues:** The advantages of hypnotherapy for ailments including irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) are acknowledged by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE). [14–15]

8.9 Conclusion:

People can manage their pain, worry, and anxiety with the use of hypnosis. However, keep in mind that medical professionals usually recommend cognitive behavioral therapy or other treatments in addition to hypnosis for certain disorders. With studies demonstrating its efficacy in lowering perceived stress and enhancing coping strategies, hypnotherapy is a potent stress management tool.

Hypnotherapy can assist people in leading more balanced and stress-free lives by encouraging relaxation, improving mental health, and facilitating behavioral change. A flexible and individualized method of stress management that can be customized to fit each person's needs is hypnotherapy.

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