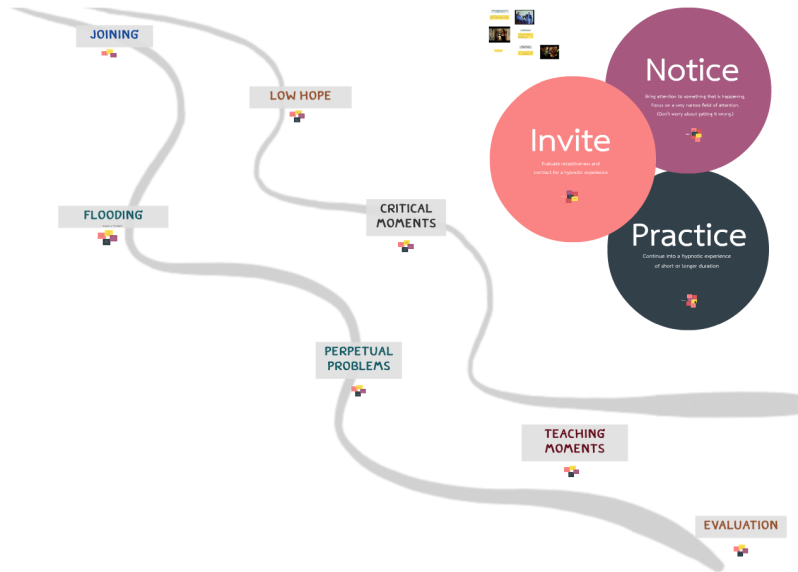


BEING HYPNOTIC IN COUPLE THERAPY, PART I



In this workshop we will create a laboratory where we can discover together what each of us already knows about couple therapy and about being hypnotic. You may be surprised to find that mixing those components with a simple framework will help you step easily into being more and more hypnotic in the intense, rambunctious, micro-moments of couple therapy.

BEING HYPNOTIC VS DOING HYPNOSIS

Being hypnotic means knowing that the capacity for being absorbing, engaging, and influential doesn't only happen when formal induction takes places. Being hypnotic simply means incorporating hypnotic principles into one's very way of being, and is revealed through each interaction." (Yapko, 2001, p. 26)

LEARNING GOALS

- 1) Notice and attend carefully to those moments in a couple therapy session that are doorways/opportunities for being hypnotic;
- 2) Skillfully invite partners in the couple into that experience, with or without formal induction;
- 3) Access and effectively use hypnotic tools that enhance their ability to create experiences of hope and change.



Invite

Evaluate receptiveness and contract for a hypnotic experience



Notice

Bring attention to something that is happening.
Focus on a very narrow field of attention.
(Don't worry about getting it wrong.)



Practice

Continue into a hypnotic experience
of short or longer duration



Notice

Bring attention to something that is happening.
Focus on a very narrow field of attention.
(Don't worry about getting it wrong.)

BODY LANGUAGE

- Breathing out audibly
- Mirroring body posture
- Exaggerating body posture
- Understating body posture
- Moving toward
- Showing emotion

COMMENT

- "Wow. I'm taking that in."
- "That's a lot."
- "I'm feeling the intensity."

DESCRIBE

I noticed your arms cross and what looked like frustration cross your face."

"This looks like a place that gets stuck for the two of you."

REPEAT KEY WORDS

"Completely hopeless."

"Like climbing a mountain."

"Alone."

ASK

Did you feel a shift there?" (positive or negative)

Do you notice how the conversation just changed?

"Is this how it usually goes?"

"It felt like we added on a new feeling there.

Did you feel a change?"

WONDER

"I wonder if this is something important"

Invite

Evaluate receptiveness and
contract for a hypnotic experience

WONDER

"What would it be like to
pay attention to that signal?"

"How does it feel to notice more about
your experience right now?"

ASK

"Could we take a moment to explore that feeling (image)?"

"Would you be willing to (go deeper into or notice) what is
happening between you right now?"

"Would you be interested in exploring a way to help
yourselves in these moments?"

"Would you be interested in experiencing yourself doing that
easily and well?"

DESCRIBE

"Yes, you can allow your attention to turn inside to help you
notice what is most important."

Yes, it's okay to take as long as you need
to notice what is happening and what needs to happen."

"As you laugh your bodies soften and change."

DIRECTIVE

"Let your mind take in the message your body is sending."

"Let an image of this problem come to you from a deep place."

"Let's pay attention to what is happening here."

STORY / METAPHOR

"That reminds me of another couple who remembered how to have fun together. The change began just as it is beginning for you now."

"Have you ever had the experience of..."

"Do you have an image or picture of how things (are or will get better) for the two of you?"

Practice

Continue into a hypnotic experience
of short or longer duration

TAKE THE INVITATION AND
"SPREAD OUT"

ENCOURAGE EXPLORATION AND DEEPENING

CONSIDER A CUE TO RE- ENTER THIS EXPLORATION

"And every time you...
you can be aware of
(or remember, or feel) ..."

CON

Im

CONSIDER PRACTICING PRACTICING

Imagine practicing new things at home

"Can each partner perform
the desired response within
the appropriate
context?" (Yapko)

CONSIDER A POST-HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION

Can they carry the session or a
feeling from the session with them?

INVITE REFLECTION

"What was that like?"

"What did you notice?"

"What seemed most important?"

"How did that feel?"

