Many gay men feel alienated from their families of origin, society, and themselves, sometimes in subtle ways that are unrecognized. Clinical hypnosis offers a powerful approach to enhancing and increasing sensory awareness, creating a powerful resource for restoring connections within. Such connections provide a bridge between the self and body, something that is often disowned by gay men. This workshop defines and illustrates successful hypnosis facilitated interventions to enhance the treatment of gay men. These beneficial therapeutic processes indirectly address unresolved issues that may not even be in these patients’ awareness. Addressing this provides integrative healing to clients, offering a profound sense of happiness in new ways. Effective scripts targeting self-esteem issues related to development, religion, HIV and the urban gay male stereotype will be provided. Videos of treatment sessions will be shown in order to optimize communicating these methodologies. Attendees will feel more confident in speaking to gay male patients about unique facets of personal history, relationships, and in addressing topics related to gay sexuality and attachment. In addition, authenticity in the treatment relationship will be part of the treatment success.

Upon completing this session, the participant should be able to:
Offer specific hypnotic scripts targeted to gay men to promote internal happiness;
Differentiate benefits and drawbacks of working with either a gay or a nongay therapist to achieve the best therapeutic match;
Use specific strategies for discussing the norms regarding gay sexuality with their gay male clients; and
Formulate a comprehensive treatment plan specific to the needs of each gay client, incorporating hypnotic scripts for self integration.

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What will you change when you return to your practice as a result of this session?

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INTEGRATIVE THERAPY WITH GAY MEN…THE USE OF CLINICAL HYPNOSIS FOR OPTIMIZING TREATMENT SUCCESS

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My theory:
Part 1

Long before being verbal, a gay male censors the truth to make sure he is loved and accepted, (He automatically and unconsciously presents this).

He implicitly knows the risks of being his true self, and purposefully choses to conceals his identity in daily life.
Part 2: The Bridge From Past to Present

By engaging in experiential work, the power of achieving goals are accomplished, while indirectly, a bridge to the past is provided where internal success is experienced like never before.

- internal focus
- reliance on self
- use of the entire self (without compartmentalization),
- expansion of resources,
- exposure of the vulnerable self
PART 3: THE POWER OF THE THERAPY RELATIONSHIP

Empathy and attunement create successes in therapy. Your ability to join your client in his world is a trance state where mutual closeness kindles a connection within himself that is new and exciting.
SHAME - THE HALLMARK OF GAY EXISTENCE

Shame stems from internalizing the painful history of growing up gay and hiding oneself. Buying into cultural stereotypes within the gay male community as well as expectations of the heterosexual community only reinforces the feeling of not measuring up. (Miller)
CLIENT SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

DIRECTIONS: Circle the best response to the following.

1. Do you feel self-conscious in certain settings where you assume you are the only gay man?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Usually
   - Always

2. Do you find yourself holding back from self-expression and making choices in an effort to fit into mainstream society?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Usually
   - Always

3. Do you leave out details of your social life when speaking to family members or coworkers?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Usually
   - Always

4. Do you ever worry about what to wear or modify your wardrobe selection in order to fit in better?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Usually
   - Always

5. Do you find yourself changing your tone of voice or curbing gestures in certain contexts?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Usually
   - Always

6. Do you criticize men you find to be stereotypically effeminate?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Usually
   - Always

7. Do you make fun of these men (with others) as a means to gain approval?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Usually
   - Always
Attitudes of Providers

Objectives:
Researchers examined providers' implicit and explicit attitudes toward lesbian and gay people by provider.

Results:
Among heterosexual providers, implicit preferences always favored heterosexuals over lesbian and gay people.

– Health Care Providers' Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Toward Lesbian Women and Gay Men
EVALUATE YOUR READINESS:

DIRECTIONS: Simply respond by circling “yes” or “no.” Room is provided to elaborate on why you have answered one way or another.

