

Hypnotherapy Training Solutions

Self-Care For The Professional Hypnotherapist

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Introduction –

My Professional Profile



Hello, my name is Stephanie Kirke and I have practised as a professional hypnotherapist since 1994. Having said that, I am not sure where the time has gone to since qualifying. Hypnotherapy in the hands of a skilled practitioner has such a lot to offer clients. As a practitioner, there is no better profession for helping people succeed with whatever challenges them. For these reasons, we are in great demand most of the time. This creates some special circumstances in terms of working with clients and more to the point, how we chose to work with clients. Working safely and ethically is a constant concern. It is something I include in the training courses I run and is essential in terms of developing safe practise for both the client and the practitioner.

The path to becoming an experienced practitioner is not an easy one. Hypnotherapy training courses on the whole are difficult to compare in terms of the standard of training they offer. When I listen to my students each year they invariably tell of searching through endless choices of schools and training qualifications where evidence of meaningful standards are difficult to establish.

You probably already know through your training, that the hypnotherapy profession is not as yet regulated. This means that anyone can set him or herself up as a hypnotherapist and sometimes, unfortunately, this does happen. When I advertise my practice I make a point of describing to prospective clients the professional standards to look for when searching for a suitably qualified and experienced hypnotherapist.

The client searching for a hypnotherapist needs to ask for the practitioners professional profile giving details of where they trained, when they trained, details of professional membership to registering bodies, details of insurance, and finally, details of experience gained through working with people. For practitioners starting out, be ready with this information and give it out to all enquiries from the very start. There is everything to be confident about. You have gained a meaningful qualification through your training, you are insured and in supervision. You are able to work competently in your chosen areas, you are motivated to want to succeed and will.

The majority of practising hypnotherapists, have a previous life prior to qualifying. In my early thirties, I was a full-time mature student at Goldsmiths' College, University of London studying Psychology. I enjoyed this so much that from 1990-92 I studied and qualified with an MSc. degree in Occupational & Behavioural Psychology from Polytechnic of East London. At the same time, I also started teaching in FE as a psychology lecturer, teaching GCSE, A level, and giving psychology input to qualifications such as GNVQ Child Care, Health & Social Care and Business marketing. From 1992-04 I studied and trained as a hypnotherapist and when I qualified I set up in practice part time and continued with teaching. From 2002 onward I have been a full time hypnotherapy practitioner. I have also been fully involved with training and supervising hypnotherapists for the past three years. (appendix 1 for complete profile)

The aim of presenting this short text is to provide a companion to the work that you will be doing in the future. More often than not hypnotherapists work in isolation and for some of us it can be isolating, testing and at times lonely. It is important to develop the practise of supervision in the early years and to continue with CPD to further develop your skills as you progress.

As a professional, taking CPD is recommended to continue throughout your career, regardless of how experienced you may become. After all, other professionals such as counsellors, psychologists and psychotherapists carry out CPD having recognised its value.

Having joined the BIH two year ago, I now act as their UKCHO representative, with much of the work of the Executive focussed upon Voluntary Self Regulation for the profession in the UK. Getting back to grass-roots level, the following dialogue of self-help is designed to inform and ultimately support practitioners in their work with clients.

I think you will agree that working with clients can be the most enjoyable of activities but at the same time the most challenging. Your professional development as a practitioner will bring about consistent changes within you. It helps to keep track of where you are and where you intend going; then it helps to do the same with your clients and work in the same way. Practise what you teach and always put yourself on the line in order to achieve growth. If you are asking your clients to do that which you are not prepared to do yourself, then question yourself about why this is the case. If you have any questions or would like to contact me for any reasons connected to the work you do as a practitioner, I would be more than pleased to hear from you. I hope you enjoy reading the following and get some of what you need as a result. All the best to you for a happy and challenging career in this wonderful profession of ours.

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Chapter 1: Developing Awareness

Lets begin with talking about those who are newly qualified as hypnotherapy practitioners. Having succeeded with gaining the qualification to start practising is an exciting and thrilling experience, but it can also be one that is mixed with strong apprehensions. This is natural and is desirable I would say. Any practitioner who is not in emotional 'readiness' to do the best s/he can, is not fully prepared to do the job.

To this day, I can still remember my first client, the first session and the presenting difficulties that motivated him to come along. As many hypnotherapists start working at home, I will open this dialogue for those who choose to do the same. Working from home can work and be just the thing that clients appreciate too. The skill needed to create a discrete, safe and practical environment can be simplified for creating an effective professional effect rather than being complex and therefore missing the mark.

In your training, you have probably discussed how to create a suitable and appropriate working space, free of your personal influence, a space that is professional, warm and welcoming as well as being safe. One of the most difficult things to control when working from home are the sensory stimuli involving smells and sounds. To start session work in the early mornings with the smell of breakfast toast in the background is not something that clients appreciate. Nor do some clients like or appreciate your pets; either being in the room or smelling like they have been. To have the constant sound of others in the house, flushing toilets and emptying baths, whilst the phone is ringing and it's your mother-in-law leaving a personal message regarding details of her hospital appointment for example, only further erodes your professional image and importantly disrupts the professional service given to the client.

If you are working or intending to work from home it is necessary to create times when your home is quiet and peaceful. Turn off the phone and make sure others know that you do not need interruptions. It means taking charge. Keep any pets out of the practise environment especially if clients report allergies that you will check on assessment at the consultation. Your working space needs to be pleasant in terms of colour, in terms of smelling fresh, in terms of having some reference to being a working space with books that are linked to your professional work.

Your clients will likely need access to parking facilities and when in your home, access to toilet facilities. When I worked from home, I tended to sense that a waiting room would have been ideal, something that space did not allow for. However, when I moved to office premises I discovered through the experience of having a waiting room that it is used only occasionally in the summer but more frequently in the winter. However, in the summer it is really a necessity to have two rooms to alternate between, rather than a luxury, especially if you book clients closely together. Bottoms on seats get hot! Give the chair time to cool down or have two. Giving the room time to 'rest' between clients is a pleasant thing for the client who follows the last. Generally clients arrive and leave on time, coupled with this as a timely practitioner all this helps to create a practise that runs smoothly and in a professional manner.

