



Hypnosis can help people overcome a variety of issues, including addictions to nicotine and prescription drugs.

## Using the Subconscious Mind to Overcome Addiction

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Beneath the hormones, proteins, electricity, and neurons that make up the wiring of the human brain, lies the force that makes our minds work. This force is still an enigma, but we do know that our minds play a powerful role in causing and curing our addictions.

Dr. Kazi Anam started working with the principles of hypnosis to help himself succeed in college. Later, while working as a licensed pharmacist, he began looking for ways to help his patients more, and the search led him to become a health coach and certified hypnotherapist. Dr. Anam explained how hypnotherapy can help people overcome a number of addictions.

**Q.** How does hypnosis help people overcome addiction? Have you treated prescription drug addictions?

**A.** Hypnosis is a very effective way to combat all types of addictions including prescription drug addiction. Results can be seen within days and weeks instead of months and years. However, hypnosis is vastly underused, mainly due to misconceptions about it.

When a person is under hypnosis, a hypnotist can directly communicate with their subconscious mind bypassing the conscious or critical mind that would question the validity of a particular suggestion.

Our conscious mind always questions validity of any suggestion. Let's say a person hates to eat vegetables. If the suggestion, "Now you love vegetables," is given without hypnosis to his/her conscious mind, the conscious mind will reject it immediately with the response, "No, I hate vegetables."

However, under hypnosis the barrier of the conscious mind is not there to question the validity of the suggestion. Once this suggestion is anchored in the subconscious mind, the person will actually start to love vegetables.

Similarly if the suggestion, "Now you will reject all drugs. You have no craving for drugs," is given to a drug addict, it will be questioned by the conscious mind, which will say, "No I like drugs." But under hypnosis the barrier of the conscious mind is not there to question the validity of the suggestion.

However, if an improper suggestion is given, something that is immoral or does not go along with the values of the person, it will not be accepted by the subconscious mind. For instance, if a suggestion like, "You will now rob a bank" is given, it will be rejected by the subconscious.

To help someone overcome addiction, a good hypnotist will neutralize or help eliminate the root cause and then give direct suggestions to create images that become permanently anchored within the subconscious mind.

Let's say someone has a fear of elevators. This fear is deeply rooted to a cause. Maybe in their life they got stuck in an elevator at an early age and developed this phobia or they knew someone who got stuck in the elevator.

A hypnotherapist will take the person back to the moment when this event took place and then neutralize the fear in that particular scene. This would eliminate the root cause.

Root causes for addictions include stress, poor self-image, frustration, insecurity, feeling out of control, anxiety, relationship problems, career issues, and financial insecurity. Sometimes a shy or timid person might do alcohol or drugs to feel bold and outgoing.

If these root causes are not neutralized then it is very hard to obtain successful and lasting results.

Each type of addiction needs to be addressed in a different way. When treating individuals with prescription drug addiction, it is important for the hypnotist to work with the prescribing physician and generally use of these drugs needs to be reduced over a given period of time.

This gradual tapering off of the dose of a particular drug minimizes withdrawal effects, which could be severe.

**Q.** What are some common misconceptions people have about hypnosis treatment?

**A.** In general, most people have the misconception that under hypnosis, they will be fully controlled by the hypnotist. This stems from the way hypnotists are often portrayed in movies and other media. They imagine that the hypnotist will make them bark like a dog or make them do bizarre things. Most likely they have seen some type of stage hypnosis, where things are done for fun. In reality, all hypnosis is self-hypnosis, and a person never loses control or consciousness.

Under hypnosis, a person is very relaxed and their brain waves are of the alpha type, a lower brain wave. Our conscious mind produces waves of the beta type. In clinical hypnosis or medical hypnosis, everything is done just like in any other professional setting.

**Q.** What else is involved in treatments besides just hypnosis sessions?

**A.** Usually, it involves some direct actions. For instance, a smoker looking to quit will be advised to remove all cigarettes and lighters from his or her home. They will need to read some affirmations on a daily basis. In addition, for the first 30 days, they will need to listen to the recording of the hypnosis session. Opinions vary about this, but in my experience, I find that this minimizes the number of sessions required to overcome a particular addiction and prevents relapse.

**Q.** When and where did hypnosis as a medical treatment begin?

**A.** Actually, western scientists first became aware of hypnosis when Frank Mesmer—a physician from Austria—started investigating an effect he called mesmerism. However, James Braid, a Scottish surgeon (1795–1860), is regarded by many to be the first genuine hypno-

therapist and the father of modern hypnotism.

In 1955, the British Medical Association approved the use of hypnosis in the areas of psychoneuroses and hypnoanesthesia for pain management in childbirth as well as surgery.

At the same time, the British Medical Association also advised all physicians and medical students to receive fundamental training in hypnosis. In 1958, the American Medical Association approved the medical use of hypnosis.

**Q.** Anything else we should know?

**A.** In addition to its uses in the medical field, hypnosis can be used to improve many facets of personal development such as: public speaking, stage performance, overcoming procrastination, attaining success and wealth, better memory, concentration, work performance, sports enhancement, etc.

Many celebrities, business executives, and other professionals routinely use hypnosis to their benefit. Although the general public is becoming aware of this powerful tool, it will take some time before it is widely accepted.

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