

## Tinnitus and Chronic Illness

Would you be interested in experiencing a full slate of clients, everyday? Did you know there are 40,000,000 chronically ill Americans? These people suffer from everything from chronic fatigue to chronic pain. Almost all of these chronic illnesses are essentially medically un-treatable.

Did you know there are 12,000,000 people suffering from maddening ringing in the ears (tinnitus)? I've done thousands of hours of research and spent over \$11,000 in developing a complete multi-modal program to help these people. Why? Because, for almost three years I was one of "those people."

I spent nearly three years in noise hell. The Emergency Broadcast System went off in my head 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. It never ceased, until finally, it remitted in 1996. Since beginning my healing process that included generally unknown techniques of hypnotherapy, a surprising selection of medications, interventions from other professionals and lots of support, I was finally made well.

When I first began publishing about my success in working with clients suffering with tinnitus, over 100 hypnotherapists in this country hung their shingle out with the goal to help those with tinnitus, only to meet with failure at every corner because of the depth, breadth and complexity of the malady. These therapists sincerely believed, apparently, that because they were able to utilize trance for pain management and other challenges facing their clients, that they were able to assist those suffering from tinnitus, hyperacusis (sensitivity to sound), environmental illness (multiple chemical sensitivity) and other chronic illnesses like chronic fatigue syndrome.

Why did this group fail? Hypnosis doesn't work unless the therapist knows exactly what to do. Optimistic and kind therapists simply overestimate the value of what is in their tool box. Although there are therapists that can help, they are few and far between. Only a few appear willing to take the time to learn and understand the suffering of people like you and me.

What would it take for you to help this suffering population gradually improve the quality of their lives? A hypnotherapist working with a person that suffers from tinnitus and other chronic illnesses is like a neurosurgeon doing brain surgery. The neurosurgeon is the highest paid of the surgeons. They earn hundreds of thousands of dollars per year. The hypnotherapist who is willing to invest about 50 hours of personal education and \$500 in training materials can learn how to have a practice that easily yields \$100,000 of income per year.

I read over 1200 articles from neuroscience, psychological publications and medical studies from all over the world. I learned that long term hypnotherapy is the most powerful adjunct in reducing tinnitus volume and suffering. Adjunct means that we aren't going it alone. We are working in cooperation with medical doctors, psychiatrists, osteopaths, and physical therapists. The complexities of tinnitus suffering are daunting at first, but once an understanding is gained on how tinnitus (and other chronic illnesses) is generated and how it can be relieved and reduced, there is hope for your clients.

Each of my clients readies him/herself for 20 hours of consultation on other therapies I've encouraged with other professionals, hypnotherapy with me, and a complete understanding of how their chronic illness is generated and what they must do every day in order to improve their situation. Sometimes, with the assistance of their medical doctors, their psychologists and other professionals, as a team we are able to beat the unbeatable. People who suffer from chronic fatigue, tinnitus, multiple chemical sensitivity almost all begin to heal...a large majority to the point of remission. I want you to be able to help these people too.

"....and when you open your eyes the noise will have disappeared...," and it NEVER does. It can't. Hypnotic suggestion and post hypnotic suggestions, reading a script of beautiful metaphors, simply won't do anything for those suffering from chronic illnesses especially tinnitus.

The difference between my work and every other hypnotherapist is simple. When I was suffering to the point of suicide, I HAD to get better or I was going to end my life. My tinnitus was as loud as a rock concert. The emergency broadcasting system was going off in my head for 24 hours per day for 30 months. I HAD NO CHOICE but to get better. My discovery, which took 30

months of research (and still continues) and thousands of dollars, was that there was not just one solution to the tinnitus (or any chronic illness) problem. It was more than emotional, more than physical, more than spiritual and more than psychological. A multi-modal approach to healing was the key.

### **The Chronically Ill Can Begin To Heal**

The process is at times frustrating. Time passes slowly. The chronically ill client needs to make a number of commitments. Working with chronic illness including tinnitus is far more complex than quitting smoking. He/she must commit money and time and the willingness to participate in far more than hypnotherapy if he/she is to regain wellness. It can take months or years to get well, as it did for me. Many people, unfortunately will only experience minor improvement...and for a few...none at all. Most, however, will achieve significant case gain, in time.

No one seems to listen to your chronically ill client. "Nothing can be done" is what he/she's been told. The chronically ill client can't be helped in 15 minute visits to his/her medical doctor. Even with appropriate medications, which are necessary in working with the vast majority of chronically ill clients, the medical doctor plays only a small but significant role in the healing process. This is one area where the medical community is open to the educated hypnotherapist working with their patients. The medical doctor simply doesn't have the time necessary to devote to the chronically ill patient, and this is where you come in. When it becomes common knowledge that you are working with the chronically ill and especially those with tinnitus you will find yourself swamped with requests for help within the year, should you choose to follow in this most rewarding path.