Keeping all other aspects as professional as you would do otherwise. For example book appointments and keep to them. Avoid cancellations from your point of view as this can influence clients to develop similar tendencies. To avoid your clients cancelling it is preferable to have a cancellation policy and to inform clients of this at the consultation before they start session work. All details of the arrangements that you agree upon with the client needs to be in ideally in brochure format; a signed copy of the terms and conditions of your involvement as the therapist, with your fees clearly stated. As well as this, keep such details on file in line with the data protection act. When a client finishes keep the file for at least 5-7 years in a place that is secure. This does have practical implications of storage, especially if you are successful and of course you will be. Always shred files that are no longer required.

Those of you who are experienced and who well know all the above mentioned points of practice will also be aware of feeling apprehensive when starting out. I would encourage any practitioner whether experienced or not, to practise self-hypnosis. Do this to stay in touch with the calmness you will find helpful when doubts about 'what happens next' may perhaps come into your thoughts at times during a working session with a client. It helps to stay focussed and in touch with the process of what is happening during the session. This of course takes some practise and comes with time and experience of working with people and their difficulties. It also comes with making errors and mistakes and these sorts of outcomes do happen from time to time. Again, after each session it is helpful to reflect upon how the session seemed to go along or not as is the case. Reflective practise is something that experienced practitioners do to develop insight into their own performances and that of the client too. Effective reflective practise takes time to effectively develop. However, your sense of therapeutic direction for each person you work with, will be enhanced as a result of you taking this time. It also leads

to greater satisfaction on the part of the client to know for sure when you review progress, that you are the one who can let them know, where in the process of change work they are at any given time. Undergoing change is without exception confusing for the person at times and anything that the client may experience has the same potential to influence the therapist. Reflective practise helps to avoid confusion on your part, especially if the work with the client is multi-faceted and complex.

Chapter 2 : Self-Care Considerations

Personal physical safety

This topic is rarely discussed on training courses to practitioner status but does need to be incorporated as part of any core curriculum. There is rightly a focus placed upon the physical safety of the client but rarely is this given to the practitioner. I know of instances where both male and female practitioners see clients for the first time, alone in the premises at home or in office premises. This is potentially unsafe practise and some would understandably, an unnecessary risk to take. In most other professions the practitioner receives training to enhance awareness of potential vulnerability. Clearly, it is in your best interest to insure that when you meet clients for the first time, you have someone else around that the client can also be aware of. Go out of your way to ensure this and practise good safety-first above all else. This does not necessarily mean compromising the confidentiality of the client.

A practise space with two doors to external rooms or corridors, places both you and the client in an ideal situation. One door can be the entrance and the other the exit. However, a room with one entrance is more usual and for the comfort of the client, we are often told to allow them unrestricted access to the doorway to maximise their comfort whilst they are with you. I would suggest that you also arrange things to maximise your own comfort where ever and when ever possible. Make sure that if you need to exit the room you are able to do so without going around the client, it will be more comfortable for both of you.

How close to practise with Clients?

Working proximity to the client merits mentioning here. When you know that a client is coming along and you are aware that there are difficult emotions involved in the change work, settle your client with some physical distance between you and them. Give as much distance as is socially

reasonable in order to avoid picking up on energies coming from anxiety, depression, anger etc, as the client works to resolve issues involving such emotions. As the sessions progress you can afford to work at a closer proximity to the person, as their emotional energy alters and they make progress in the process of rebalancing. This suggestion was given to me years ago by my supervisor, who also taught me to practise protecting my energy when working with clients. Instead of a bubble he suggested drawing an imaginary line with one's finger from one shoulder to the other, taking in all personal space to the front as you would if you were drawing an imaginary boundary. What ever you chose to do, there are more variations on this theme discussed later.

You may not be too surprised to learn that therapists tend to think about the clients needs initially and themselves second. Through supervision and peer group work, I have learned that generally therapists are fully absorbed with the needs of their clients. It could also be said that many therapists working with clients soon learn about burn out, exhaustion, loss of vitality, or even loss of interest in life outside of therapy. Doing reflective practise is advisable not only in terms of what is best for the client but also to consider what is best for yourself as a therapist. Your own health care and awareness is equally important and reflective practise can help you monitor this over time.

Emotional safety

Initially, your own intuition about any client who comes to you is important. Ignore intuition at your peril. It cannot be emphasised strongly enough. If you have any instinctual 'feelings' about a particular client then give your self some time to make sure you know what is happening. Unconscious input, or intuition is a vital part of your inner self-protective 'radar' and it is important that both male and female practitioners learn how to take notice of it. Intuition is not simply a female skill, male colleagues also have or develop this quality and it helps to guide and protect us in terms of who we feel comfortable to work with. You will be keen to work with any client who approaches you to begin with. Later as you develop, it is likely that there will be times when you choose to work with some clients and not others and you will understand your reasons for such decisions. Reflective practise is an aspect that will be mentioned several times during the course of this text, it refers to the ability to be able to reflect on what has happened in session in order to make full sense or to gain understanding of the situation and resulting outcomes. It is also important as part of the mechanisms of future work

In terms of working with clients all therapist discover quite quickly that energy is an integral part of working with people. Depending on the needs of the particular client, the therapist will discover that s/he will use more energy working with some clients compared to others. Working face-to-face takes on a mix of the client's emotions and the therapists. Emotional protection is an aspect that each and every practitioner needs awareness of. How to achieve it and why it is important. There are several ways in which we as individuals come to know what to do when we have dealt with difficulties within the family, or have encountered uncomfortable challenges with strangers. Brief encounters are one thing but when we are working with the emotions of the client, this is something that is very different. We need to acknowledge that the energy of different individuals is different and it goes without saying that the energy from different needs is different too. For example, a person who is clinically depressed has flat energy with very little of vibrancy at all. It can also be heavy and sticky, with underlying anger very often difficult to affect change within the first few sessions. Working with the energy of depressed clients on a regular basis needs a very different self-care approach, compared to working with those who are anxious.

Anxious energy has the potential to disruptive equilibrium, it is uncomfortable to be near to in proximity and in terms of nervous apprehension added to this, the therapist will need to re-balance and cleanse his/her energies after a session and BEFORE working with the next client. The workspace will also need attention after such a session. Opening windows, changing the air quality, the fragrance of the room to replenish with natural fresh air rather than chemically induced fragrances.