1. Do you understand the unique history that gay men have experienced?
   Yes  No

2. Can you imagine its impact?
   Yes  No

3. Are you able to appreciate a gay male client’s issues without judgment?
   Yes  No

4. Do you see your client as a whole person rather than seeing being gay as his identity?
   Yes  No

5. Are you really at ease with gay people?
   Yes  No

6. Can you convey respect and care in your interactions? (If he is coming to therapy with issues pertaining to sex, intimate relationships, or compulsive behaviors, feeling safe will be front and center for him.)
   Yes  No
As you further consider what might arise for you, additional questions may form:

1. Are you comfortable enough with a gay male client for him to feel comfortable with you?
   Yes  No

2. Do you convey a sense of professionalism?
   Yes  No

3. Are you secure enough to reach out for additional guidance should you need it?
   Yes  No

4. Can you form an alliance with a client who may be cautious in pronounced ways based on a history of feeling unsafe?
   Yes  No

Again, elaborate on your responses without editing yourself.
• 9% had existing procedures to identify LGBT-competent physicians.
• 16% of participants reported having comprehensive LGBT-competency training.
• 52% reported having no training.

Conclusions: There exist both need and interest to develop procedures and programs to train physicians to become LGBT-competent.
“Micro-aggressions” – brief verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, (intentional or unintentional), that communicate hostile or negative slights against LGBT individuals.

— D.W. Sue, Micro-aggressions in Everyday Life; Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation, 2010
This is a belief system that values heterosexuality as a superior to homosexuality.

Fears of gay men could maintain attitudes that heterosexuals are superior and could lead to unethical treatment of sexual minority clients.

Men are significantly more homophobic than women.

Place of residence is related to attitudes. People living in large cities are more tolerant than people who live in small towns and rural areas.

Other factors related to personal attitudes includes political conservatism, religiosity, and previous experiences with gay men.

Individuals who previously had positive experiences with gay men reported more positive attitudes towards them.
TRANSFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

• The relationship is the primary factor in successful psychotherapy.

• Transformational relationships require sensitivity to differences and flexibility in responding to these differences.

• Skillful therapists do not challenge clients core beliefs.

Dan Short- Transformational Relationships
Gay or Non-gay Therapist

Advantages of a non-gay therapist:

• Communication from a non-gay perspective is healing (from a female therapist, or a heterosexual male therapist.)
• Ability to acknowledge or express vulnerabilities with a parental figure.
• Indirect healing can occur as a result of having a non-gay therapist who accepts and loves the individual, compensating for earlier rejections.
• Less competition than with a gay male therapist.
Starting age 4 or 5 they felt they were different from their peers:
• More sensitive
• Cried more easily
• Enjoyed aesthetic interests such as nature art and music
• Less aggressive
• Often not interested in sports
• Made fun of by other kids for being different

Isay: Being Homosexual
ADOLESCENCE

By this stage,
• The gay adolescent has injured self-esteem
• Is rejected other boys
• Often is made fun of by peers
• Labels himself as different based on society’s biases
• He believes his sexuality is disgusting

Isay cont’d
Fathers often were distant and lacked attachment to their gay sons. Often fathers were detached or hostile as they sensed their son being different, and couldn’t accept this. Sometimes gay boys were secluded, and based on differences between the fathers expectations, they withdrew from their child. Fathers favored other male siblings who were more conventionally masculine and may not have been conscious of this.

Isay, cont'd
Gay and Lesbian youths whose families rejected their sexual orientation and gender expression were at higher risk for several health and mental health problems as adults.

Gay young adults are 8.4 times more likely to report having attempted suicide, 5.9 times more likely to report high levels of depression, and 3.4 more likely to use illegal drugs, as well as unprotected sexual intercourse.

Latino men reported the highest number of rejecting behaviors from their families.

Rejecting behaviors include:
• Verbal harassment
• Physical violence
• Exclusion from family activities

Supporting behaviors include:
• Finding children positive LGBT role models
• Welcoming youths LGBT friends and partners
• Interventions and education aims at helping families support their LGBT children and decrease rejecting behaviors. When families receive this, they often make changes that limit risk to their children.
Experiential work enables gay men to unwrap the protective shield around their inner selves and begin to expose and enjoy more of who they really are. It offers an opportunity to feel a comfort level with being their true selves.
Gay men haven't learned to befriend their bodies.

Bodies are for betraying while growing up.

Bodies are for disappointing you as an adult if you don’t look at as beautiful as media images that you buy into.
## Therapist Worksheet: Positive Attributions

**Directions:**
The following list reflects some of the ways in which your gay client has experienced or navigated life until now, including paralysis, anxiety, rigidity, loneliness, alienation, and invisibility. This exercise will help you clarify the type of defenses your client has honed over his lifetime and, more importantly, how to guide him toward updating the ways in which he navigates his life.

