



**COMMON LANGUAGE for PSYCHOTHERAPY (clp) PROCEDURES**  
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## HYPNOSIS

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Definition: Change in consciousness via inductive procedures - verbal and non-verbal, direct and indirect.

Elements: Hypnosis induces deep relaxation while subjects continue contact with their therapist's voice and own subconscious and ignore other bodily sensations and surrounding sounds. It allows regression and vivid reliving of past experiences while feeling reassured without distress related to those experiences. Trance is induced by the therapist speaking in a modulated and monotonous tone.

Related Procedures: Direct or indirect suggestion, imagery induction, muscle relaxation, visualisation.

References:

1. Erickson MH (1967) *Advanced techniques of hypnosis and therapy: selected papers of Milton H Erickson*. Grune & Stratton, New York (1st edition)
2. Thuillier J (1996) *Mesmer o l'estasi magnetica*, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, Milano. ISBN 88-17-11665-3
3. Rossi E (1986, 1993 2nd Edition). *The Psychobiology of Mind-Body Healing: New Concepts of Therapeutic Hypnosis*. W W Norton, New York
4. Loredio C, Nardone G, Watzlawick P, Zeig JK (2002) *Strategie e stratagemmi della psicoterapia*, Franco Angeli, Milano

Applications: To reduce mental or physical discomfort, including pain and chemotherapy side effects, and to aid problem-solving.

1st Use? Mesmer (1773 cited by Thuiller 1996), Erickson (1967).

Case Illustration 1. A professional woman aged 45 complained of a difficult relationship, bulimia, and a recently distressing but vague memory of past abuse by her father. The memory made her feel "dirty" and made unacceptable the image of her father who had died many years earlier. She agreed to relive the experience during an in-session hypnotic trance. During 3 sessions she became used to being hypnotised. She was then regressed to the time of the abuse. While the patient spoke of the abuse the therapist added reassuring elements (e.g. whatever might happen, the patient was an adult in the therapist's office). When she and her father had been in bed together after returning from the hospital where her mother was a patient, her father had caressed her while he was asleep, and it was the only time it had happened. She felt guilty about her pleasure felt from his involuntary innocent caresses. Once the trance was over, she felt relieved and aware of having done nothing wrong.

Case Illustration 2. A widow complained of the inexplicable onset of anorgasmia. Some years after her husband died she began a new and satisfying love affair. In therapy session 1 she relived her last sexual intercourse in a hypnotic trance in order to identify the exact moment when the orgasmic response got blocked. She was a good hypnotic subject and vividly relived her last sexual intercourse with feelings linked to her

relationship with her new partner. This enabled her to understand reasons for the block. She said that just before orgasm her new partner's face looked like that of her late husband, which instantly inhibited her excitement. Later in the session, through "fading", appropriate suggestions gradually replaced her late husband's face with the face of her current partner. This removed the problem permanently.