

GHSC

General Hypnotherapy Standards Council

Promoting the Profession – Protecting the Public

GHR

Overseeing the

General Hypnotherapy Register

Promoting Good Practice, Unity & Continuing Development
within the Profession of Hypnotherapy

THE GENERAL HYPNOTHERAPY STANDARDS COUNCIL (GHSC)

The GHSC was initially established in order to offer a facility through which the diverse field of **Hypnotherapy** could collectively work towards the status of **Professional Self-regulation**.

(N.B. This was achieved in December 2010 when the Department of Health supported regulator, the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council - CNHC, accepted the profession into its Federal Regulatory Programme.)

The Council is composed of numerous **Professional Hypnotherapy Organisations and Training Schools** and all are listed on our website at www.GHSC.co.uk. Each member organisation nominates one named person with the authority to act as its **Representative**.

The Council's main areas of responsibility are in setting criteria for the **validation of training courses**, overseeing the criteria for the **ongoing registration of individual practitioners** within the **General Hypnotherapy Register** and enforcing compliance with the **Code of Ethics & Practice** via its **Complaints Procedure**.

THE GENERAL HYPNOTHERAPY REGISTER (GHR)

The GHR is the registering agency for the General Hypnotherapy Standards Council. It was originally established following Department of Health guidelines that each separate Complementary & Alternative Medical Profession (CAM) should have a single, central Register of Practitioners. *(N.B. All GHR therapists registered at practitioner status are now eligible for inclusion within the CNHC's regulatory programme.)*

The Register is composed of ***individual practitioners** and is open to any hypnotherapist who is able to satisfy the criteria with regard to both **training and ongoing requirements** as periodically determined by the GHSC. All Registered Practitioners are required to maintain adequate **Public Liability & Professional Indemnity Insurance** and to accept our published ***Code of Ethics & Practice** and ***Complaints & Disciplinary Procedure**. *(*Available to view on our website).*

What is Hypnosis?

Healing by **trance state** has been acknowledged for centuries and has been observed, in one form or another, in virtually every culture throughout the world. However, the term **'hypnosis'** (from the Greek *-hypnos*, meaning *-sleep*) was only coined around 1840 and remains a somewhat less than accurate description of the experience as, **in most respects, the hypnotic state is entirely dissimilar to sleep**. At our current level of knowledge, the phenomenon cannot be conclusively defined but perhaps a reasonable interim definition might be that: *'Hypnosis is a state of mind, enhanced by (although not exclusively) mental and physical relaxation, in which our subconscious is able to communicate with our conscious mind'*. This state of mind may be brought about either by oneself unaided (self-hypnosis) or with the help of another person. If this other person is a trained professional, who utilises the resultant state to encourage beneficial change to occur, the process is referred to as **'hypnotherapy'**.

What is Hypnotherapy?

Psychological therapy and counselling (collectively referred to as the *-talking therapies*) is the treatment of emotional and psychological disorders, unwanted habits and undesirable feelings, using psychological techniques alone. The aim of all such therapy is to assist people (usually referred to as *clients*) in finding meaningful alternatives to their present unsatisfactory ways of thinking, feeling or behaving. Therapy also tends to help clients become more accepting both of themselves and others and can be most useful in promoting personal development and unlocking inner potential.

Hypnotherapy could be legitimately described as the original psychological therapy and somewhat more contentiously perhaps, as the basis for many of the more recent styles of psychological intervention. There are many forms of psychological therapy but hypnotherapy is distinctive in that it attempts to address the client's **subconscious mind**. In practice, the hypnotherapist often (but not exclusively) requires the client to be in a **relaxed state**, frequently enlists the power of the **client's own imagination** and may utilise a wide range of techniques from **story telling, metaphor or symbolism** (judged to be meaningful to the individual client) to the use of **direct suggestions** for beneficial change. **Analytical techniques** may also be employed in an attempt to uncover problems deemed to lie in a client's past (referred to as the *-there and then*) or therapy may concentrate more on a client's current life and presenting problems (referred to as the *-here and now*). It is generally considered helpful if the client is **personally motivated to change** (rather than relying solely on the therapist's efforts) although a belief in the possibility of beneficial change may be a sufficient starting point.