How to rebalance emotional well-being is usually determined by personal preference. It can range from taking walks out in the open air, or perhaps sitting and going through a visualisation designed to replenish energy, or perhaps achieving self hypnosis with the aim of restoring what you need in order to work with the next person who is coming along.

Protecting Your Emotional Energy

Protecting the energy within, when you have the quality of energy you require in balance, it can be effectively secured by using a technique called the 'bubble'. As previously mentioned, there are a number of variations on this theme as this technique has been around for a long time. To start, the person uses their ability to visualise a bubble that has the potential to surround them physically, enveloping the whole of the personal space also. The next stage is to construct as many qualities to the bubble as is needed, eg colour, texture, movement, sound and finally function. Do each step taking as much time as

you need with each. The function of the protection can have many purposes but essentially can be designed to receive positive types of energy and reject negative energy from entering your personal space or your physical being. One can practise this exercise in a light to moderate trance to optimise your enjoyment when putting protection in place. The function of the bubble is on the outset to protect your energy within your personal space as you work with clients who tend to bring along disruptive energy or have such energy as a result of the imbalances in their own experiences. Finally, the function of the bubble is to be strong enough to do its job. Testing the effectiveness of the bubble once you have created it is the fun part. I usually visualise myself with my bubble in place, fully functioning and to test its effectiveness I then visualise myself in a large open field with a rhinoceros at the other end, looking at me. The rhino then proceeds to charge at me. Depending on the occasion the exercise has a variety of outcomes all of which involve my bubble remaining in place. The rhino disappears in a puff of smoke on contact with the bubble. Or is deflected or rebuffed, left on the ground dazed having crashed into my bubble full force with no harm to the protection itself.

Another method of rebalancing energies again involves the technique of visualisation. Identify the energy within after working with a client. Describe it to yourself and visualise it as it is within. Then imagine and visualise taking yourself to the resource of a water source, that of clean air, refreshing light or fire that cleanses. Your visualisation may constitute a combination of these resources rather than simply using one. Your choice depends on what you are attempting to rebalance. The fire option may seem unusual but it is effective in altering emotional residue from clients whose energy happens to have been flat, sticky or heavy to shift. I use it after those times when I have needed to work in close proximity to a client and as a result, it has left me with feeling the experiences of the client prior to change. This type of visualisation can introduce the quality of movement enhancing the process of transformation.

Psychological Safety

There are several considerations here. Firstly, when your clients have been working to affect change whilst with you support, you will notice that the room is left with a 'mark' or 'register' of something that represents the energy that the client has been using in combination of your own. A client working with anxiety and is for example using alcohol to cope with anxiety, will leave the distinctive residue in the practise room after the session has ended, whereas an awareness of this whilst with the client tends to be absent.

Going back into a work space will give you additional information such as this which may have been ordinarily missed. Intensity of energy is usual if the person has jettisoned energy that has long been held onto. Release of client energy is left in your workspace and is best dealt with by opening doors and windows and clear through the atmosphere to recharge the energy within. Re-introduce a clean equilibrium to the work space for the next client. Wearing certain colours can help maintain personal energy balance effective when used for client work. Working with a people occurs on many levels, some removed from conscious awareness as above.

Another consideration for psychological safety come up when clients improve to the point of no longer needing to come to sessions. If the work has been over 4-5 sessions or more perhaps, then an awareness of the end of a working relationship comes into both the clients' unconscious awareness and your own as the therapist. Prior to this you are both 'connected' for the duration of the change work. Being psychologically connected via energy to our clients is an unusual concept for some perhaps. Connection can be at both at the level of thoughts and emotions. Caring and feeling genuinely concerned about the welfare of clients is a powerful energy force and some would say a positive contributing factor to the progress of the person undergoing change. However, being over concerned is something to be aware of and to work with to avoid excessive concern on the part of the therapist and over dependence on the part of the client. It could be that on some occasions therapists develop a sense of being overly responsible. Being able to come to learn how to trust your own unconscious mind and that of your clients' when change work is in full flow is necessary. When change work begins to come to a planned conclusion, clients will be helped if you have prepared them to expect what you have come to understand is right for them. The penultimate session prepares them for the final session based on the evident that for several sessions before the penultimate one it just seems more and more obvious to both the client and therapist that the work is done and drawing to a comfortable conclusion. This is a time to help clients claim their victories, to claim success. The client can take comfort from the fact that they are through what ever it was that was keeping them stuck and they are now moving on. After the final session I always write to clients acknowledging this and sensitively suggesting that if they refer others to me, all enquiries are gratefully received maintaining their confidentiality at all times.

When you have worked with a client and succeeded, they leave and go on with their lives, and this sometimes leaves the therapist with energies and emotions that are still 'connected' to the person. Any connections that persists needs to be taken to supervision if they become troublesome or

intrusive in the life of the therapist. Your supervisor will help you understand the nature of this experience as it is common one when working with people .

Transference issues happen at the unconscious level of awareness and can be powerful, confusing and unexpected. Your training has probably prepared you for these experiences. It can be quite disconcerting at the conscious level to have awareness of 'old' issues that you once believed were truly resolved, only to discover that they seem to be once more an issue for you. With the help and support of your Supervisor, who is experienced and qualified, you will need help to reflect back to the issue that has transferred from the client. Through both the processes of transference, and counter-transference, we understand the powerful nature of emotional energy and the potential it has to re-awaken experiences at the psychological levels. If transference issues are left unresolved they ultimately affect the nature of the work you do with your client and not necessarily in a positive way. Psychological approaches such as psychoanalysis utilise transference to work through unconscious issues previously unresolved and can be positive for the client therefore.

Chapter 3 : Self Care - Indirect Considerations

Personal Privacy

When you start practising from home this really means that you have clients come into your personal space and your family's personal space. Clients are usually apprehensive about coming to see you, less so if they have been referred via a friend, but the point is that you need to separate your home from your working space. Differentiate this too for the client who comes along. In my training I heard many stories about the practitioner who unfortunately opens the door to clients in slippers, casual clothes, or experiences the family pet dog barking a warning not to come too near. These things are fine for a home that is your own, but when it comes to developing a professional image it is not such a good thing to be informal.