### **The Initial Interview**

When your client arrives at your door, he/she is usually despondent. I always book a 120-150 minute session for the initial interview. This first meeting will cover the following:

1. Client assurance that most people do improve with time and dramatically so.
2. A 90 minute case analysis specially designed for the chronically ill client. (Write my office for information about this special analysis procedure.)
3. The signing of a statement understanding your credentials and non-licensure status.
4. Presentation of the basic plan for therapy which will include medication from a medical doctor, seeing other appropriate professionals in conjunction with you, including an osteopath, a physical therapist, a psychologist, a psychiatrist, a TMJ specialist, an ENT, an audiologist and possibly other professionals.
5. Explanation of the various hypno-therapeutic interventions you will be using including hypnoanalysis, ego state therapy, time line therapy, focusing exercises and numerous other rarely used techniques.
6. Explanation of the fear deconditioning process which will take place to reduce tinnitus distress.
7. Explanation of the processes of auditory habituation where external sound sources in their day to day life will be utilized to help create secondary sound sources for the brain to hear.
8. Explanation of medications like antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications that actually reduce not only distress but volume and how they can expedite the healing process.
9. Explanation of the questions and medical tests that need to be sought from the medical community to assist in the healing process.
10. Explanation of what tinnitus (or his/her chronic illness) is caused by and how you will be addressing the causes - physical and emotional.
11. Scheduling of weekly (two hour) appointments for the next 7-10 weeks to begin the healing process.

### **Your First Hypnotherapy Session**

Having received medical records from the client assuring that there is no tumor causing the tinnitus (via MRI or CT scan) and that the blood chemistry and glucose levels are in balance, and having eliminated all other possible medical causes (of which there are many), you can then begin your first session of hypnoanalysis. Hypnoanalysis is a powerful therapeutic modality that allows the hypnotherapist to find emotional and physical causes of various symptoms. Hypnoanalysis is a lengthy and powerful process that takes weeks with the chronically ill. During this time the client will begin to experience less distress as the hypnoanalysis desensitizes the individual to his/her malady. With luck, there will be an emotional predisposition to the individual's

tinnitus, and hypnoanalysis will eventually uncover this background. The "aha" experience or that of "insight" can often make dramatic emotional improvement in the client's symptoms and emotional outlook which is necessary to preface physical symptom improvement.

### **Later Sessions**

In later sessions over the coming months you will utilize other forms of hypnotherapy, continuing to pay attention to the results of the medications and other treatments that are underway. You normally will be acting as a coordinator for them. In the first few months the norm is to watch your client change from a deeply depressed or distressed state of mind to one of hope and optimism. In the ensuing months the client will begin, in most cases to experience symptomatic relief. There is no time frame that is predictable for any one case. If a client suffers from significant hearing loss, he/she will heal at a different rate than one with perfect hearing. The variables are many.

### **Hypnotherapist as Cheerleader**

It's true that during the healing process your client will experience setbacks and difficult days when he/she loses hope. You become the most important person in his/her life at times like this. You become cheerleader, biggest fan and supporter. You keep him/her going.

### **Then One Day....**

....you will get the greatest phone call you will ever receive...this week..."I can't make it today, I have to...." I love this phone call. The person is feeling better. He/she is beginning to heal and doesn't have time to see you, the instrument of his/her healing. This phone call is what I look forward to with every client. It is always my goal to eventually say good-bye and hear the words of thanks and relief from my clients. It may have taken six months or two years but it is wonderful. If every practicing hypnotherapist in America were to have a full schedule of 100 clients per year we couldn't even begin to assist the most difficult cases or those who are suffering the most. Please, think about helping those only you, with just a little education and experience, can help to heal. What would the quality of your life be if you could start changing lives, one by one? How would you feel about yourself if you could see the faces of your clients as they cry with tears of joy because of the work and dedication you have given to them? I think you already know. I know I do.

*Kevin Hogan suffered from tinnitus for 30 months. He sees approximately 100 clients per year with tinnitus, hyperacusis, chronic fatigue, multiple chemical sensitivity and other chronic illnesses. He has become a resource for thousands of sufferers across the world in assisting them to find help. Kevin is the author of several books on this subject. For additional information visit his website at [www.kevinhogan.com](http://www.kevinhogan.com)*