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Hypnotically Enhanced Treatment For Addictions: Alcohol Abuse, Drug Abuse, Gambling, Weight Control And Smoking Cessation

Hypnotically Enhanced Treatment for Addictions

Alcohol Abuse, Drug Abuse, Gambling, Weight Control, and Smoking Cessation



Joseph Tramontana, PhD



Synopsis

There is a dearth of literature and training experiences on the use of hypnosis in the treatment of alcohol abuse/problem drinking, drug abuse, and gambling. This book offers new strategies, techniques, and scripts for use with problem drinkers, alcoholism, drug addiction, and gambling addiction in an outpatient population. It also reviews old and new techniques or combinations of techniques, strategies, and scripts for other addictions. Five key addictions are addressed: alcohol abuse and dependency, drug abuse and addiction, gambling compulsions/obsessions and addictions, tobacco addiction (including cigars, pipes and chew), food addiction/compulsions. Many of the techniques and strategies incorporate a variety of therapeutic modalities, including: cognitive-behavioral techniques, reframing and other NLP techniques, systematic desensitization, covert sensitization, 12-step-programs, guided imagery and meditation, and more. The techniques described can be employed both in and out of trance. Chapter I is an overview of how the author does hypnosis and how he orients new patients to his approaches. Chapter II deals with alcohol abuse and problem drinking using two different models: abstinence and moderation management. Chapters III and IV focus on drug abuse and pathological gambling. Chapters V and VI deal with smoking cessation and weight loss. While much is already written in these two areas, the author presents some novel approaches to packaging the sessions, along with his own approaches to treating these problems. Chapter VII offer conclusions. In summary, all of the strategies, techniques, and scripts herein have to do with helping clients take more effective control of their lives.

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Customer Reviews

A truly practitioner oriented book written in first person, the author takes you through a personal journey of treating addictions using hypnosis, integrating cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, and neuro-linguistic programming approaches. Beginners and advanced practitioners, alike, will find the book 'user friendly' with plenty of metaphors, stories, scripts, and techniques. --V. K. Kumar, PhD, professor, West Chester University of PA

This is the book I've been waiting for. Dr. Tramontana has distilled his years of experience as a psychologist and hypnotherapist to create a concise guide that every therapist will want to use to enhance his or her practice and help addictive patients get well. It is a must read for every conscientious therapist. --Bruce N. Eimer, PhD, ABBP, author of *Hypnotize Yourself Out of Pain Now!*

It is surprising that so little has been written about hypnosis for treating addictions, since it has been so successful in treating other refractory medical and mental disorders. Dr. Tramontana uses it skillfully, and his strategy and scripts are easy to follow. --Dabney M. Ewin, MD, past president of ASCH, author of *Ideomotor Signals for Rapid Hypnoanalysis*

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Joseph Tramontana, PhD has been a Licensed Clinical Psychologist for 38 years and is a long-standing member of the American, Mississippi, and Louisiana Psychological Associations. He received Certification in Clinical Hypnosis from the American Society for Clinical Hypnosis, and has been using these techniques in his practice for the past 30 years.

Joseph Tramontana's Hypnotically Enhanced Treatment for Addictions is good as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. For example, on p. 60 he alludes to the role of personality "parts" (or subpersonalities) in problem behavior (specifically gambling), but he does not otherwise develop the idea of using ego-state therapy or "parts therapy" to address clients' ambivalence and inner conflicts

regarding their addictions and self-defeating habits. He touches briefly (on p. 2) on the potential use of hypnosis as a natural alternative to getting high or experiencing altered states through drugs, but again does not really develop this aspect. (Bart J. Walsh called such use of hypnosis "Utilization Sobriety.") Also, the excerpts from his hypnotic scripts and patter reflect a tendency to impose specific imagery instead of allowing clients to generate their own in what Roy Hunter calls "open-screen imagery". I also wonder if the sessions he devotes to hypnotic reinforcement of the 12 steps of AA (see pp. 27-33) would be better spent training clients in hypnotic relaxation for voluntary tension reduction, effecting therapeutic desensitization to their "triggers," and facilitating inner conflict resolution (i.e. overcoming ambivalence through the aforementioned "parts" or ego-state therapy). Still, the book has many merits. Dr. Tramontana admits that over time he adapted and expanded his approach to include those clients who were not receptive to 12-step groups or group therapy (see pp. 2-3). His methods draw on the ideodynamic hypnotherapy of Leslie LeCron and David Cheek. Moreover, he deserves credit for recognizing and promoting the value of using hypnosis in addiction treatment at all. It seems strange to me that hypnosis has been so underutilized in this field when several factors make it such a good fit: Aspects of addictive thinking and relapse behavior are themselves functional--or rather dysfunctional--equivalents of trance (see Dennis Wier's work on "Pathological Trance and Addiction."); hypnosis helps clients bypass their intellectualization (and other defenses) to gain access to emotion, imagination and creativity; and hypnosis has a recognized role in addressing many of the issues that complicate addiction recovery, such as anxiety, pain, trauma, ambivalence, and inadequate ego strength. As Tramontana says, ". . . the nature and manifestation of addiction is complex and multifaceted. Fortunately, hypnosis is an approach--used alone or in tandem with other paradigms--that is flexible, permissive, and non-threatening, giving the therapist the power to address a wide range of variables and offer relief" (p. 114). Other topics Tramontana discusses include using regression and uncovering techniques to identify and release the emotional residue of past experiences that interfere with addiction recovery, and hypnotic behavioral rehearsal (similar to imaginal rehearsal or "future pacing") for practicing new skills. He describes hypnosis as an altered state of consciousness when introducing it to clients, and he outlines its use in addressing "issues that . . . seem intractable to other approaches" (p. 17). This book is definitely not the last word in using hypnotherapy with addicted persons, nor is it even as thorough as I had hoped it would be. However, I would still recommend it as providing a useful starting point and suggestions for hypnotically enhancing addiction treatment.

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