Taking into account the vocabulary of your client, create a list of positive experiences or attributes that you will help him achieve to allow him to move beyond the parameters of his earlier defenses.

1. 
2. 
3. 

What types of interventions will you use to help him reach these goals? Why do you expect these particular approaches to be beneficial to him?

1. 
2. 
3. 

How will you and he know that he has shifted his original position or gained more appropriate tools?

1. 
2. 
3.
Body Awareness Script

“You can appreciate what it is that is happening inside of you. Thoughts that you are having, images that come to you, or pictures in your mind.

You might even notice emotions that get stirred or physical sensations inside of your body.

Really pay attention to what it is that comes to you.

Be open to whatever these images, thoughts and sensations are, and we will discuss them in a few moments.”
“Picture yourself in the drivers seat, driving in a car, down the road, looking into the rear view mirror. (Have them notice or describe what the car looks like, smells like, etc. If you are working on a piece from their history, you may ask them to choose a car from that era).

As you first look in the mirror, everything is close and you see it all so clearly. You even notice the small warning that says things in the mirror are larger than they appear.

As you continue traveling along, things that were up close are now further and further away.

Eventually, as you continue moving along this road, things that were right with you are no longer visible, they are further and further behind you now.

You may remember what it is that you saw, and left behind. Even though the image may be remembered, you no longer see it. You no longer need to see it. It just recedes, further and further away.”
RELIGION

Religion: The set up

• How do you feel good about yourself if you grew up in a religious family whose institution defines homosexuality as evil?

• Growing up Fundamentalist, Mormon, Evangelical, Catholic is very difficult.

The ideal or hope is to have a family who can compartmentalize....separate out the teaching of the church for their love of their child

• Often the suggestions of switching churches is a vacant or too easy solution.

• The internalization of beliefs lives inside, frequently not at a different church

• Others feel the pain of this on a more deep and profound level including self hatred and self loathing
Start with a basic induction, and then continue as follows.

“Imagine a beautiful large circle, perhaps in the sand or in an open field. You might even imagine one that has been assembled with various stones. You can choose a place that is just right for you, a wonderful place outdoors or indoors.

Look all around you and appreciate the beauty of these surroundings. Take in the sounds and smells or simply notice the textures and the edges of this circle. Appreciate that inside of this circle is a space that is contained and sacred, your safety net.

Now, just notice that there is an opening to this circle. Perhaps it is a gate or simply a small opening where people can intentionally enter, with your permission. And you know that you are the gatekeeper of this inner circle. You allow those who deserve to be with you to enter through this opening, and you do well in maintaining the protection that you need between the outside and the inside world. That is right.”

[If you need details about the client’s vision of the circle, you can ask him to describe this place.]

“This is the place where your closest friends, chosen family, or biological family are next to you during very important moments in your lifetime—perhaps during happy moments, but also during times of pain and vulnerability. These may have been moments in the past or moments that will take place in your future. This is the place where support is generous, just for you. That is right.

Just notice who is with you—how each person looks, the expression on his or her face, and how they are situated inside of your inner circle. Excellent. You can also notice their body language as they tend to your needs inside of this special place. Who is standing around you? What are the ways in which they surround you? Appreciate how wonderful it feels to have them around you in this circle. As they surround you, you can experience the powerful strength of each and every one of these relationships.”
In the early to mid 80’s HIV became rampant in the gay male community. Gay men who lived or traveled in urban settings were bombarded with anxiety regarding HIV. At that time of diagnosis, people had a two year long life expectancy at most. Gay men in their 20’s on up in age were being diagnosed, ill, caring for several ailing friends or loosing multiple friends and it felt like the entire community was being decimated.
The Ties That Bind

Males learn to keep their emotional experiences private from others due to having been shamed and therefore overvalue emotional autonomy.

• The ties that bind male couples are not all that binding. Partners are continuously testing whether their attachment is sufficiently strong and secure to endure over the long haul.
• The therapist needs to address presenting issues in a way that validates their relationship but also helps the men make their attachment bond more secure.

