

Mindfulness and Hypnosis with Pathological Gamblers

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Rhode Island Gambling Treatment Program

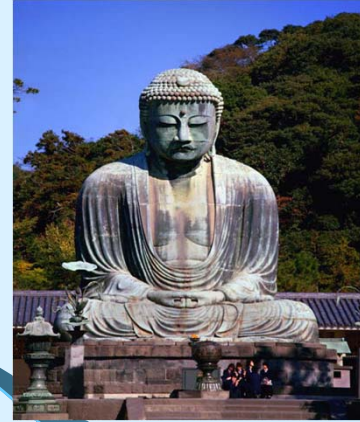
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Mindfulness



- **BEING** state of mind
- **DOING** state of mind
- **In the present moment**
- **In the past or future**
- **One thing mindfully**
- **Many things at once**
- **Nonjudgmental**
- **Judgmental**



Why be Mindful?

- **Need to let go of the past and not worry about or live in the future**
- **Need to focus on one thing at a time rather than lose focus**
- **Need to let go of judging oneself or others**

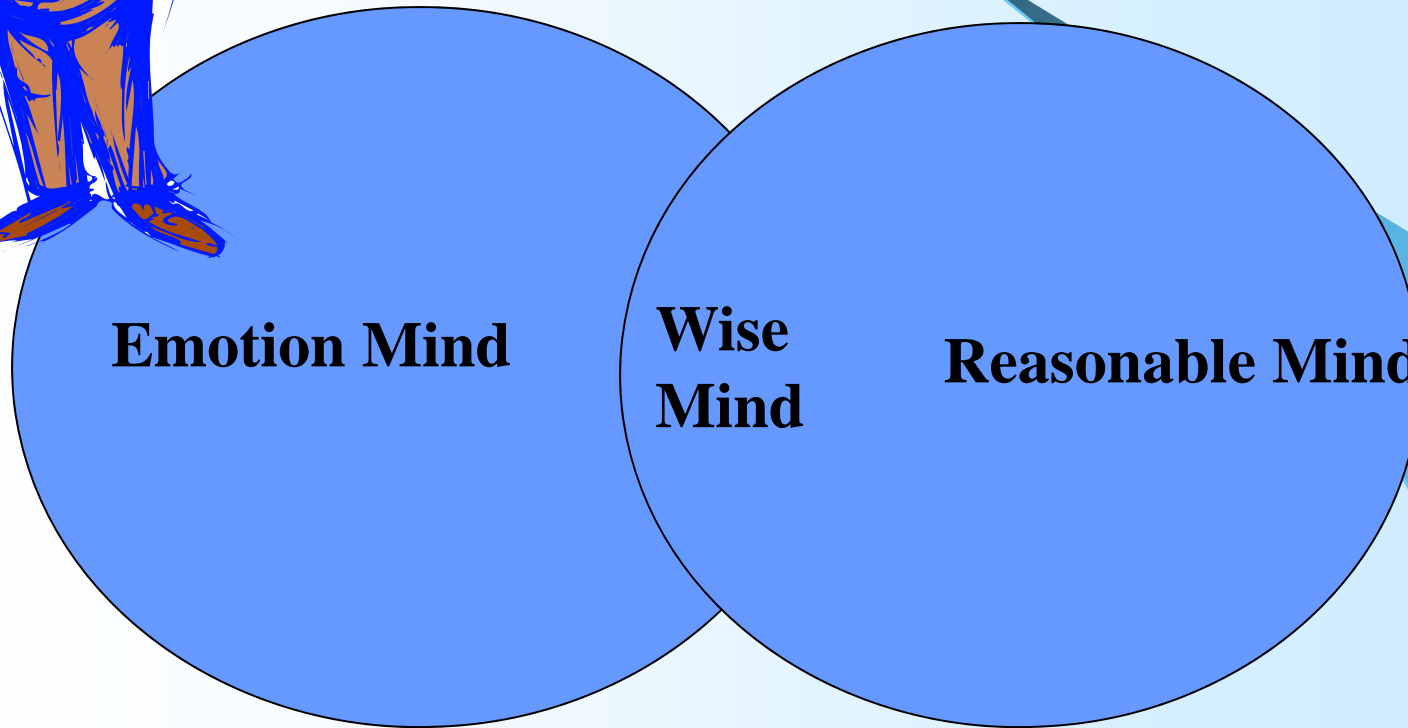
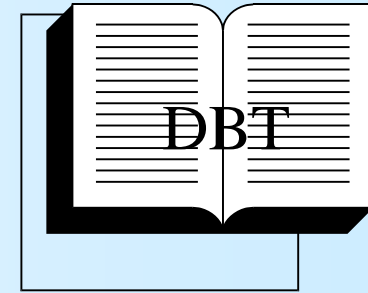
Quick Mindfulness Exercises

