

# Choosing a Qualified Hypnotherapist

## Introduction

This document provides information and suggestions to help you choose a Hypnotherapist who is right for you. The document is organized into sections with each section containing background information and one or more suggested interview questions.

## Section 1 - Licensing

There are two categories of Hypnotherapists. They are:

- Professionally Licensed Practitioners
- Non-licensed (Lay) Hypnotherapists

Licensed practitioners hold a recognized professional license in fields like medicine, nursing, psychology, dentistry, chiropractic, and counseling. They have taken additional training to achieve certifications specific to Hypnosis. Many will also be members of one or more professional organizations dedicated to providing training and certifications in Hypnosis and related areas. The two most prestigious hypnosis certifying bodies in the professional field are the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis and the Society of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis.

Lay hypnotherapists do not have professional licensing. They have received training from non-accredited hypnosis schools that generally do not come under state or federal regulation. The lack of regulatory oversight makes it possible for individuals to take a weekend course and call themselves a “Hypnotherapist” in many states.

The most significant difference between a Professionally Licensed Practitioner and a Lay Hypnotherapist is the advanced level of education, training, background, and accountability associated with the licensed practitioner.

## **Interview Questions**

- ✓ Does the person have a state recognized professional license in some area such as medicine, nursing, psychology, dental, chiropractic, and marriage and family counseling? Where did they receive their hypnosis training?
- ✓ How much experience does the person have working with Hypnosis to accomplish goals similar to the ones you are interested in achieving?

## Section 2 – The Difference in Doctors

Doctors are doctors – right? Not so. In some cases, you may find someone claiming to hold a Doctorate degree in Hypnosis. They may preface their name with ‘Dr.’ or append the initials DCH after their name. The catch is that there are no accredited doctoral programs for Hypnosis. So how can someone claim to be a Doctor of Hypnosis? The answer is that the credentials being advertised were obtained through a non-accredited program. This is very confusing and disturbing because the public’s assumption is that anyone claiming to be a doctor has gone through years of training in a fully accredited program. When in fact, there

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are non-accredited programs that offer Doctorate degrees in as little as six months with no prior college education required. Although the actual Hypnosis training may be good, it doesn't compare to the amount of schooling and experience required to earn a fully accredited doctorate degree. The ability to obtain an unaccredited doctorate degree and advertise it as something it is not is an unfortunate by-product of the unregulated Hypnotherapy industry.

## **Interview Questions for people using Doctor or DCH in their title:**

- ✓ What did they earn their doctorate in?
- ✓ What school / program did they go through?
- ✓ Was it a fully accredited doctorate of Hypnosis program? Note: None exist
- ✓ How long did it take them to earn their degree? Note: Most accredited programs require 8+ years of university level schooling.
- ✓ Ask for information on the program so you can check it out for yourself.

## **Section 3 - The Therapeutic Relationship is Built On Trust**

An effective Hypnotherapist is someone you feel comfortable with – someone that you trust will do the best job for you. That trust is built on any combination of personality, credentials, experience, and expressed understanding of your objectives. It is important to take the time up front to find someone that you are comfortable with – someone that you feel you can trust.

### **Interview Question and a Suggestion:**

- ✓ Does the hypnotherapist offer a free consultation so you can meet them, ask questions, and get an idea of how they might be able to help you?
- ✓ Check with family and friends to see if they have experience with someone that they would recommend.

## **Section 4 – Not Just Hypnosis**

There are other therapies that complement hypnosis such as biofeedback, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), art therapy, and Guided Imagery. Although not mandatory, the use of these therapies can greatly enhance the effectiveness of hypnosis sessions. From a professional's point of view – it's always nice to have a few other tools in the bag.

### **Interview Questions:**

- ✓ What other therapies or techniques beside hypnosis does the hypnotherapist offer?
- ✓ What type of training and experience in the additional therapies / techniques does the person have?
- ✓ Does the Hypnotherapist routinely combine techniques?

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## **Section 5 – The Guarantee**

Be wary of guarantees. Can a dentist guarantee you will never have another cavity? Can a physician guarantee you will not have high blood pressure just because you take a certain medication? Does a psychologist guarantee your depression will be gone in five visits? Of course not! But there are hypnotherapists (primarily lay hypnotherapists) that will guarantee that you will stop smoking in one visit or lose weight after completing a predetermined (and prepaid) number of sessions. Hypnosis is a powerful tool, but it is not a magic wand that can be waved to make a perfect world. Every person is unique and every outcome is highly specific to the individual.

### **Interview Questions for those offering guarantees:**

- ✓ What are the specific details of the guarantee?
- ✓ What are the specific numbers or examples that support the guarantee?
- ✓ If the guarantee is supported by numbers, how were the numbers determined? Note: To be considered valid, numerical references need to be supported by one or more formal studies.
- ✓ If it is a money back guarantee, ask for details on what you will need to do to get your money back in the event that things don't work out.

### **About the Author**

Debbie Nesbitt is a state licensed, board certified, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Certified Hypnotherapist and Approved Consultant by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, and member of several professional organizations. Additional details about Debbie can be found on her website at:

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