It also helps the practitioner to place a boundary in time and place if s/he intends to work from home. Far too often we hear of practitioners who lose motivation and then lose momentum in terms of time keeping. They get to their desk at 11.30am for example and have tended to miss the opportunity to take the early calls from those clients who needed to talk in person, and instead have let the answer phone pick up the messages. Professionally speaking, the telephone is the most important contact point you have with your clients. It is important to answer as many calls as you can in person, and

if you find this difficult you can make sure your answer phone message is friendly and welcoming.

When you work from home, you have regular hours, a room that is suitable to work within and this is within your regular home environment. Pets, children and other family members, friends and colleagues know that you are not always available to see them if you are working with clients, if they don't know this, leave a note on the door, make sure you are not disturbed when you are working and generally ensure that your focus is upon the needs of the person you are working with.

When working hours become intense, it is important to say here that your privacy as an individual person is in itself important. Your needs for time alone, relaxing is as important as the time you give to others.

It is important to remember that no matter how many hours a week you work, you need the amount of time you know you need to rebalance your needs as a person, first and foremost. Each of us is different in this respect in terms of the amount of time. Make your own discoveries about the time you need to rebalance your needs. The needs of your clients are always competing with your own and those of your family.

When you have clearly defined boundaries in terms of workspace and time in terms of hours allocated to working with clients, things stand a better likelihood of running smoothly.

Personal Isolation

In terms of working one-to-one, much of the therapists work involves sitting and working in isolation with your self and the client. In comparison to other professions this is a unique situation. Much of what we know about working with others in groups or teams recognises that we gain much from our working relationships with other colleagues. Here we can acknowledge that the professional therapist stands to lose out in terms of being part of a cohesive unit, having work colleagues comes as a result of us developing our professional relationship with our supervisor and peers when we can get to meet as a group. The other isolating contributing factor is that of confidentiality. In most other professions it is possible to go home at the end of the day and talk about the events that have happened at work. This is not possible when working with people's vulnerabilities in a professional and responsible manner. It is common for therapists to experience professional isolation and for this reason it is important to have sound personal relationships that help to redress the balance. Again, supervision is the

means by which you can ensure the quality and effectiveness of your work being presented to the client and to prevent professional isolation you're your perspective as a therapist.

The other choice that reduces professional isolation is to find a peer group in your areas or even set one up if necessary. Peer groups are worthwhile in that they connect practitioners to each other. Practitioners have the opportunity to network with each other and when it comes to sharing knowledge and experience, the group experiences growth. Another benefit is one of being able to refer cases to other practitioners, when you either do not have experience to work with a particular difficulty, or would choose not to for some reason. Your peer group members get to know what you do therefore and you know the same of your peer group members. It works very well within the ethics of confidentiality too.

There is also the potential to organise CPD within your peer group, especially if several members begin to realise that they stand to benefit from re-visiting certain themes around change work. It just takes effort to organise the time and the space for those to come along and for you to find someone who can bring the benefit of their experiences even expertise to support skill building and confidence to practise differently.

Personal Relationships

There are no rules regarding the nature of your personal relationships with others other than avoid entering into personal relationships with your clients. Your clients are not your friends, regardless of how long you have known them or how well you know them. Further, avoid entering into an intimate relationship with your clients. Keep the two areas of your life separate and practise ethically. You will undoubtedly meet those clients who you like as people and like them very much in terms of who they are and what they have endured perhaps. However, to ensure that your personal relationships with family and loved ones are stable and rewarding for you, means taking time to give attention to maintaining these. When therapeutic work concentrates on relationship difficulties, the therapeutic relationship could be potentially undermined if the therapist's personal relationships are not happy or are overly demanding of the therapist's focus. Having said this, we probably all know other therapists who work in nothing but a professional manner and uphold the needs of the client first and foremost regardless of the fact that their personal life is out of balance. Going into a therapy session with a client after having a major disagreement with one's husband, wife, partner is not conducive to the therapeutic relationship nor is it professional to do so either.

However, life and such like, does happen. I think that the most challenging times for any therapist is after a close personal bereavement. It simply is more acceptable for any therapist in this situation to simply stop seeing clients until a suitable amount of time has passed that allows the therapist to come away from the loss and return to the focus of working with clients. Loss is a concept here that needs attention to detail. Loss of time, opportunities, income, there are lots of forms of loss around close personal bereavement. If for some reason you choose to ignore your own needs at this time of all times, it is quite likely that later on your experience of loss increase many fold. Someone whose professional opinion I respect said to me a long time back 'if you hold back giving to your self, the things you give to others as a therapist, how can you expect others to accept what you teach them? It's pretty difficult wouldn't you say? I had to agree then and still do, and I pass this on when ever it comes up in supervision.

Chapter 4 – Personal Awareness

Assessing Your Own Needs

Applying what we know works to ourselves and passing this on or teaching this to others, provides clients with authentic role models. It helps us to develop an ability to becoming a genuine person. If we fall short on this, then that is our work and it continues. If we fail to give ourselves what we give to others we fall short. Continuing to strive for genuineness as a person first and as a therapist second helps to make good therapists great. Great in terms of effectiveness and great in terms of demonstrating what it is to be a human being. Your own personal development will be under constant flux as a therapist and you will grow and develop through working with people .

The therapeutic process as a human experience is not such a comfortable one if at all. Becoming familiar with being unsure, trusting your intuition as you go along with each client and working to help them satisfy their needs is a usual encounter I believe. But one that is constantly under question for the discerning. Being challenged is what I am also referring to here. Challenged on the basis of so many things as to be at times bereft of solid ground of any description. I would suggest, feeling professionally adequate. The point being however, is what to do in this type of situation. The few suggestions below are an attempt to answer my own shortcomings, in an attempt that it could possibly be useful for the reader.

