

Week 9 Video 2 Pain Management

Whenever you're working with a client for pain management, it is essential that you get medical approval to work with the issue. The main reason for this is because you can actually use hypnosis to mask a physical pain and anytime a person has a physical pain, it's simply an indication that something needs attention, that there's a problem going on. If a client comes to you and says "Hey, I broke my leg, can you do hypnosis?" No. You send that client to the hospital, get the leg taken care of.

Other clients will come in and say, "You know, I have this chronic pain. This chronic pain in my lower back and nothing I do seems to make a difference, can you help me?" The first thing you want to do when you're talking to a client actually over the phone rather than even seeing them is to ask them if they are getting medical attention, what kind of medical attention. If they are not getting any medical attention, it's very risky for you to take a client on because of the ability to mask any pain and if you mask the pain, there may be a real problem like a tumor that's causing this. It doesn't even matter if the client says, "I don't care. I'm an adult. I want you to do this. It's not worth the risk."

There are two different kinds of pain management. One is for chronic pain and there are a number of people who have chronic pain issues that doctors are sometimes unable to figure out what's going with them, and many times, there's an emotional component and the questions that you're going to be asking your client are going to be finding out as much as you can about the physical pain. Is it worse when they're stressed? Is worse in the morning? Is it worse at night? What makes it feel good? If there is no more medical intervention that needs to be dealt with on this chronic pain and the doctor sends you the note that says, "Yes, you can absolutely see my client. I don't see any harm in hypnosis." Keep that note with the file. I'm going to be adding a pdf to this page which will give you sample of a kind of a letter that you'd want to get from a doctor, just don't accept a phone call saying it's okay. You want this in writing because you want to basically cover yourself in case of any future problems.

So medical approval, utmost importance for this. Remember when we talked about the depth testing, remember #4 in depth testing was when you had your client remove all the feeling from their hand and you actually could pinch your client's hand and they would feel touch but no pain, this is when we use depth testing as a major convincer that they can use their mind to actually reduce their pain especially for those chronic pain issues. We know that when clients are on chronic pain, when they focus more on their pain, what happens? If they focus more on their pain, their pain tends to get bigger.

So if they're watching TV, they may not notice their pain when they're distracted or if they're at a movie or having dinner.

So, allowing them to be aware that there are different times that when they focus on their pain, their pain tends to grow. But when you do, back to this testing, I want you to test them one two three and do up to stage four, no need to do stage five and stage six.

Most of the time, people in chronic pain notice that stress can make their pain worse. So the stress management that I talked about in the last video is going to be very helpful but teaching your client to also visualize and imagine whatever that physical pain is in a different way has untold benefits. Now, what I mean is this, the client may be coming to you and say, "Okay, I have this pain in my lower back and it feels like this big knot, this big red knot in my back." Make sure you write down big red knot and ask them "how often do you notice and when you feel it, does that image kind come up in your mind?" "Oh yeah, I can feel it getting redder and hotter and redder and hotter." So, this gives you some information about how you could have your client imagine that physical red hot knot in their back to imagine it differently. This is where that first session is so important of getting information and finding out more about how your client experiences the world whether it's visual, auditory, or kinesthetic.

One of the things I do is I ask my client to "close your eyes and I'd like you to imagine right now that you have red hot knot in your back, just imagine it, just feel it, just pretend you imagine it. And I'd like you just to use your creative imagination and if you could do absolutely anything to help make that feel better, what would help that feel better right this moment? Maybe it's a cool washcloth, maybe it's healing hands, massaging the back." I don't know what it is but ask them to allow their creative imagination to come up with some ways to help it feel better and you kind of give them ideas, like, "Would it feel better if you were in a hot tub?" "Oh yeah, that would feel so much better. I could relax." Find out from them what would feel better. Maybe a really nice cool washcloth on that or maybe a hot pad helps it feel better. Whatever it is, you're going to be using that in the hypnosis session to help your client, so instead of visualizing that red knot, visualizes that "ah...that cool washcloth on that, it feels so nice, feels so good." There are a number of ways that you can use whatever is going to feel good for your client in hypnosis.

I've had some clients with severe chronic pain where they had issues that were never going to get better. They believe they were never going to get better. The doctors have told them, all the physicians have told them. It's not my job to help change their belief. I might believe that they could heal themselves, but if they don't believe it, we don't want to go down that road, okay. We're not healers and advertising ourselves as a healer in

any way can open up a can of worms, so unless you're already a healer and getting your hypnosis training to augment that.

When you're doing the hypnosis with your client, you're going to be having your client do the day rehearsal that we talked about in another video. Having them imagine themselves going throughout the day but imagining their body feeling good, so imagining that person moving their muscles, feeling comfortable as they go throughout the day, we want to continue to reinforce focusing on what it is they want to feel rather than focusing on what it is they don't want to feel.

The self-hypnosis for pain management, you're going to have your client, the person with a knot in their back, have them imagine that they're in that hot tub or cool or warm, whatever they need, so have them imagine themselves in that situation where their back is feeling comfortable and good. Have them imagine themselves in that situation where their back is feeling comfortable and good. Have them imagine their future self moving around, feeling comfortable, doing the sports, doing the walking, so this is really key for pain management. It's not necessarily healing but it can help people reduce their pain in the moment simply by changing how they're thinking and how they're viewing their pain.

