

Anxiety, Depression and Stress Management

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Anxiety and Depression: Treating Trauma through Hypnosis

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Anxiety and depression, along with addiction, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and phobias are very often the conscious manifestation of unprocessed past trauma. As such, they are symptoms, rather than the condition that needs to be addressed and treated. The evidence of trauma is often seen in self-destructive behaviours, such as drug and alcohol abuse, emotionally and/or physically harmful sexual activity, self-harming and anti-social behaviour. These responses represent coping mechanisms used by the subconscious to deal with buried emotions that may include shame, grief and rage. Hypnosis is the process by which we are able to negotiate with the subconscious to acknowledge, honour and then heal the wounds of the past in a way that offers emotional protection to the individual, within an environment that is completely safe. The subconscious neither recognizes nor understands the concept of linear (chronological) time. In this sense, buried trauma remains as fresh today as it was at the moment of the event that caused it, resulting in the subconscious manifesting a heightened state of alertness and vigilance in the form of negative behaviour.

Hypnosis is an effective treatment for trauma, and therefore anxiety and depression, because it actively works with the subconscious, which is the gatekeeper for the root problem (the original trauma). As the old saying goes, you cannot heal what

you cannot feel.

Anxiety is essentially a threat-detection and self-protection mechanism triggered by the two amygdala neurons, which control emotions, memory and survival instincts. Humans, unlike prey animals, are not designed to operate in a prolonged state of heightened anxiety, but the amygdala links past experience to present responses.

Past trauma – even if experienced only as a witness rather than victim – remains in the ‘now’ as an ever-present threat, and the amygdala responds accordingly. Rewiring the brain with new and more positive associations to create the behaviour we desire can be achieved through Neuroplasticity. This describes the brain’s ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life, compensating for injury and disease and adjusting responses to new situations or environmental changes.

The result of associated learning is that the more you repeat a task the more it becomes a habit, and when you repeat an experience over and over, the brain learns to trigger the same neurons each time.

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