- **Eating candy; raisin exercise**
- **“Leaf in the Stream”**
- **“Body Awareness”**





Wise Mind



Emotion Mind

**Wise
Mind**

Reasonable Mind



Mindfulness Helps Center the Client

- **When stressed, there is a tendency to go from one crisis to another, become disorganized and depressed.**
- **Mindfulness practice has been shown to reduce stress and depression.**
- **Mindfulness practice has a calming effect**

What is Hypnosis?

- **“Hypnosis is a procedure during which a [trained] health professional or researcher suggests that a client, patient, or subject experience changes in sensations, perceptions, thoughts, or behavior.”**



Hypnosis Involves Selective Attention

- **Attention becomes very focused on a specific thing as other things are taken out of awareness**
- **Relaxation is involved but it is an active relaxation with imagery**
- **Time distortion**
- **Dissociation**
- **Responses seem involuntary**

Myths About Hypnosis

- **It is like you see on TV**
- **It is mind control**
- **People do things they don't want to do**
- **The hypnotist is in control and not the client**
- **Memory improves with hypnosis**
- **Memory found during hypnosis is less reliable than memory retrieved in other ways (actually varies – 25% of people who are highly hypnotizable are susceptible to misinformation suggestions)**
- **Amnesia for what happens during hypnosis is common (it is actually rare)**



Responding in Hypnosis

- **There is a range of hypnotizability**
- **70% are fairly easily hypnotized**
- **Anxiety can increase fear of losing control**
- **Preconceived notions of hypnosis can act as a barrier to hypnosis**

Suggestions



- In hypnosis the wording of a suggestion is important. (hence, I often use “you will be able to do ... when it is appropriate and safe to do so”)
- Suggestions are taken literally. “Trance logic” applies.
- E.G. “Whenever you are in front of a slot machine you will suddenly become bored.”

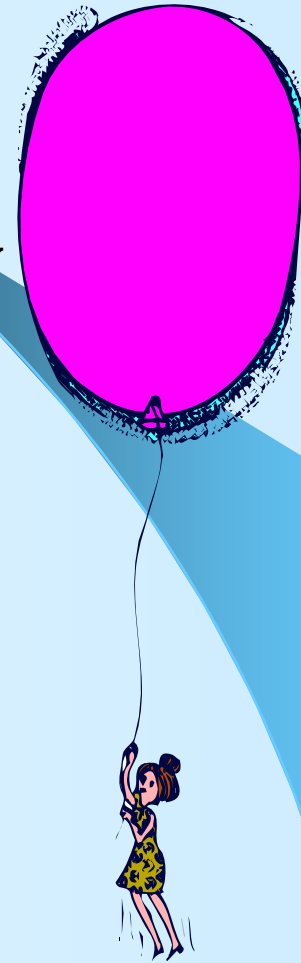
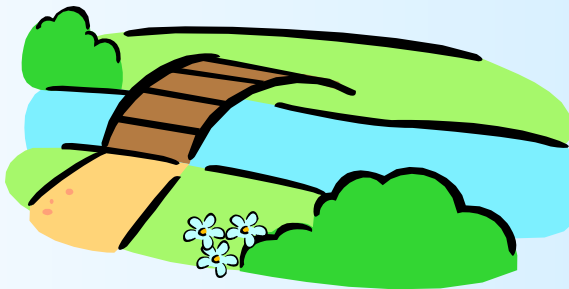
Steps to Take



- **Develop positive rapport and therapeutic alliance**
- **Conduct careful assessment**
- **Identify what hypnosis means for the client**
- **Dispel myths and misconceptions about hypnosis to develop positive expectancy and response bias**
- **Initiate practice session**
- **Assess level of response during hypnosis**
- **Encourage lenient interpretation of different suggestions**
- **Encourage the use of imagination and attention during hypnosis**
- **Devise suggestions that are tailor made to the client**