If a client comes along and challenges your moral standing, your beliefs and or your values as a human being – because they hold no such values themselves, you will need to know yourself fairly well in order to be prepared and to meet these occasions. Would any reader work willingly with a multiple rapist, or a child molester? Is a thief who steals and burgles the elderly any different from the corporate thief who steals the pension fund? These questions naturally lead me into an area where we sometimes never envisage going as a result of doing our job, but we encounter on some occasions never the less. Be prepared. Know yourself, your strengths and vulnerabilities. Our emotional and psychological safety is at all times our responsibility. Having said that, when clients come with certain experiences we find ourselves being tested and sometimes left wanting. I remember presenting this point to conference and citing an example of a client who as a very young child, experienced torture at the hands of her parents and older sisters. I remember saying that the experience was initially daunting but became a privilege nonetheless. I knew that the client was willing to find a way through the experiences she had gone through as a child. I had no such experiences of torture myself nor had any previous clients I had worked with but somehow I knew I was ready to do this and what is more, I could. The client trusted me not to let her down or duck out of the difficulties of the situation facing us both. So we worked as a team and she led the way, I covered the rear and together she found the reconciliation she was needing. Me? I found that I had more understanding and compassion for the position of the client than ever before that point in time.

The work with the same client continues to this day but on a less frequent basis and according to her needs. She is perfectly capable of making the decisions on the frequency of sessions, she is the one going through the process of healing and mending herself. When we review session work, this particular client is able to acknowledge her obvious strength of love, courage and honesty of her inner child even in the face of terrifying times. For my part, I acknowledge that on several occasions since starting this work, I took my own apprehensions to supervision to ensure I was giving appropriate support to my client. Supervision also helped me make sure that I remained balanced and effective in my role when my client needed to expedite the horrors of past experiences that were hers. On some occasions, when both going through the darkness, the light that showed her a way forward was her humour. Whilst my client worked her way through her darkness out into her own light at the end of session work, my professional obligation was to make sure I was at her back and could also make it out. At times it's essential to have a guiding light as back up. In principle, the clients can learn how to model it and create one of their own. Have you created yours yet for those challenges that have the potential to knock you off your balance or lock you

away in a dark place? I am sure you have or will do in the light of the above and the potential to have similar professional experiences of your own.

As far as I can tell from speaking with other therapists, how we do the job of working to help others differs very often from what we offer to ourselves. For example, how many hypnotherapists regularly practise self-hypnosis? If we find there is a reluctance on our part to put this into practise, I would ask you to question why is this so? Especially when you know how effective it is to achieve what ever you need in the course of your work with others. In addition to this, a considerable number of colleagues that I have known seem to be unsure about the 'power' of the unconscious mind or the real value of hypnosis as an experience to utilise change. Even as I ask the question why would this be the case? I have to admit to being baffled on this. Time with yourself and what needs attending to is part and parcel of the position of most professional hypnotherapists. Lets explore this further here.

Self-Hypnosis

Some trainers now teach students to teach self-hypnosis to their clients when ever and wherever possible; the practitioner is also encouraged to use self-hypnosis as a means of monitoring health and well-being for themselves too. But do most of us tend to do this in practise? No, it would seem we do not. Personally, I have found my own self-hypnosis is one of the most effective means of re-balancing energies, changing the quality of energy, replenishing or recreating resources for personal and professional benefit. I would recommend that you make it an part of daily experiences on a regular basis. Doing self-hypnosis on a **regular** basis means five to ten minutes, twice daily and tends to be more beneficial that say using self-hypnosis thirty minutes twice weekly. As you know, a general rule of thumb is to avoid forcing yourself to use self-hypnosis, if for some reason it becomes challenging to enter into hypnosis go off for a while to do something else and return to it later.

Entering into hypnosis via relaxation is a pleasant and more usual way of achieving trance but not necessary to achieve trance. As we know, the conscious mind can drift or it can focus on some kind of stimulation in the present time and place eg visual or auditory, etc., or it can drift into the past and review pleasant memories. Personally, I enjoy simply closing down visually and letting my unconscious mind take/create/ what ever it needs to in only a few minutes if not seconds. Knowing what it is that you prefer to use to enter into trance comes from understanding your self and your own needs. It can be fun to discover the ways that suit you as an individual, as well as

helping you as a busy practitioner to balance the demands of your job. Giving yourself time to discover your preferences is important. So too is giving yourself time off when you need to rest from working hard. Or when you need to recover fully from illness when it happens. The temptation for some is to go back to working with clients before you are fully recovered thus compromising your health further. Protecting health at the physical level is the number one responsibility of the practitioner. Protecting emotional and psychological health is also a valid professional responsibility. You owe it to yourself and to your clients to remain in good health. Personally, I think that all practitioners come to learn how to give themselves this consideration and it probably comes as a result of learning via experience of pushing boundaries beyond the limit of what is acceptable or advisable.

Spiritual Awareness as a Practitioner

As practitioners, this area is one that is very often overlooked. Perhaps it starts with clients who come to us with a healthy spiritual awareness already in place. How many times do clients disclose events to that are not easily explained by them or anyone else? The adult client who, as a child saw the image of a neighbour stood at the entrance to a house and beckoned to him from the pavement, 'she was glowing hot white, but I could see her face smiling at me so clear it was almost like she was still living. I never ran so fast in all my life'. The neighbour of course was no longer living at the point of the experience the client had as a child. Another client in her 70's who described a protective entity that initially came to her when she had answered a knock at her front door as a young woman. It was a winter evening and when she opened the door, no one visible was there. Gradually however, she watched a mist develop from the gate along the path, it became thicker as it approached her, and as it did this, she became 'serene' within. She remembered feeling a sense of peacefulness, no voice, or words registered in her experiences, but after some while the mist receded, it left her standing on her own door step perfectly at ease within herself as it eventually it disappeared beyond the gate. Another client reported such happiness at being aware of her deceased mother standing by the side of her husband whilst they were taking their wedding vows in church. She said, 'my husband must have thought I was happy because we were getting married, I can't tell him I was happy because I knew my mother was with me – I could smell my mothers' perfume so strongly, it was almost overwhelming, she was there for me in the church'.

In my own experiences as a therapist and probably in yours too, engaging with clients who still have relationships with those loved ones who are no

longer living is an interesting and rewarding side of human experience. Regardless of what your personal beliefs happen to be, for someone who has 'unfinished business' to conclude, with someone who is no longer living in this time or space, being able to work with a client in this situation is not just satisfying, it is a privilege. The end result is that they are able to give the sense of huge loss and find resolution to help them move on.

