

Handout 08

for

Basic Hypnosis: HYP100

Abreaction

114 - Abreactions

As a basic hypnosis student, you are not yet skilled enough for abreaction engagement or elicitation for psychoeducational benefits. Turn the abreacting student or volunteer over to a hypnotherapist with a skill set beyond the basic relaxation, deepening, direct suggestions, and emergence of this Basic Hypnosis training.

Abreaction is an emotional reaction to some form of stimulation; external, internal, or both. Severe abreaction is evidenced by screaming, crying, hysterics, intense emotions, nervous twitches and tics, rhythmic movement, rocking or swaying, and possible withdrawal or dissociative behavior. In its most productive form, abreaction allows for a catharsis of some repressed pain or trauma. The release of the tension or trauma holds a potential for healing. An abreaction is more than a simple remembering or recall of an experience, the body tends to display behavior indicating that it is reliving the experience.

The human central nervous system (CNS) has two primary branches, the sympathetic and parasympathetic. The parasympathetic system is a relaxed awareness and functioning the system is functioning in a healthy flow of relaxed well-being. The sympathetic system is fight / flight / freeze / fawn when startled or frightened. Western culture is steeped stories of a human capacity for fight or flight, the capacity for freezing or getting stuck is not a well discussed part of the cultural mythos. The freeze response is an inability to take appropriate action, like an opossum playing dead, or a deer frozen in a headlight. The individual may be shocked, unable to respond.

A triangle of abuse occurs when there is an abuser, an abused, and a witness.

The witness is drawn to take sides. Aligning with the abused creates a potential to be a target of the abuser, and becoming an abused person. The fawning response is yielding to a perceived threat by aligning with a perpetrator of abuse in order to get the sense of being safe from being a target of the abuse.

Identifying Abreaction and Hysteria

A body with an incomplete processing of an unpleasant experience may have undischarged, unstored, energetic memories found in the nervous system that is often most easily observed in the peripheral nervous system (hands, feet, head). Feet that wanted to run and escape, but didn't or don't, may start movement. Hands that wanted to strike or protect, may start tapping, twitching, or clenching. A person may demonstrate hysteria in ungovernable emotional excesses.

You may notice a continuing back and forth rhythmic, circular or elliptical movement of the head, rocking or swaying movement of the body, exaggerated breathing, hands, legs or other body parts moving in a rhythmic and continuing manner. These movements are signs of some unresolved inner trauma. Trauma is a word stemming from the Greek word for "wound".

This class is not intended to teach you how to interact with abreaction to achieve catharsis, those strategies are found in the HYP200 course.

A person demonstrating abreaction is inappropriate for demonstrations of stage show entertainment or simple relaxation demonstrations. These wounded individuals require therapeutic intervention strategies to process their nervous system reactivity.

At this stage of your basic hypnosis training, when you encounter people displaying abreaction, if you are in a classroom setting, send someone for the instructor or the “catcher” for the program. The catcher is an advanced student or former student who is sitting in, or participating. Maintain contact with the abreacting person, do not touch the abreacting person without permission. The only suggestions to give for this basic hypnosis course of direct suggestions are for calming, relaxing, distancing, breathing, stepping back, relaxing, breathing deeply, coming back to the waking state only as fast as it is comfortable to remember to forget that which is not yet fully ready to come forth.

Within a safe bounded and unbounded learning environment providing a sanctuary for all parties to the exchange to be safe, excellent therapeutic unfolding can emerge in an educational setting. Demonstrations of how to work with abreaction are wonderful teaching tools for new hypnotists, and are the standard practice in the additional 150 hours of education following this fifty (50) hour basic hypnosis class.

It is not unusual for my classes and groups to have advanced students and former students / current colleagues attend groups and classes to refresh themselves and to provide service for clients or students who are falling out, in need of something more than basic hypnosis methods to restore the feeling of rest and well-being.

When a student has completed the certification track, with scores of 80% or greater on the exams, they gain access to my classes on a space available basis for

free.

Classes are schedule through 2026.

Artificial Trauma

A good client history can help you can avoid pushing a button on a hidden fear, phobia or allergy.

Responding to Abreaction

(Remain calm. The hypnotized subject is highly sensitive and can sense what you are experiencing. If you are confused or uncertain, they will pull away from your suggestions. Stop giving any more direct suggestions, except for suggestions of calm, self-control, relaxation, peace and well-being until you are more skilled with hypnosis. After the rhythmic motions stop, proceed with induction or suggestions. If movements start again, stop giving suggestions other than ones of relaxation, breathing gently, calming down, emergence, and end trance with a suggestion like:

It's alright to remember to forget. Remember to forget those things that you don't need to know or remember at this time.

(View all experiences as normal. Each individual will experience hypnosis in their own very special way, a way that may be very different from your experience. Cultivate a working relationship with other professionals in the community, and refer these subjects to an appropriate therapist: psychologist, psychiatrist, mental health

Relaxation as an Emotional Outlet

The relaxation of hypnosis provides a natural emotional outlet. A subject may be perfectly normal until they enter hypnosis. Should the subject begin to toss or turn or do any repetitive action, you are exposing an emotional energy that is seeking release. By the time most people become adults, they have learned to control and put their less acceptable quirks, social deviances, and idiosyncrasies, particularly in public settings, into a quiet place within. The natural capacity for deep relaxation allows squished down emotions, feelings and perceptions to be identified, and perhaps freed for more productive purposes.

Lethargy

(When the subject does not respond to suggestions or remains indifferent during the session, include in the emergence suggestions:)

"All the new ideas, thoughts or feelings triggered by the experience being assimilated, collated, correlated and filed away in the warehouse of learning for future use in positive, powerful, life affirming ways that surprise and delight you. Each and every time you practice hypnosis you go deeper and faster than the time before."

(Give the subject a self-hypnosis recording and, if they are interested, recommend reading to continue the developmental process of self-discovery. The subject's level of desire for change is going to impact his or her outcomes.)