JOINING



PACING

Intensity, speed, language (vocabulary), use of humor (or not)

"I'm here playing very
close attention" (Weisberg,
Clavel, and others)

"I'm here playing very
close attention" (Weisberg,
Clavel, and others)

MIRRORING BODY LANGUAGE

REFRAMING WITH IMPLIED SUGGESTIONS

"We fight all the time and don't feel close,"

could be reframed back as:

"So as we reduce fighting and increase your closeness we'll know we are on the right track."

"I don't know if I love him any more,"

could be reframed back as:

"So it might be important to uncover what is blocking (has blocked) your love for him."

LOW HOPE



REFRAME

Explore parts of self that want the marriage and parts of self that are stuck (normalize ambivalence)

Develop cues or metaphors for breaking down problems into manageable steps

Reframe fears as challenges to be overcome (Rossi)

Systemic reframe--changing a part changes the whole

"As change begins it doesn't matter how, who goes first..."

MENTAL REHEARSAL

Access helpful characteristics and qualities from the past
(being one's best self)

Imagine using resources to handle a situation well

Imagine long-term results of handling a situation well

Imagine possible impediments to handling a situation well and
work with those impediments

TIME DISTORTION

Retrieve memories of overcoming difficult challenges--
what it felt like before, during, and after the challenge

Revivify a pleasant couple experience from the past

Evoke a neutral feeling and imagine having the ability to
watch curiously as the future unfolds

Evoke a future after the problem is better or gone

STRENGTHEN COMMITMENT TO PRACTICE

Share stories about couples who made it
(and how they began their first steps)

Sharing stories about the importance of repetition and practice

Imagine doing positive steps (e.g. couple time)

Visualize one positive action that 1) you are ok doing, and 2)
that you know your partner would appreciate

Imagine returning to the next session feeling good
about your actions

FLOODING

(Couple or Therapist)



SYMPTOM AS A SIGNAL

(Rossi)

Identify thoughts or sensations that are important signals needing attention

Create cues ("when... then...") that lead to self-care (such as time out, time with friends, food, exercise, body-scan, breathing, meditation, or self-hypnosis)

SOOTHE THE BODY

Drop the thoughts--and attend to body sensations

Notice places with tension

Notice fight/flight/freeze urges

Breathing

Muscle relaxation

Cultivate the ability to notice emotion

and then soothe the body

Solidify a "neutral" touch point for each partner

SOOTHE THE MIND

Notice automatic thoughts

Slow the process down (like a pitch coming in more slowly)

Notice emotion without catastrophizing

Neutral or positive self-talk

Develop strategies to replace rumination

"Imagine that your efforts right now keep you on a path to a better future"

EGO STRENGTHENING

Circle of support

Images of security

Safe place

Positive self-talk and self-imagery

Mental rehearsal

CRITICAL MOMENTS



EXPLORING

Evoking longing/deep needs
Noticing a pattern (that works or doesn't work)
Normalizing and encouraging differentiation

ATTACHMENT

Evoking positive memories of connection
Imagining what is needed for partner
Imagining what is needed for ourselves
Empathy for partner and his or her vulnerabilities
Empathy for ourselves and our own vulnerabilities

TOLERANCE

Notice and explore affective bridges to past events/
people/feelings to increase understanding and empathy
(for yourself or your partner)
Explore feelings (yours or your partner's) without
prematurely moving away from it

NON-DEFENSIVENESS

Finding neutrality

(grounded--"I'm loveable," mental space, curiosity,
interest)

Regulation of self in conflict

(How can I help myself?)

Regulation of partner in conflict (How can I help?)

PERPETUAL PROBLEMS



WORK WITH THE BODY

Notice where the reaction is in the body

Allow the reaction/feeling and explore it

Allow the feeling and toggle between that feeling
and a part of the body that is neutral

REFRAME

Mental normalization

Looking at the problem in a new way

Creating a symbolic representation of the problem
(and working with the symbol)

Problem as a signal for a new behavior (tolerance,
negotiation, self-care, time-out)

SOFTENING

Looking at partner (eyes open hypnosis)

and remembering positive attributes

Separating the irritating (or hurtful) parts from the understandable parts (Atkinson)

Remembering our own imperfection and partner imperfection with compassion

MENTAL REHEARSAL

Imagine handling the situation well

Imagine long-term results of handling the situation well

Imagine possible impediments to handling the situation well and work with those impediments

TEACHING MOMENTS



EXPLAIN

Explain the new habit

Use examples and metaphors (induction)

RESPONSE

Explore the story/stories elicited by your examples
Explore the emotional response: "And when you picture yourself doing this habit what do you feel?"

PREPARATION FOR ACTION

Mentally rehearse what was taught
Evoke concerns/problems and address in hypnosis

REINFORCEMENT

Picture a positive outcome:
"Imagine what it will be like when you are able to do this consistently"

EVALUATION



EXPERIENCE OF SESSION

"How was it to be here
exploring how to increase your connection?"

EVALUATE

"Take a moment and sink back into this session. Is
there anything we need to do differently next time
to make it more helpful?"

PREPARATION FOR ACTION

"Let's take a moment and imagine when you can see
yourself doing something different in this coming week."
"And every time you try, even if you don't do everything
you hoped, you can notice the gradual changes."
"And you can imagine over time how this will make a
difference to you and your relationship."

SECURE ATTACHMENT

"I'll be thinking about the two of you this week as
you...."