Assessing Your Needs –

I thought it would be different and fun at this point to include an exercise that I have developed with clients over the years, particularly women clients who come along with a variety of feelings, in particular an angst about where they are in their lives and what they sense is in the negative for the future. Their profound thought patterns create head problems, mainly from over-doing conscious loops in an attempt to balance and keep themselves from going off the rails with depression. Essentially, they have also learned to practise very punitive and harsh practise at the emotional and behavioural levels. The relationship they have with themselves as a person is I would describe, poor. They are usually very able to give to others and overdo this, whilst poor at giving to their own self. Unfortunately, they have usually influenced others to treat them like they treat themselves and so are very unhappy with their lives and all in it. The following approach can work equally well and just as effectively with men who do the same. Although in my professional experiences there are less men practising such relationships with themselves compared to women.

What sort of relationship do you have with yourself? The questionnaire is a way to begin to tackle any issues around this area. This particular relationship is fundamental and also instrumental in the relationships you form with others. How you treat yourself, is inevitably and inadvertently what you teach to others and if you happen to have developed an impoverished relationship, where you keep yourself on a short rein, give very little in terms of rewards or positive self acknowledgements then you ultimately teach this to others as they come to know you as a person. It will serve like a double negative and goes without saying that this is something to avoid.

You can complete the questionnaire and score the questionnaire as per instructions in Appendix 2 and discover where you have room to improve what you do with yourself and what you practise with yourself too. The

knock on effect of this type of knowledge also influences how we teach our children to develop the types of relationships they do with themselves. Optimising self-esteem and ultimately confidence to be comfortable being who they are is the grail in terms of personal development.

In terms of what you discover about yourself in the course of doing this simple exercise, you are also then able to incorporate changes with how you do what you do and when. In addition, you ultimately have new options to practise more successfully with your clients, teaching them how to get the most from what they offer themselves initially and then what they choose to offer of themselves to others in a more balanced and emotionally healthy manner.

Chapter 5 – Supervision & CPD

About Supervision

Working with the public brings many challenges to our skills, knowledge, experience and personal well-being. Supervision is essentially about providing support to the practitioner so that the best possible professional service can be realised by the clients we work with. Supervision varies depending on the registering organisation you belong to. If you can find someone who is qualified all the better. Finding someone who can effectively help you learn and develop as a professional is essentially the initial aim.

Many practitioners with many years of experience continue with supervision and CPD. It is common practise to work in isolation for long hours and supervision / peer group support provides a professional solution to these difficulties. Gaining feedback through supervision is equally important for the more challenging reasons as to why we get stuck with certain case work. Strengths and weaknesses can be identified as well as further areas for training.

The Process of Supervision - Some Guidelines

- The supervisee contract according to their own needs and the needs of and circumstances of their clients. You will need to consider the frequency of supervision that suits your circumstances. Newly qualified practitioners have very different needs compared to those of with years of experience for example.
- All supervisees need to adhere to the Code of Ethics of their own professional hypnotherapy organisation and to provide the supervisor with relevant copies of membership, Codes and Insurance to practise.
- Where a supervisee belongs to more than one organisation, prior agreement establishes which Code is relevant.
- Regular reviews of supervision take place and identify its effectiveness, usually after the initial 3 months of starting. Reviews thereafter are set after negotiation between the supervisor and supervisee.
- It is expected that the supervisee will develop methods of self-assessment and evaluation, throughout the period of being in supervision. eg personal development journal, reflections, observations, working style preferences and any conclusions reached thereafter.
- Records of supervisory meetings, issues brought to supervision, outline of discussions, outcomes, subsequent interventions used in the therapy

setting. Own therapy, (if relevant) issues, discoveries, insights and progress etc.

Guidelines for Choosing a Supervisor

1. The supervisor ideally needs to be trained and qualified to supervise and experienced as a therapist. S/he ideally needs to be practising in the field of therapy similar to your own, or closely related and with a similar style. This requirement varies according to the particular registering body you have joined.
2. If you are newly qualified and have very little experience as a therapist, you ideally need to look for a supervisor who has considerable experience as a therapist. If you are a registered or accredited practitioner then it makes sense to find someone who is equally or more experienced and still practising as a hypnotherapist.
3. It can be helpful to have details giving the professional profile of the supervisor. Does the supervisor carry out CPD? What is the theoretical orientation of the supervisor (eg Gestalt, Client Centred, Behavioural).
4. An initial interview can be extremely important to establish the above points. It is also important to assess whether you have rapport with the supervisor and feel comfortable and confident with what you sense as you communicate at the interview.

Further Considerations

When conducting supervision, the supervisor will ultimately place responsibility to the client over and above responsibility to you. If he/she feels that your practise in some way jeopardises the well being of the client then it is the client that is the focus of professional concern. In all other situations, the supervisor will work with you to enhance the standard of your work and support your needs as a practitioner. It is helpful to have an idea of what you would want from each supervision session and to let your supervisor know this beforehand.

The fees of supervision are usually set by the supervisor and will vary according to the individual, their experience as a supervisor and as a practitioner. The frequency of your supervision is really determined by your status as a practitioner. If you are newly qualified then regular supervision that satisfies the code of ethics and best practise is the guideline. If you are experienced as a practitioner, the number of clients you are working with and

the nature of the difficulties they present with will be a determining factor. Discuss these aspects with your supervisor and agree on the frequency that suits you and your circumstances. If you are just starting in practise, it is likely that you will benefit from regular supervision with no less that a month between sessions. Any such agreement for supervision can be subject to review at any time and reviews of your needs as a practitioner ideally need to happen on a regular basis after consultation.

Check with your supervisor if s/he operates a cancellation policy but above all, when you have made your appointment for supervision stick to it where at all possible. Your professional commitment is reflected in your time keeping and your organisational skills.

It is potentially desirable to have the support of your supervisor to provide continual professional development with you as the supervisee. Identifying your training needs can be part of the process of supervision, and this may well come about after taking case study work to your supervisor in the first instance.

Summary of Self Care for Hypnotherapists

I hope you have found some of the above helpful in terms of how you will go forward and develop your practice. If you have any thoughts comments that you think might be useful, then do by all means contact me. I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Appendix 1 – Professional Development

Professional Profile – Qualifications & Experience

Stephanie Kirke MSc.Psy, DipHP, AccHypSup, Senior Clinician,
MNCH(Acc) BCH, CI, MNGH

I am an accredited member and senior clinician with the NCH, and a Board Certified Hypnotist with the NGH in the US. I am also a member of BIH and HA here in the UK.

