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Hypnotherapy and Focusing

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1 What is hypnotherapy anyway?

A short definition of hypnotherapy is that hypnotherapy is a method of giving voice to the subconscious, with both the hypnotherapist and the client witnessing what the subconscious has to say. The hypnotherapist's major role in this process is to guide the client, based on pre-induction information, to pace the resulting dialog, and to assist in the translation between the language of the subconscious and the language of the conscious.

2 In what language does the subconscious talk?

The subconscious talks in terms of metaphors, symbols, and archetypes which the hypnotherapy needs to recognize and work with to help guide the client. As the classical hypnotherapist is trained in these symbols and archetypes, s/he is able to translate the metaphorical meaning from the subconscious to an objective meaning for the conscious. As the hypnotherapist expects this form of dialog, s/he recognizes it when it is spoken, and assists in limiting translational errors.

3 How is a hypnotherapy session similar to a focusing session?

Focusing	Hypnotherapy
Bring Awareness into body	Induction/Deepening/finding right depth
Invite a felt sense	Metaphorically open doorway to subconscious
Getting a handle	Recognizing archetypes / symbols
Being there	Guiding / Pacing
Ending	Return to normal consciousness, reentry

4 What skill sets are unique to focusing and to hypnotherapy?

Focusing	Hypnotherapy
Finding the right distance /	
Finding the right inner relationship	Finding the right depth
Acknowledging	Joining their world
Resonating	Synchronizing

5 What are some of the strengths of the different modalities?

Focusing	Hypnotherapy
Partitioning issue	imbedded suggestions
Distancing	Archetypes
Strong Pacing	strong guide
Handle	holograms
Images	archetypes
Giving voice to nuance	drawing through barriers
SomeTHING	ANYthing
Not needing naming	getting to names via symbols
Bringing to present	transcending time

6 What are some of hypnotherapy's strengths relative to focusing?

Hypnotherapy is a therapy modality that can be used in either a directive or non-directive format. As it often relies on guiding the client to work directly on a presented issue, the client often after a session has a feeling of having accomplished work that they set out to work on, such as smoking cessation, weight control, or understanding why they behave in certain situations as they do. During the therapy session, the hypnotherapist often acts as an intuitive guide, gently holding a safe, specific emotional and trance space for the client, helping the client to hear internal voices that they have been unable up to this time to hear. As the hypnotherapist is trained in meanings of symbols and archetypes, s/he is quite aware of these as they come up in session, can recognize their significance, and use these for further guidance within the session and afterward. Also, the hypnotherapist can use symbols and archetypes as part of their guidance when talking to the subconscious, bypassing the working brain to translate words to images for the subconscious to understand.

7 What are some of focusing strengths relative to hypnotherapy?

One of the major strength that focusing has is the orientation on working with the un-labelable, what focusers often refer to as a "felt sense". Although hypnotherapy has approaches for this, it is one of the primary tenets of focusing. In addition to working with the felt sense, focusers tend to become adept at working with the attributes and interactions with people having these felt senses, and with the felt sense's inter and inner relations with people.

8 What could hypnotherapists learn from focusing?

Hypnotherapists generally work from the initial conversation with the client about the presenting issue that the client brings to the session. Often, of course, the session goes to "where it needs to go" and is directed by the client with the help of an observant hypnotherapist, however, even when directed by the client, the hypnotherapist generally works to bring forward metaphors and symbols from within the client's subconscious and works with these.

While this works very efficiently and allows a very powerful modality for the hypnotherapist, the client oftentimes does not have a good label for what they feel or for what the subconscious wants to tell the client. It is at this point that the hypnotherapist can take advantage of the richness of the felt sense and the "it-ification" of feelings and emotions, which do not have describable names. Using focusing approaches in these situations allow the hypnotherapist to keep the client in session without needing to name the un-nameable, and thus break the flow of the session.

Another technique that is helpful here is the art of working in the light trance state. Focusers become adept at interacting with their client in a very light trance. Hypnotherapists often recognize the value in working in the lightest level of trance possible where the client can still perform their processing. With focusing training, and with an understanding of how to work with felt senses, the hypnotherapist can work more effectively at lighter levels of trance.

Much of hypnotherapy is performed from a guiding/directing approach, with pacing as the compensating/listening part of a cycle. Even when working directly with a presented issue that the client wants to present, the hypnotherapist with focusing training can have a different approach in recognizing the value of using the pacing as the primary mode, with guiding used to keep the session on-client-requested track.

One last point here is that of the value of expanding the felt sense to other senses for the hypnotherapist. S/he could just as easily use felt sense as heard sense, smelt sense, or any other of the various senses, including using intuitive senses.

9 What could focusers learn from hypnotherapy?

Focusers could learn that they are performing light trance work. In doing this, and in their inner relationships that focusers are co-creating with their clients, focusers need to understand the power of metaphor, and of symbols, and how to use them and recognize them during their sessions. Understanding these metaphors and symbols will allow the focuser a fuller recognition of the implications of what the client is saying from the felt sense's point of view, and can help with a richer repertoire of gentle suggestions for the interactions of the client and their felt senses.

Another important point here is that as focusing is a form of light trance work, the focuser needs to understand the potential for leaving post-focusing suggestions with the client. The client will hear the suggestions the focuser gives him/her and incorporates them at a deep subconscious level. This is another reason for the focuser to apply qualifiers such as "perhaps you could sense..." or "you might ... if it feels right for you" in that with the qualifiers, the focuser receives non-directive suggestions which will tend not to linger past the end of the session.

Focusers should learn the concepts of embedded suggestions, as in trance-work, embedded suggestions are as powerful as directed suggestions. An example of an embedded suggestion can be found on a Starbucks coffee container. At the bottom one can read "Caution: the beverage you are about to enjoy can be extremely hot". The conscious mind reads this and extracts the message that the beverage can be hot. The subconscious mind reads the embedded suggestion that the beverage will be enjoyable.

Focusing is supposed to be mostly pacing, but inadvertently may become guiding by the use of embedded suggestions which the guide is unaware they are using due to lack of training in linguistic analysis of embedded meanings within words and phrases. As focusers understand the power of their words on a session, they need to understand how and when they are using these embedded suggestions.

10 Conclusion

Both of these modalities are similar, yet different. However, in many ways, they tend to overlap. Each modality can learn from the other by analyzing strengths of each and usefulness across modality lines. By understanding both, we can serve our client better by giving them a richer secession each time they see us.

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