



Choosing a Qualified Clinician

Introduction

This document provides information and suggestions to help you choose a qualified clinician 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 those that use hypnosis in their practice:

- Professionally licensed health care providers - trained/certified in hypnosis
- Non-licensed/registered/lay hypnotherapists – no professional healthcare license

Licensed health care providers hold a recognized professional license in fields like medicine, nursing, psychology, social work, dentistry, chiropractic, and counseling. In addition to all the years of training for an advanced degree required in their field or expertise for licensure, board certification, and mandatory ongoing continued education, further training and/or certification is obtained in hypnosis. Many will also become members of one or more professional organizations dedicated to providing training, ethics guidelines 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 for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis.

Non-licensed/registered/lay hypnotherapists do not have professional licensing in health care fields as mentioned above. Some states may require registration with the state before hypnosis can be practiced. It is important to know that registration is not licensure, often does not include educational requirements, and does not imply an advanced degree. Hypnosis training may come from self-study to non-accredited hypnosis schools/programs that generally do not come under state or federal regulation. The lack of regulatory oversight makes it possible for lay-hypnotherapists to take a weekend course and call themselves a “hypnotherapist” in many states.

The significant difference between a professionally licensed health care provider and a lay-hypnotherapist is the increased level of education, training, experience, background, and accountability associated with the licensed health care provider which the lay-hypnotherapist simply does not have. Additionally, lay-hypnotherapists cannot bill their services to insurance companies because they lack appropriate qualifications and credentialing.

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?

Choosing a Qualified Clinician

- 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 nationally accredited doctoral programs for hypnosis. So how can someone claim to be a doctor of hypnosis?

The answer is that the credentials DCH were obtained through a non-accredited program and are not recognized by professional health care accredited programs. This is very confusing because the public assumption is that anyone claiming to be a doctor has gone through years of training in a fully accredited program. But in fact, there are non-accredited programs that offer doctorate degrees in hypnosis in as little as six months, with no prior college education required. While the actual hypnosis training may be good, it doesn’t compare to the amount of schooling and experience required to earn a nationally accepted, fully accredited doctorate degree in a recognized health care field with additional training/certification in hypnosis.

The ability to obtain a non-accredited “doctorate of hypnosis 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 health care accredited programs require 8+ years of university level schooling.
- Ask for information on the program so you can check it out for yourself. (Some programs that claim accreditation only attest to making sure the program was taught meeting standards of adult learner programs, not the actual educational content.)

Section 3 - The Therapeutic Relationship is Built On Trust

An effective clinician 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:

Choosing a Qualified Clinician

- Does the clinician offer a 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

Hypnosis can be used to leverage many other types of therapies such as cognitive behavioral therapy, biofeedback, neuro-linguistic programming, and solution-focused therapies, thus enhancing the effectiveness of sessions. The advantage licensed health care providers have is that they combine hypnosis with all the techniques and therapies they have been trained/certified to use.

Interview Questions:

- What other techniques beside hypnosis does the clinician offer?
- What type of training and experience in additional techniques does the person have?
- Does the clinician routinely combine techniques?

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 some people that use hypnosis in their practice (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.