I am a qualified Certified Instructor and train others to practitioner status with the UK Academy and have done so successfully for the past three years. I am also a qualified supervisor and offer this to licentiate, registered and accredited hypnotherapy practitioners either face-to-face, email or telephone. I also offer CPD training in the specialist areas including smoking cessation, depression as a result of illness/accident, anxiety and panic attack, gambling addiction, pain management and diabetic motivational coach. I also and the HPD qualification. I am also about to qualify as a pain specialist and to work to enhance health in terms of injury, illness and disease.

Qualifications

- 1985-88 BSc., Psychology (2:1) Goldsmiths' College, (University of London)
- 1988-90 MSc., Occupational & Organizational Psychology, (Polytechnic of East London)
- 1992-94 Certificate and Diploma in Hypnotherapy, Psychotherapy, Counselling and NLP (NACHP)
- 1994.96 730 Adult Teaching Qualification /D32/33 Assessor Award (City & Guilds)
- 2003 Accredited Supervisor Qualification (National Council of Hypnotherapy)
- 2003 Ericksonian Hypnotherapy Specialist Practitioner (UK Academy)
- 2004 Smoking Cessation Specialist Practitioner (UK Academy)
- 2005 Certified Professional Coach (UK Academy)
- 2005 Certified Instructor (National Guild of Hypnotists – US)
- 2005 Board Certified Hypnotherapist (National Guild of Hypnotists – US)
- 2006 Pain Management Specialist (National Guild of Hypnotists – US)
- 2007 Diabetic Motivational Coach (National Guild of Hypnotists – US)

Professional Memberships

National Council for Hypnotherapy - UK
National Guild of Hypnotists (USA)
British Institute of Hypnotherapists – UK
The Hypnotherapy Association - UK
The British Psychological Society (since 1986)

Appendix 2 – Self Assessment Opportunity

How Do you treat yourself as a Person?

This is a self-assessment Questionnaire not a test. Please answer ALL questions on the questionnaire. Your first initial response is the more reliable therefore avoid lingering on any particular question. Be as honest with yourself as you can be. Please respond with either A for Agree or D for Disagree. Your responses will be scored separately and interpreted in terms of 10 different criteria all of which are helpful indicators of how you deal with and yourself as a person.

1. I regularly take time out to focus on my own needs. (A/D)
2. Very often I say I'm OK, when I am not. (A/D)
3. I always know what is best for me. (A/D)
4. I would sooner go against the needs and opinions of others if it is the right thing for me to do at the time. (A/D)
5. On the whole, I generally get myself up and running. (A/D)
6. I enjoy the feeling of succeeding with difficult challenges especially where others have failed. (A/D)
7. I do not feel comfortable with other people taking over what I want to do with my time. (A/D)
8. I like myself as a person even though I know I am not perfect. (A/D)
9. I know I can achieve exactly what I set out to achieve. (A/D)
10. When ever I make a mistake or get something wrong, I feel badly about it for a long time after. (A/D)
11. I make time to focus on those things I enjoy. (A/D)
12. I would rather be in an unhappy relationship than have no relationship at all (A/D)
13. I would sooner go with my own intuition than with the opinions of others even when they differ. (A/D)
14. It does not bother me that some people do not like me. (A/D)
15. When things get tough I take my time to find a way through and often reach my goal. (A/D)
16. I always acknowledge my own achievements to others. (A/D)
17. I am responsible for my own self in any relationship. (A/D)
18. I still want to aim to change some things about myself but these have to be changes for the better. (A/D)
19. I know that my ideas are valid and useful and I can be successful in my own right. (A/D)

20. I spend a lot of time making sure I never make a mistake with anything. (A/D)
21. I give myself opportunities to take time out from work. (A/D)
22. I would always prefer to save face, than face difficult realities. (A/D)
23. I avoid being put on the spot and will say openly if I don't know what to do for the best. (A/D)
24. I sometimes find it difficult to act according to my own values when I am with people whose values differ from mine. (A/D)
25. I create the opportunity to learn from my mistakes. (A/D)
26. It does not bother me that others envy my success. (A/D)
27. Relationships are an important part of adult life but they are not the purpose of life. (A/D)
28. These day I am content to be who I am. (A/D)
29. I know I can succeed even when the going gets difficult. (A/D)
30. It's my own fault if bad things happen to me. (A/D)
31. My own needs come last compared to the needs of others. (A/D)
32. Being honest with myself is sometimes difficult. (A/D)
33. I very often do not know what is the best thing for me and usually take advice from others. (A/D)
34. I would always save a friend from embarrassment even at my own expense. (A/D)
35. I always know what others need but very often do not know my own needs. (A/D)
36. I never or rarely blow my own trumpet. (A/D)
37. I know that the needs of others are far more important than my own needs. (A/D)
38. I hate my body so much I avoid looking at myself in the mirror. (A/D)
39. My plans include getting to the top. (A/D)
40. I can accept responsibility when I get things wrong. (A/D)
41. I never give myself an opportunity to do anything but focus on work (A/D)
42. Being honest with others is sometimes difficult. (A/D)
43. I never listen to what I tell myself if best for me. (A/D)
44. I sometimes think I am not worth the time and effort others give me (A/D).
45. I find it difficult to motivate myself and would rather help someone else to do this. (A/D)
46. I can't stand bigheads. (A/D)
47. Other people will think badly of me if I get my own way on things. (A/D)
48. There is so much about myself that I am unhappy with. (A/D)
49. I will never work for myself even though I am fed up with working

- for others. (A/D)
50. I enjoy the experience of new challenges and simply do the best I can to meet them. (A/D)
 51. My husband/partner and children's needs come before my own more often than not. (A/D)
 52. It does not bother me that I am sometimes unpopular. (A/D)
 53. I am afraid to trust my own judgement and prefer to follow my husband/partner or children's advice. (A/D)
 54. I know I drink/smoke/eat too much but I have a stressful lifestyle. (A/D)
 55. I resent and feel envious of others who achieve the things I want. (A/D)
 56. I find it difficult to accept a compliment even when it is genuine. (A/D)
 57. If a woman gets her way in a relationship it means that the man is usually unhappy. (A/D)
 58. When I reach my target weight, then I can be happy. (A/D)
 59. I am not good enough to be a success. (A/D)
 60. When I let myself down, I make every attempt to make sure this does not happen again and then I move on. (A/D)