— Gil Tunnell, Gay Male Couple Therapy-An Attachment Based Model, 2011
Some couples do not have enough of a protective bubble from the rest of the outside world:

• Work with couples to emphasize the importance of this. Have their own private sacred place that they create time to nurture.
• Getting caught in the excitement of the gay community can dilute the potential for intimacy between partners in a relationship.
• Tease this out with your couples. Often there is the assumption that this norm is okay.

– Rick Miller, LICSW
Masculinity and Vulnerability

Regardless of which modalities you choose to utilize, the most significant intervention with a male couple is to help elicit vulnerabilities and increase expressive communication within the couple.

— Rick Miller, LICSW
Open relationships or relationships that are non-monogamous can be common in the gay male community.

This model is easily accepted without people assessing whether it suits their relational needs or whether their relationship has the strength to sustain this.

Many couples switch to an open relationship during problematic times.
Open Relationships

What Open Looks Like

• Agreement made about what the rules will consist of.
• The primary couple relationship comes first.
• Sex is ongoing between partners.
• Rules are adhered to.
• The open relationship stems from mutual desire and emotional stability rather than a crisis that is not being tended to.
Questions for Providers

• Will you appear comfortable while discussing sex with your client?
• Are you able to adapt your language to use the right words with your clients?
• What are your internal instinctual reactions toward gay men?
• How do you feel about anal intercourse?
• Do you know that what you’re talking about is accurate?
• Are you prudish (according to gay male standards)? Will this show?
• How would you react when clients are diagnosed with HIV or STD’s?
• What are your attitudes about casual sex, anonymous sex or open relationships?
• Will you worry about offending him, or he worry about offending you?

– Miller
THERAPIST QUESTIONNAIRE

CHECKING IN WITH YOUR OWN FEELINGS

DIRECTIONS: The following questions are designed to help you catch emotional reactivity before it catches you. Answer honestly now so that you can handle the issue before bringing into the therapy room.

DO YOU:

• Find yourself caught in the bind of advising your client rather than helping him figure out what is best for him? (Keep in mind that advice can feel like disapproval, particularly around sexuality.)
  Yes  No

• Find it difficult to hear details about your client’s sexual adventures and as a result, feel uncertain about how to intervene?
  Yes  No

• Feel captivated or even excited by your client’s experiences?
  Yes  No

• Feel enraged by poor decisions your client has made or by him putting himself or others at risk when pursuing sex?
  Yes  No

• Find it nearly impossible to hear or discuss anything else except the behavior about which you are most concerned?
  Yes  No

• Worry so much about sounding judgmental or narrow minded and shaming that you feel paralyzed when it comes to intervention?
  Yes  No

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When the Leader Doesn’t Lead Effectively

Tendencies of Therapists:

• To get caught in the bind of advising clients – rather than helping them decide what is best for them.

• Advising, at times, can feel like disapproval,

• It can be difficult for clinicians to hear about the details of their client’s adventures and know how to intervene.

• The primary goal is helping clients with sexuality is to elicit self-reflection and honesty so he can assess his own sexual behavior without you having to confront him on this.
My Questions

• How did your family discuss, or not discuss, sex?
• How did you discover pornography? How did you get gay pornography, and at what age?
• Did you ever get caught masturbating? How was that handled?
• Were you ever caught having sex with guy friends? How was that handled, and how did you feel at the time?
• Which phone apps do you use? (This implies they do, and they may answer more honestly.)

— Miller
RELAXATION AND CENTERING

Developing the capacity for internal focus will enable your client to:

• Develop confidence in welcoming sensate pleasures
• Possess more realistic expectations of what he is able to achieve
• Achieve confidence in decision-making based on healthy choices, wisdom, and desire
• Adhere to internal strength in “heat-of-the-moment”
• Allow self-forgiveness and compassion for earlier mistakes
The Mind & Body Connection - Self Reflection

Before Sex

• What were you thinking about beforehand?
• What did you notice was going on inside during this time?
• What were the physical sensations that you are aware of?
• What were your thoughts about your potential actions?
The Mind & Body Connection

During Sex

• What were you thinking about during this period of time?
• What did you notice inside your body during this period of time?
• What were the physical sensations that you are aware of?
• What were the emotions that you were aware of?
• What were your thoughts about your actions?
The Mind & Body Connection

After Sex

• What were you thinking about after?
• What did you notice inside your body at this point?
• What were the physical sensations that you are aware of?
• What were the emotions that you were aware of?
• What were your thoughts about your actions?
Body Awareness Script

“You can appreciate what it is that is happening inside of you.
Thoughts that you are having, images that come to you, or pictures in your mind.
You might even notice emotions that get stirred or physical sensations in your body.
Really pay attention to what it is that comes to you.
Be open to whatever these images, thoughts and sensations are, and we will discuss them in a few minutes.”
Remember moments where you were able to shift your focus in a healthy way, such as an activity that you enjoy that distracts you from stress or discomfort. It feels good to shift the focus and you really know how good this is for you. (Give past examples they have mentioned).