There's a lot more to pain management. There are people who specialize in pain management with hypnosis, and well, I'm not saying you have to go and get a certification in pain management, it's a subset of a whole other area of hypnosis where there's actually been tons of research in pain management. There are over 5,000 research studies on how hypnosis can help pain management and you know that this is true because of your experience even with just simply twisting and pinching.

There are a few videos below this video that I want you to spend some time and watch and the first one comes from the BBC in England and it's a short video that shows a hypnotherapist who is doing self-hypnosis while he's having hernia surgery. Now, it's not graphic, it's not gross, it's not scary. It's a very compelling, amazing video that he's doing this. Now, I believe he owns a hypnosis school in England and what he's doing as the surgery is going on, he's continuing to reinforce the image and the feeling of allowing his body to feel numb and it's really fascinating. Below it are two additional videos about pain management and one of them also uses hypnosis to help a client be able to reduce the amount of anesthesia they're using. There's been a lot of research on this and we know anesthesia is generally fine to use but if a patient can reduce the anesthesia, then the recovery time is faster and much easier, and we don't use it much here in the United States although I do have some colleagues that have been teaching their clients hypnosis and they've also been there in the settings where the client has

had surgery helping them maintain that state of hypnosis so they have less anesthesia. It's absolutely fascinating.

So remember, medical approval, depth testing, and finding out the most important thing is what would feel good? So I'll share with you even though I've been doing hypnosis for many many years, I never really used it only for pain management ever and one time it was like the first day of summer, I was taking my kids to Ocean City New Jersey and they were 8 and 11 and we were with another mom and a couple other kids, it was one of those beautiful perfect beach sunny days. The sky was just that perfect blue and people were out there on the beach. It was around noon and they had tons of umbrellas and I was just fascinated by the patterns of the umbrellas and they're all really bright colors. And as I'm looking at the umbrellas, all of a sudden, I realized that I had walked into a telephone pole, one of those big aluminum telephone poles but I had walked into it toe first and I could hear the toe break, the bone break. And I immediately let out choice four-letter words, my kids looked at me, my friend looked me and I'm like "Uh..." the pain was incredible.

Now, I've ever broken one other thing in my life and that was same toe about 20 years before, so I wasn't worried about it. I knew I didn't have to go to the hospital. I knew there wasn't anything to do with the broken toe and I was actually wearing sandals with socks. Don't ask me why. I was certainly not a fashion plate. So, I sat down and everybody sat with me and they were like, "You have to go home mom," "what do I have to do..." blah-blah-blah and all they wanted to do, the kids, they wanted to walk down the boardwalk. They wanted the rides and just to get cotton candy and I was not about to say my friend "Here, sure you take four kids and I'll go back and put my foot up." So I said, "No problem. I'll be fine" and I immediately had to create an image in my mind of something that would help my foot feel good. And so, I imagined I was wearing a big big boot and inside that boot was tons of slushy ice so that my foot would feel totally numb and cold. And so I imagined that, I kept on imagining it. And you know, I mean, I know this stuff works but I've never had to use it for myself.

So I imagined my boot full of the slushy ice, my foot started to feel numb and cold. And I just made sure I kind of walked on the heel. I didn't want to cause any other problems with this, but every once in a while, maybe every 5 or 10 minutes, the pain would kind of seep through, I realized, I was thinking "Oh my toe, I just broke my toe." The minute I would think that, then the pain would intensify. And so I had to start saying a mantra to myself to keep myself going because by this point, we had only gotten down about a block and I'm thinking, "How do I do this?" So I said to myself, the more I pay attention to my toe, the number it feels. The more I pay attention to my toe, the number it feels.

So this time, when I paid attention to my toe, it immediately went to that numb feeling. Well, we were able to walk about a mile down the boardwalk, the kids had lunch and pizza, we came back, we walk to their house, and this is about three hours later. I hadn't taken any aspirin or any pain medication and it was still numb and cold and if I really paid attention, it could hurt but I did my best to focus on that ice, "on the ice, on the ice, the ice." So we get back to my friend's house and I sat down and I asked my daughter if she would take off my sandal for me and take off my socks because it was just too hard for me to reach at that point and so she takes off my sandals, she takes off my socks, and she goes "Oh my God! Mom, your toe!" And I looked down at my toe and it's like six different colors and it's about this big. And you know what happened? I fainted. Totally fainted right there in the chair. When I opened my eyes, they actually gave me a glass of water and then aspirin and I put back the sock so I didn't have to look at my toe because I had to get that image out of my mind. It was not until about six months later where I was sharing the story with somebody who actually was podiatrist and he said, "You know, you could've caused more damage just by walking on a broken toe." And I said, "Ooh, I had no idea." So I'm sharing this with you so that remembering when we have physical pain, it's generally a good idea to get somebody to look at it and it's generally a good idea to not go walking for a couple of miles when you have a broken toe.

So take a moment, take some time actually because these videos, some of them are pretty short, one of them is pretty long, just watch the videos. We're going to talk more about this in the next webinar about pain management because there are many different ways that we can help our clients but it all depends on where our client is with that physical pain, and just notice how you feel about the pain management. Would you help somebody in a situation where they're having surgery so that they could have less anesthesia? You know, any of this, it's all possible but if you feel uncomfortable with doing pain management, then don't do it. Just refer them to somebody else. I'll see you in the next video.

[00:18:02 END OF VIDEO]