Regardless of the techniques employed, perhaps the most important thing is that a client should expect to feel comfortable and at ease with their therapist. This is of particular importance in hypnotherapy, in which the value of the treatment is greatly enhanced when

there is confidence in the practitioner. For this reason we recommend that a single session only is initially booked, leaving the client subsequently free to decide if they wish to proceed with more. Unlike many other psychological therapies, hypnotherapy is generally considered to be a **fairly short-term approach** in which beneficial change, if it is to occur, should become apparent within a relatively few sessions.

(N.B. In actual practice, most hypnotherapists will combine hypnotic procedures with other appropriate counselling and therapeutic techniques. Should there be any doubt about the combination of skills utilised in individual cases, the therapist should be asked directly for a further explanation of their preferred therapeutic approaches.)

Who can be hypnotised?

The answer to this question is undoubtedly **virtually everyone**. This claim must, however, be qualified by the observation **that some are more readily hypnotisable than others** and that it will also depend upon one's *willingness* to be hypnotised at the time. This *willingness* will itself depend upon a number of factors, not least of which will be the strength of the person's particular *need* and their *trust* and *confidence* in the therapist concerned. A corollary to this question is: **What level of trance is required in order to achieve a beneficial outcome?** Although there remains some disagreement over the answer, most researchers concur that **the actual level (or depth) of trance experienced does not relate to the beneficial results that might be obtained**. In practice, this means that even where a person feels that they have not been hypnotised, given time (and this is a very important factor), the desired outcome of therapy might yet materialise. This matter of time is especially important in our current society, which has, in many respects, been coerced into believing that gratification of every desire should be instantaneous. Hypnotherapy can be extraordinarily effective but it is not magic.

However, if the right ingredients are present, if the time is right and if a suitable practitioner can be found with whom the client is willing to work, then all their (realistic) goals are achievable.

Who may benefit from Hypnotherapy?

Again, the answer to this question is **virtually everyone**. Given that hypnotherapy can be utilised to access a person's inner potential and that probably no one is performing to their actual potential, then this answer is literally true. However, it is not just *potential* which hypnotherapy is well placed to address but also one's inner resources to effect beneficial *change*. In this regard, it is the innate healing capacity of our own body that may be stimulated by hypnotherapy. Consequently, the list of problems which may be amenable to hypnotherapy is far too long and varied to catalogue but certainly includes: **anxiety, panic, phobias, unwanted habits and addictions (e.g. smoking, overeating, alcoholism), disrupted sleep patterns, lack of confidence and low self-esteem, fear of examinations and public speaking, allergies and skin disorders, migraine and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)**. Additionally, it has proved of value within **surgery**, where normal anaesthetics have not been practical, in the wider sphere of **pain management** and in the areas of both **sporting and artistic performance enhancement**. As an adjunct to other counselling techniques, it can also assist in helping to resolve **relationship difficulties** and be useful within **anger management** strategies.

Although there remain many other areas of human suffering in which hypnotherapy may bring relief, there are instances in which it may be **contra-indicated**. These could include some manifestations of **depressive illness, epilepsy, psychosis (e.g. schizophrenia) and some breathing problems**.

Some Common Concerns

Clients are sometimes concerned that they will lose control in hypnosis. However, general consensus indicates that regardless of how deeply people may go in hypnosis and however passive they may appear to

be, **they actually remain in full control of the situation**. They are fully able to talk if they wish to (or not, as the case may be) and can terminate the session, stand up and leave the room at any time. Neither can a hypnotised person be made to do anything against their usual ethical or moral judgement or religious belief. It is likely that the notion of a loss of control stems from most people's misconception of stage hypnosis, wherein participants are apparently persuaded to perform all manner of (usually foolish) acts. However, the reader should be aware that participation in a stage act is an entirely voluntary process (thus *permission* is already given to the hypnotist) and that there can be no such volunteer who is unaware of exactly what they are letting themselves in for!

Finding a Suitable Hypnotherapist

Every GHR Practitioner is eligible for registration within the Department of Health supported regulator, the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC), and thus contacting a **GHR therapist** should afford clients the necessary confidence to proceed with a full consultation.

Your Local GHR Practitioner's Contact Details:

(Ref. 002)

All queries should be addressed to:

The Registrar

GHR, PO Box 204 LYMINGTON SO41 6WP

E-Mail: admin@general-hypnotherapy-register.com

Web: www.general-hypnotherapy-register.com