Interpretation of Scores across categories

You only score when your response matches those given below

Self Nurture vs. Self Neglect

- I regularly take time out to focus on my needs /q1/A
 - I make time to focus on those things I enjoy /q11/A
 - I give myself opportunities to take time out from work / q21/A
 - My own needs come last compared to the needs of others /q31/D
 - I never give myself an opportunity to do anything but focus on work / q41/D
 - My husband/partner and children's need always come before my own/ q51/D
- Total =

Self Integrity vs. Self Dishonesty

- Very often I say I'm OK when I am not /q 2/D
 - I would rather be in an unhappy relationship than have no relationship at all/q12/D
 - I would always prefer to save face, than face difficult realities/q22/ D
 - Being honest with myself is sometimes difficult/q32/A
 - Being honest with others is sometimes difficult/q42/A
 - It does not bother me that I am sometimes unpopular /q52/A
- Total =

Self Trust vs. Mistrust

- I always know what is best for me / q.3/A
 - I would sooner go with my own intuition than with the opinions of others even when they differ/q13/A
 - I avoid being put on the spot and will say openly if I don't know what to do for the best/q23/A
 - I very often do not know what is the best thing for myself and usually take advice from others / q32/D
 - I never listen to what I tell myself is best for me/q43/D
 - I am afraid to trust my own judgement and prefer to follow my husband/partner or children's advice /q53/D
- Total =

Self Respect vs. Disrespect

- I would sooner go against the needs and opinions of others if it is the right thing for me to do at the time/q4/A
 - It does not bother me that some people do not like me/q14/A
 - I sometimes find it difficult to act according to my own values when I am with people whose values differ from mine /q24/A
 - I would always save a friend from embarrassment even at my own expense/q34/D
 - I sometimes think I am not worth the time and effort others give me/q44/D
 - I know I drink/smoke/eat too much but I have a stressful lifestyle/q54/D
- Total =

Self Motivation vs. Self De-motivation

- On the whole, I generally get myself up and running/q5/A
 - When things get tough I take my time to find a way through and often reach my goal /q15/A
 - I create the opportunity to learn from my mistakes/q25/A
 - I always know what others need but very often do not know my own needs/q35/D
 - I find it difficult to motivate myself and would rather help s someone else do this/q45/D
 - I resent and feel envious of others who achieve the things I want /q55/D
- Total =

Self Promotion vs. Self Devaluation

- I enjoy the feeling of succeeding with difficult challenges especially where others have failed/q6/A
 - I always acknowledge my own achievements to others/ q16/A
 - It does not bother me that others envy my success/q26/A
 - I never/rarely blow my own trumpet /q36/D
 - I can't stand bigheads/q46/D
 - I find it difficult to accept a compliment even when it is genuine/q56/D
- Total =

Self Equality vs. Self deprecation

- I do not feel comfortable with other people taking over what I want to do with my time/q7/A
 - I am responsible for my own self in any relationship/q17/A
 - Relationships are an important part of adult life but they are not the be all and end all/q27/A
 - I know that the needs of others are far more important than my own/q37/D
 - Other people will think badly of me if I get my own way on things/q47/D
 - If a woman gets her way in a relationship it means that the man is usually unhappy/q57/D
- Total =

Self Acceptance vs. Self Rejection

- I like myself as a person even though I know I am not perfect/q8/A
 - I still want to aim to change some things about myself but these have to be changes for the better/q18/A
 - These days I am content to be who I am /q28/A
 - I hate my body so much I avoid looking at myself in the mirror/q38/D
 - There is so much about myself that I am unhappy with/q48/D
 - When I reach my target weight then I can be happy/q58/D
- Total =

Self Belief vs. Self Doubt

- I know I can achieve exactly what I set out to achieve/q9/A
 - I know that my ideas are valid and useful and I can be successful in my own right/q19/A
 - I know I can succeed even when the going gets difficult and challenging/q29/A
 - My plans include getting to the top/q39/A
 - I will never work for myself even though I am fed up working for others/q49/D
 - I am not good enough to be a success/q59/D
- Total =

Self Forgiveness vs. Self Blame

- When ever I make a mistake or get something wrong, I feel badly about it for a long time after/q10/D
 - I spend a lot of time making sure I never make a mistake with anything/q20/D
 - It's my own fault if bad things happen to me/q30/D
 - I can accept responsibility when I get things wrong/q40/A
 - I enjoy the experience of new challenges and simply do the best I can to meet them/q50/A
 - When I let myself down, I make every attempt to make sure this does not happen again and then move on /q60/A
- Total =

Overall Total Score = (total the categories above)

Interpretation of Scores –

1-20 You need to begin to acknowledge that your needs are rarely met and this in large part is due to you treating yourself unequally compared to how you treat others around you. It is likely that you tend to act to please others, to your own detriment; you may even believe that your happiness is in the hands of others. You may be in relationships that are unequal with you giving more than you receive for the most part. Take encouragement in the fact that you are a caring person and can now begin to care for you more so. Examine your individual category scores and focus on any that is particularly low, these areas will help focus your personal development.

21-40 Potentially you have a positive relationship in the making. Fairly moderate scores across several categories helps to show you where your strengths are at present. Any low scores will help you focus your attention on where you can gain a more positive relationship with yourself. You may experience some conflict or even guilt between your needs and the needs of others and have yet to work to find a comfortable compromise or even give

yourself more compared to what you give others. Perhaps at times your own self worth is not the thing that you lack but the confidence as a person in your own right. It is likely that you rarely appreciate yourself or your achievements as you tend to avoid taking credit where credit is due. Categories likely for your focus include Belief, Promotion and Motivation.

41=60 A higher range of scores needs some positive recognition. You appear to have already achieved considerable progress with the way you treat yourself. You are able to speak your mind but at times chose not to, which is something now in balance.

Opportunities for treating yourself equally may be shown in categories like Belief, and Forgiveness these will come with further attention, maturity and a willingness to want this for your self.