

# Considering the Hypnotic Practice of Dental Hypnosis

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Professional dental training incorporates the history of Hypnodontics, an analgesia free method of treating dental pain, which was promoted by Dr. Aaron Moss and accepted by the American Dental Association over fifty years ago. There are dentists, primarily those associated with dental centers, who continue to offer hypnodontic treatment. However, the general dental practitioner will tell you that it is not cost-effective for them to prepare patients with hypnodontics when they have access to an array of new pain reducing options.

Also, the marketing of dentistry has changed its focus. Today, the emphasis is on having a beautiful smile inferring whiter and straighter teeth. Rather than fearing the loss of all your teeth, implants are now available as needed. New methods are friendlier, less painful and less intrusive. For patients with uncontrollable dental fears, anxieties or phobias there are referrals for psychological counseling or anti-anxiety medications. For more difficult patients medical sedation is recommended.

Colleagues and clients who have shared their experiences of wanting to use self-hypnosis without an analgesic or anesthetic have encountered a mixed reception. Reports have included dentists in a state of disbelief or frightened by the experience. Some dentists have suggested the patient just has a high tolerance for pain, while others infer the patient is substance abusing which alters pain sensation. Other dentists have been impressed with the results and found working with such patients more comfortable and less physically exhausting. However, the dental profession as a whole would rather rely on dental protocols within their control that are consistent, predictable, and reliable.

For the hypnosis practitioner, this raises the question as to whether there is a market for your services to expand into the area of dental hypnosis. The answer is **Yes**. But, just like the dental profession that has updated itself, so the hypnosis practitioner who wants to offer dental hypnosis needs to update with new knowledge and new marketing strategies.

Let's begin by looking at the field of dental hypnosis and how you learn more about it. Begin by doing an internet search for the terms *dental hypnosis* and *hypnodontics*. Notice the key points that are featured at each site. You also want to learn the language, by searching both general and specific dental sites for dental terminology and treatment procedures. Your next step is to contact any of the professional hypnosis organizations. Find among their members those practitioners in the dental hypnosis field who have websites, posted or published articles or offer training literature or videos. Whenever possible, take training offered in dental hypnosis and pain management by different trainers.

This will provide you with a range of experiences with various hypnotic approaches that have been found to be successful. At conferences, ask around and find colleagues who have done dental hypnosis. Ask questions such as which techniques work best for them and their clients, how do they contact dentists and what kinds of marketing have they found to be successful.

Those in the marketing profession spend an inordinate amount of money trying to determine what will make the customer buy the product, or what will make the customer happy, satisfied and return again. You can take this same marketing strategy and it will cost you *Nothing, Zero, Zilch – Not One Penny!* Yet it will become your best marketing strategy for both attracting clients and building a working relationship with dentists. Your job is to simply ask questions, listen and take notes. Ask everyone you know and don't know about their dental experiences, how they feel about the dentists they have had, what their pain was like before and after, how do they feel about future dental visits, what are their dental concerns, what keeps them from going to the dentist on a regular basis. And, don't forget to add yourself to the list. Your own experiences are valuable as well.

You will find that you have probably gathered more information than you ever wanted to know about dental experiences. However, you now have a wealth of information to draw upon. From this body of information you will begin to recognize certain common themes. These will become the "core issues". These core issues will tell you where you need to focus if you want to be successful in dental hypnosis. For instance, many people have serious concerns about pain. This should reinforce to you the need to learn about hypnotic pain management, hypnotic analgesia and hypnotic anesthesia.

Beyond the core issues, you will also hear some unique, anecdotal experiences. One man told me the story of how he uses self-hypnosis while in the dental chair. He sends the dental pain from his mouth down his body and out his feet. His only problem is that his feet always hurt afterwards! He got the process right, but he needed some hypnotic help to dissipate the pain more effectively. What you are building from the core issues and anecdotal stories is a knowledge base regarding the concerns and issues of clients and how to build your own comfortable repertoire of appropriate and effective hypnotic tools and suggestions.

Once you know the scope of practice in dental hypnosis, can speak knowledgeably about dental terms and procedures and have a good understanding of personal dental experiences, you are ready to start building a working relationship with dentists. Let's go back to that earlier example of the core issue of pain being a major concern to many dental patients. You now approach a dentist and tout your services of pain reduction through dental hypnosis. There is a good possibility the dentist may rebuff you and say how he or she has available the latest topical anesthetic gels or equipment that reduces

pain to a minimum. But, you have information on your side and in the most polite of manner you can respond. “Yes, doctor, I agree with you that dentistry has made great advances in reducing pain, but I have talked to people extensively who have told me that these new methods have not worked equally well for everyone. As a matter of fact, I have clients coming to me because dental pain is still an issue for them.”

The door is now open. You, as the dental hypnotist, can now move forward on three levels. First, you can use what you have learned from people who would never tell their dentists what they have told you. This is your bridge, by showing the dentist how dental hypnosis has a lot to offer for all kinds of dental situations where patients have not been satisfied customers. Second, if you’ve done your internet homework and also looked at how dentists promote themselves on the web, especially those dentists you are planning to contact, you will have a good idea of what aspects of dental hypnosis to promote. The third is to apply the same marketing strategy to dentists. Ask dentists what concerns and problems they have with their patients. This provides you with the opportunity to explain how dental hypnosis can create a more relaxed and compliant patient. Such a patient will allow the dentist to work quickly and effectively while at the same time reducing the underlying tension that exists between dentist and patient.

The questions you can ask are endless and the information gathered first-hand will tell you more than any book can about where to focus and market your dental hypnosis practice. And, don’t forget to ask the dentist if he or she finds their job very stressful. You get the idea. Dentists can become clients too!

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