

# Hypnosis as part of your psychological treatment

---

Information for children, young people, and families to read together

**Psychological Services  
Child Development and Paediatrics, Children's Assessment Centre  
Kent and Canterbury Hospital  
Ethelbert Road  
Canterbury CT1 3NG**

## What is this leaflet about?

You have been given this leaflet because hypnosis has been suggested as part of your child's or teenager's psychological treatment.

## What is hypnosis?

Hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness. Some people describe hypnosis as a normal state and similar to being very focussed on something. They also say they feel very relaxed and calm. During hypnosis, the mind is more open to suggestion than usual. Because people are open to suggestion while in a hypnotic state, they can learn to change their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour about things they have been finding difficult.

Hypnosis is a natural mental state. Children are often in a state similar to self-hypnosis when they are playing imaginary games or very focussed on activities such as playing electronic games or reading books. Hypnosis is used by people such as actors, musicians, and sportsmen and women to help them perform to their best.



## Hypnosis with children and teenagers

Hypnosis with children was first described in the 18th Century. However hypnosis was rarely used with children after that as it was thought that children could not be hypnotised as well as adults. However in the 1970s, research showed that children were actually more hypnotisable than adults. This created more interest in using hypnosis in the treatment of behavioural and physical problems in children and teenagers.

Individuals differ as to how hypnotisable they are. As with all psychological treatments, hypnosis is more helpful for some children and teenagers than others. However it can generally provide some benefits for everyone.

## What can hypnosis be used for?

Hypnosis is a technique that can be useful as part of a treatment for a variety of problems experienced by children and teenagers. The clinical psychologist you see has received specialist training in hypnosis and may suggest using hypnosis as a part of your psychological treatment.

Hypnosis is used at the centre to treat a number of problems such as:

- chronic (long-term) and acute pain
- emotional difficulties such as anger or anxiety
- sleep problems
- eating problems
- phobias
- behavioural/habit problems
- soiling and wetting.

## What happens in hypnosis?

During hypnosis your psychologist will help you to concentrate and use your imagination. This helps you to become very relaxed and focussed. This is usually called a 'trance' and it is very similar to what we experience in everyday life when we are lost in thought, absorbed in an activity (such as reading, watching sport, playing Xbox or Playstation), or just daydreaming. This trance is simply deeper and more relaxing during hypnosis, and will allow your psychologist to give you suggestions to help you reach your goals or get over your difficulties. In this way, hypnosis can be useful for the treatment of lots of different problems.

## How many sessions will there be?

You will usually have around four to six sessions of hypnosis. As part of your treatment your psychologist may teach you self-hypnosis.

## Who will do hypnosis with me?

Hypnosis is conducted by Nicky Wood, Consultant Clinical Psychologist at the Children's Assessment Centre, Kent and Canterbury Hospital. Nicky has undertaken specialist training in clinical hypnosis at University College London and is experienced in the use of hypnosis as part of psychological treatments with children and young people.

### Will I be taught self-hypnosis?

To make sure that your treatment is as effective as possible, your psychologist may teach you self-hypnosis. This will allow you to increase the effectiveness of your treatment at home and maintain the benefits after your treatment sessions have finished.

### Some common concerns about hypnosis

There are lots of mistaken beliefs about hypnosis. Here are the facts: **hypnosis does not:**

- allow someone to control your mind
- make people forget what has happened
- make people do things against their will.

Your psychologist will discuss and agree with you before your hypnosis what kinds of things you will focus on and imagine. You will not be asked to do anything you do not feel comfortable with. During hypnosis you will still have control over your actions and choices.

### Can I have someone with me when I have hypnosis?

For younger children a parent will often be there during hypnosis. You may also have someone with you if you are older.

### What if I need to move or cough during hypnosis?

Because hypnosis simply involves a particular focussed state of mind, this will not be affected if you need to move, scratch, or cough. Your psychologist might ask you questions and encourage you to speak when using hypnosis.

### What if I fall asleep during hypnosis?

Sometimes when they are very relaxed, some children and young people can fall asleep. If you fall asleep during hypnosis this is absolutely fine; your psychologist will wake you up.

### What if I do not want to have hypnosis?

You do not have to have hypnosis as part of the treatment. If you decide that you do not want this, then you will be offered other treatments to help with your difficulties.

**If you would like to comment for future revisions of this leaflet, please contact the author:**

**Nicky Wood, Consultant Clinical Psychologist  
Telephone: 01227 86 40 38.**

**This leaflet has been produced with and for young people and their families**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)