Example

- **Induction – relaxation; rainbow**
- **Deepening – staircase**
- **Ideomotor signaling**
- **Cloud to safe place**
- **Inhale up; exhale down**
- **Affect bridge**
- **Termination**



Warnings: Caution

- Some patients have been traumatized – they can be hypnotized with their eyes open
- Some patients dissociate – ditto
- Start simple with induction, deepening, cloud to safe place, termination
- Copy onto CD (MP3 format) and have patient practice going to a safe place daily

When to Use Hypnosis with Gamblers

- **Desensitization – arousal of gambling followed by suggestion that situation is boring**
- **Grief – unfinished business can be finished**
- **PTSD – TV channel changer with two images, peaceful scene and traumatic scene.**
- **Inability to self-soothe (common with personality disorders) – introduce ideal parents who will be able to soothe the client [ideal parent protocol comes from Daniel Brown, Ph.D.]**
- **Pain disorders – use dissociative feature of hypnosis to dissociate the pain.**

Hypnosis with Gamblers -- 1

- Ego state therapy to increase motivation
- “I would like to speak to the part of you that is not sure about quitting gambling.” vs. “the part that wants to quit gambling.”
Generate a dialogue between the parts and generate cognitive dissonance. There is a fundamental conflict between these parts.



Hypnosis with Gamblers -- 2

- Imaginal desensitization through imagery.
- Using the most typical gambling scene.
- “You are entering the casino through the garage entrance. You walk by the ... and now you are in front of the ... machine. You look in your wallet and suddenly you are bored and feel empty. You put your money away and walk out of the casino.”

Hypnosis with Gamblers -- 3



- Relapse prevention
- Imagine typical scenes where relapse has happened. Get them to notice changes in their body as they have the cravings and can deal with it.
- Use “clock time”
- Can use “my friend John” technique
- Ego strengthening afterwards

Hypnosis Resources



- **American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH)**
- **D.C. Hammond (ed). Hypnotic Induction & Suggestions. Chicago: ASCH, 1998.**
- **D.C. Hammond (ed.). Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphors. New York: W.W.Norton, 1990.**
- **S.J. Lynn & I. Kirsch. Essentials of Clinical Hypnosis: An Evidence-Based Approach. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2006.**

Acknowledgement

- I would like to thank the following for their help and guidance.
- Daniel Brown Ph.D. who taught me hypnosis and many of the protocols I use in hypnotherapy. See www.ecowraps.info/
- Lisa Gallagher, Psy.D. who acted as a consultant as I learned to use hypnosis
- James Schwarz, Ed.D. a fellow student

Now What?

- Instill hope under hypnosis



Further Information

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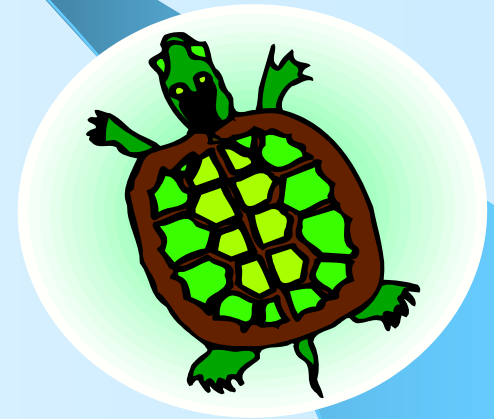
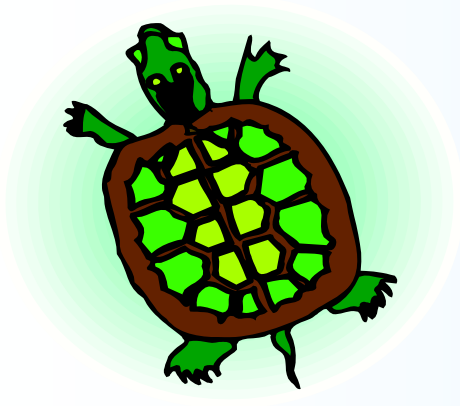
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**Check the RIGTP web-site for a list of resources online
and in-print.**

<http://www.gamblingtreatment.org>