

Hypnotherapy/Coaching & the Dentist

Hypnotherapy combines hypnosis (trance) with cutting-edge research on how the brain works to set up mental and physical changes in how we think and act. Modern neuroscience has estimated that up to 90% of our behaviour is in fact generated unconsciously. The mind is hugely powerful and since the mind and body are intrinsically connected, how we think and feel has great impact on how our bodies react. Therefore issues such as how we cope with any difficulties and problems that come up - such as going to the dentist for some -how we can remain positive and relaxed in such a situation, are issues that can be greatly helped by hypnotherapy and coaching.

Trance is a natural state we go into when we are relaxed or on 'auto pilot' – ever wondered how you got from your house to work? – since your mind has 'switched off'. Nevertheless, the 'switched off' mind is still in control. It does what the traffic lights say, you still get on the train/bus. In the same way the deeply relaxed hypnotherapy client remains in control at all times but, because the hypnotist has calmed and relaxed their mind, they are receptive to new ideas on how to deal with problems, so increasing the power of positive thoughts.

In a similar fashion, coaching, which deals more in words and ideas, can be highly effective in dealing with a lack of confidence, enabling clients to manage anxiety and stress much more effectively at the dentist. They are free to choose which discipline, or a combination of the two, would be most beneficial for them.

Our beliefs can either limit and hold us back, or enable and take us forward. We all have both sets of beliefs. For example:

Limiting belief: "I've never been any good at that"

Enabling belief: "I can have a go at learning how to do that"

Limiting belief: "I'm hopeless at the dentist – I just fall apart"

Enabling belief: "The dentist is a challenge that I can learn how to cope with"

Limiting belief: “The pain is so bad”

Enabling belief: “Once the injection is in, there is discomfort rather than pain”

Coaching can challenge intellectually limited beliefs, allowing the client to discover more enabling, positive beliefs, while hypnotherapy can alter or change, existing beliefs and embed enabling, positive beliefs in the deeply relaxed and receptive mind of the client.

The power of having positive thoughts is an essential component of success. When you have a positive thought this impulse causes the brain to release serotonin, the ‘feel good’ chemical that gives you the feeling of happiness and wellbeing. Such thoughts are transmitted from one brain cell to another. If however, the thoughts you are having are negative, the chemical triggered is cortisone, which gives you a feeling of sadness and depression, limiting the flow of positive thoughts and ideas.

Hypnotherapy is particularly successful at assisting with disempowering pain that can make you feel isolated and afraid. As a double cancer survivor, who had major surgery that has left me in constant pain, I can personally state this to be true. Drugs numb the brain, making a normal life difficult, but I discovered in hypnotherapy an empowering tool that keeps me in control, since it provides effective methods of dealing with pain, anxiety and stress. Successful Hypnotic Interventions include:

- Creating an ‘anchor’ - the memory of a deeply peaceful/joyful experience that you can recreate in your mind in a moment
- Methods of changing the colour, shape and texture of the pain
- Fooling the brain into thinking that all is well and you are not in pain, by blocking the ‘flight or fight’ responses to stress
- The creation of a positive phrase e.g. “I can do this”

- Creating deep relaxation, which by its very nature gives you the opportunity to be calm and peaceful, thus creating a state of mind in which the power of pain is greatly reduced

So it is the case that the drug-free techniques and the relaxation of hypnotherapy and coaching can greatly improve your mental state, which leads to a greatly improved ability to deal with any problems or difficulties and the reduction of pain, anxiety and stress. It increases the positive, empowering nature of your thoughts and therefore the quality of the experience that you have at the dentist.

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Duration and cost:

£ 65 a session; Senior citizens and those receiving benefits, £ 40. This cost includes our initial discussion on what you want to deal with, when having set a date for a session, you will receive my relaxation CD. You will also receive following a session a personalised CD which addresses your particular issues in hypnotic language, which can be played before and during your dental appointment.

Neither hypnotherapy or coaching is intended to be a long-term therapy. Every client is different so it is difficult in advance to say how many sessions you might need. However, the ability to deal with anxiety and pain better are areas that would normally take between 1 – 3 sessions.

Practical ways of setting this up:

- I can run sessions at the surgery/practice/organisation if space permits. This would incur a room hire fee
- Information about this service can be advertised on a board, through the website (including appropriate articles) of the surgery
- I can leave cards, booklets etc. advertising and explaining the service
- Referrals to my private practice can be made by the professionals at the surgery. A percentage of the fee paid for the service could be paid to the referring agency

Any number of these strategies could be combined