Experience what has come to you, thoughts, images, or sensations. Appreciate the ways that you now feel as you remember these moments. Now allow yourself to notice distractions or behaviors that you may know really aren't good for you. As you know, everybody has these moments. Notice what you feel inside, both painful feelings or even appreciation for your ability to be honest with yourself. Any thoughts or feelings are just fine. I wonder if your ability to be honest with yourself might feel like a relief? (Expand on the healthy behavior and have them magnify these sensations).
DIRECTIONS: Read each of the following opening statements and then answer the question that follows.

1. The comparing mind is always inaccurate. Comparing yourself to others creates feelings of inadequacy and disappointment. Instead, map your progress! How has your life changed for the better since you started on your own mindfulness journey?

2. Happiness comes from within; it emerges rather than being bestowed. Making good decisions regarding self-care protects that happiness. What can you do today that will feel like a good decision tomorrow?

3. Embracing who you are with confidence and care will radiate an energy that can be mirrored back. What would you like the world to know about you that you have kept hidden in the past?

4. A varied support network will be ready when you need it—one person or one group may not have all the answers. What connections can you imagine in the future, whether through an activity, an interest, or a shared concern?
5. Regular connection keeps the mind and heart open. Hosting dinners, book clubs, or other gatherings involves sharing yourself, your home, and your vitality with others. How might you create settings that are unique to you and welcoming to others?

6. Being alone sometimes is good, allowing you to rebalance, rest, and turn inward. What’s more, being comfortable with yourself is essential to true comfort in the world. What are some things you can do with time away from others?

7. Giving back brings rewards. Altruistic activities improve mood and create a sense of purpose. What kind of volunteering might bring you contentment and allow you to feel appreciated for your special gifts?

8. Creativity comes in all forms, whether making wardrobe or design choices or cooking, writing, or singing, and creativity is the juice of a vital life. What talents—perhaps long ignored—could you make time for now?
9. Truly taking care of your body is part of taking care of your mind. A good diet, the right amount of sleep, and enough exercise support the beautiful, strong container that is you. What changes can you make starting now to show yourself love and compassion moving forward?

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10. A practice becomes a lifestyle. Continuing to use mindfulness strategies, including relaxation, body awareness, appreciation, breath work, and listening to scripts, will help you to feel centered and strong when you are not in the therapy office. What strategies do you like best thus far, and how will you use them?

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"You have been traveling, and your trip is nearing completion. This is a journey that no longer feels new; in fact, this is a journey that you can even take with your eyes closed. As you enjoy the experience of having your eyes closed, you feel the opposite of closed... wide open.

Imagine that as your destination is closer within reach, the familiar feelings and sounds entice you. A feeling of familiarity and peace comes over you—like driving down the road to your home with the satisfaction of knowing you have arrived at your destination. The feelings of relief are yours to enjoy now. Imagine the countless times you have come home—how as you get closer, that peaceful easy feeling is felt and now is embedded inside your body. That is right.

Before you go inside, appreciate the tranquil feeling that you have and imagine looking up at the sky on a very clear night. The stars are sparkling in the sky, reminding you of the vast beauty that surrounds you.

Home. It is such a magical concept—like being a child who is happy to be embraced by his welcoming family or a pet who excitedly reunites with its master, regardless of how long or how short the separation has been. Home is being in the space that feels familiar and just right. These simple words—you Are Home. Excellent.

Home contains so many meanings. Yes, not only is your home the structure where you reside, but it also is the space that includes many complex and intimate levels. Home offers you shelter, protection, and warmth. It is a place to be safe and to grow. It is a place and a feeling.

As you open the door, the calm familiarity of comfort and peace awaits you. You come in, kick off your shoes, adjust the lighting, and enjoy that perfect feeling... there is no place like home. That is right.
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