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# When to Refer a Client for Hypnotherapy

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## Professional Reference for Therapists

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## Purpose

This handout clarifies when a client's problem is better addressed through **hypnosis** rather than continued **talk-based psychotherapy**. It is designed to help licensed therapists determine when to refer a client for hypnotherapy as a complementary or alternative approach.

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## The Key Difference

Psychotherapy and hypnotherapy both aim to create positive change, but they do so in different ways.

- **Psychotherapy** focuses on changing understanding, perspective, and meaning. It works through discussion, reflection, and insight — helping clients gain awareness and make conscious decisions.
- **Hypnotherapy** focuses on changing automatic responses and conditioned reactions. It works through focused attention and unconscious learning — helping clients update habits and emotional patterns that operate outside conscious control.
- In short, psychotherapy helps change how a person *thinks* about the problem, while hypnosis helps change how they *automatically respond* to it.

# When Referral Is Appropriate

Refer to hypnotherapy when the client's symptoms are:

- **Automatic, habitual, or reflexive**
- **Persisting despite insight or cognitive understanding**
- **Emotionally or physiologically driven** rather than logical
- **Reinforced by body memory or conditioned response**

Typical phrases that indicate suitability:

- “I understand it, but I still react the same way.”
  - “I know it’s irrational, but I can’t stop.”
  - “It just happens automatically.”
  - “I keep talking about it, but nothing changes.”
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## Common Issues Suited for Hypnotherapy

### Anxiety & Stress Response

- Panic, tension, or restlessness not relieved by reasoning
- Overactive startle or fear reactions

### Habits & Compulsions

- Nail biting, smoking, overeating, skin picking, procrastination

### Somatic and Psychophysiological Symptoms

- Chronic pain or tension that worsens under stress
- Functional disorders (e.g., IBS, TMJ, bruxism)

### Sleep and Rest Regulation

- Difficulty falling asleep or quieting the mind
- Nighttime rumination or early-morning waking

### Performance & Confidence

- Test anxiety, public speaking fears, creative blocks

## Residual Trauma Responses

- Emotional overreactions after trauma has been processed
  - Persistent physiological activation despite therapy progress
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## When to Continue or Prioritize Psychotherapy

- Unstable mood or unsafe behavior patterns
  - Active psychosis or untreated substance use
  - When meaning-making, relationship work, or cognitive restructuring are primary goals
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## Framing the Referral for Clients

You might say:

“We’ve done a lot of good work helping you understand this pattern. Hypnotherapy could help retrain the automatic part of your mind that’s still holding the old reaction. It’s a way to align what you consciously want with how your body and emotions respond.”

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## Summary Statement

**Therapy changes understanding. Hypnosis changes automatic responses.**  
Refer when understanding is no longer the barrier to change.

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**Prepared for Professional Collaboration** Bryan — Certified Hypnotherapist,  
*EasyTrance.com* Helping clients change automatic patterns easily and naturally.