



Hypnosis as part of your psychological treatment

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

Hypnosis has been suggested as part of your child's psychological treatment. This leaflet explains:

- what hypnosis is, and what it is used for
- what will happen during treatment; and
- what some of the common concerns are about hypnosis.

We hope this leaflet answers some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your consultant clinical psychologist.

What is hypnosis?

Hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness. Some people describe hypnosis as a normal state, where they are 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 of this, people 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 like 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 sports people. Hypnosis helps them perform to their best.

Hypnosis with children and teenagers

Hypnosis with children was first described in the 18th Century. 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 children and teenagers. Especially in the treatment of behavioural and physical problems.

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

Hypnosis is used to treat many problems, such as:

- chronic (long-term) and acute (short-term) pain
- emotional difficulties, such as anger or anxiety
- sleep problems
- eating problems
- phobias (an overwhelming and debilitating fear of an object, place, situation, feeling or animal)
- behavioural / habit problems
- soiling and wetting.

What happens during 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'. 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, or playing Xbox or PlayStation); or
- daydreaming.

The trance is simply deeper and more relaxing during hypnosis. It allows 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 I have?

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 hypnosis with me?

Hypnosis is conducted by a consultant clinical psychologist. Sessions are held at the Children's Assessment Centre at Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

- **Psychological Services**

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

Your psychologist has had specialist training in clinical hypnosis at University College London. They are experienced in the use of hypnosis, as part of psychological treatments with children and young people.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your psychologist.

Will I be taught self-hypnosis?

To make sure that your treatment works as well 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 at the hospital 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 what kinds of things you will focus on and imagine. **They will not ask you to do anything you do not feel comfortable with. During hypnosis you 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?

As hypnosis simply involves a particular focussed state of mind, this is not affected if you need to move, scratch, or cough.

During hypnosis, your psychologist might ask you questions and encourage you to speak.

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 this is 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 not to have hypnosis, you will be offered other treatments to help with your difficulties.

If you have any feedback about this leaflet, please contact your:

- **Consultant Clinical Psychologist**
Telephone: 01227 202305

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring 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 has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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