

Review of 5-Part Fundamental Hypnosis Workshop

Reviewed by Roxanna Erickson Klein,
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The "Fundamental Hypnosis Workshop" is a series of five sequential three-hour sessions. Featuring well-known Ericksonian teachers, the course familiarizes students with the power, potential, and basic ideas pertaining to the integration of hypnosis into clinical practice. Each session included a demonstration and a brief exercise.

This Forum Review is written from the perspectives of three attendees who have differing familiarity with hypnosis: Ryc and Carlos, are newcomers while Roxanna is a seasoned practitioner. It is hoped that the contrast will facilitate a more comprehensive evaluation for readers.

FH 1 Introduction and Foundations of Hypnosis

Presented by: Michael Yapko, PhD

The initial session included commentary on core concepts; differing views of hypnosis; and the direction of research. Yapko described induction as a vehicle to guide one through subjective phenomenology. In a clearly outlined presentation, he laid building blocks for skill building regarding the use of hypnosis within clinical practice.

Roxanna Erickson Klein (REK): Yapko was clear, down to earth, practical, and useful. He is an effective communicator who has the ability to describe things with the clarity and logic that promote understanding.

Carlos Olson (CO): This session was a wonderful introduction to hypnosis. It related the history and perspectives. It clarified misconceptions and described the purpose of hypnosis as a tool for stimulating new therapeutic associations within the client. I appreciated Yapko's group hypnosis experience, giving me the opportunity to experience hypnosis within in the therapeutic process.

Ryc Strader (RS): This session sparked a foundation of hope. Yapko's approach laid building blocks of "possibilities." I see myself referring back to this session as I incorporate hypnotherapy into my practice.

FH 2 Phenomenological Approach to Hypnosis

Presented by: Jeffrey Zeig, PhD

Zeig emphasized that the context of suggestion is as fundamental as the suggestion itself. Adeptly using an analogy of the way that entertainers "set the stage" for further development to "draw in" the audience, Zeig intrigued the attendees with his descriptions of sensory integration into the therapeutic process.

REK: Zeig continues to reach beyond academic approaches. He creatively incorporates day-to-day activities into the process of learning, sowing the seeds for ongoing learning that listeners may not even recognize. His perfectly timed explanation of fractionation for trance deepening led seamlessly into the exercise session. He emphasized two useful constructs: the differentiation of the individual from the identified problem and the interactive potential of trance work.

CO: This session was particularly helpful in providing a model of induction to assist beginners in conceptualizing the process. I found of tremendous use the use of sensory and perception devices in absorption that were presented and practiced in the break out groups. Zeig's emphasis on hypnosis as evocation rather than suggestion was an important clarification.

RS: Zeig's description of "state," his continuity in referring to evocation and utilization, and his descriptions of the steps/elements of a session (Pre-Induction, Induction, Deepening, Therapy, and Termination) provided me with a practical approach to understand trance phenomena.

FH 3 Treatment Planning in Ericksonian Hypnosis

Presented by: Bill O'Hanlon

Addressing the central importance of case conceptualization, O'Hanlon diligently used reviews of Erickson's own work to illustrate the process. By seeking commonalities of client issues, both within a single case and among similar cases, O'Hanlon illustrated the investigative process and its use as a springboard to envision therapeutic direction.

REK: O'Hanlon has a style that is more informal and off-the-cuff than the other presenters. He is supremely talented in assessing the degree of readiness for the learners to move forward in gaining foundations of knowledge. By soliciting audience participation in finding commonalities from among the

cases presented, he was effectively engaging. He emphasized the fundamental importance of direction in therapeutic hypnosis.

CO: This session introduced me to the process of examining presenting problems from a solution-oriented perspective and utilizing hypnosis in that process. I found the examples that O'Hanlon provided from Erickson's cases insightful. O'Hanlon's knowledge, expertise, and presentation of searching for solutions were fascinating and his encouragement to members of the audience was appreciated.

RS: This session was informative and enjoyable. O'Hanlon's style is easy to embrace. His material encouraged me to view the "presenting problem" as a "class of problems" leading to a "class of solutions," thereby evoking an intervention linked to problem context. The practice sessions encouraging framing and reframing were helpful. Great session!

FH 4 The Principles of Utilization

Presented by: Stephen Gilligan

Utilization is widely accepted as the core construct of Ericksonian hypnotherapy. Gilligan has a comfortable and friendly style that brings humanity to the forefront. He offered concrete explanations for proximities; how the body responds to stimulation; how the limbic system is engaged; and how the grounded flow of energy comprises a therapeutic relationship. His seven-minute exercise was well-described, and appropriate for both the beginners and the more practiced audience members.

REK: I really enjoy Gilligan's multi-level presentations. Comments such as his "transportable office space" and "trance-formation" leave lasting pleasant impressions. Gilligan is able to explain complex ideas with clarity including the paradox, "Change comes about from not trying to change."

CO: Gilligan's concept of utilization, including the ideas of infinite possibilities and constructing a new conscious mind was intriguing. His explanation of how to begin a hypnosis session was pragmatic and useful. His respect for the individual and the process was a delight.

RS: Gilligan's presentation of "utilization" as Milton Erickson's most important contribution to psychotherapy

made a deep impression on me. I can see this will be the key change point in my practice. The breakout sessions were helpful in experiencing incorporation of what he presented. A very useful session!

FH 5 Three Easy To Learn Hand Mirroring Approaches to Therapeutic Hypnosis

Presented by: Ernest Rossi, PhD

Rossi succinctly describes the therapeutic process as "Helping the client to 'turn on' internal creative processes." His neurobiological explanations of the potential of the trance experience provide depth, while his sophisticated explanations of chemical processes enhance the experiential learning. Rossi is skilled at developing and presenting exercises that challenge students to learn more about their selves in the process of learning about how to use hypnosis as a therapeutic tool.

REK: I find Rossi to be an exceptional teacher who practices what he teaches; he is a role model for ongoing learning. His lessons are practical well laid out information overlaid on complex scientific ideas. His explanation of genomic switch processes was the most useful I have heard. An excellent demonstration and a clearly described five-step individual exercise parsed the information down to practical terms.

CO: This session challenged the audience, introducing hypnosis and current research at the molecular level. Rossi's expertise and demonstration was profound, interesting, and entertaining.

RS: Rossi's presentation involved depth and expanse well beyond my current ability to understand and incorporate his material into my practice.

In summary, the reviewers agree that each section offered important information, different techniques, and even contrasting viewpoints. The only minor criticisms were that the series lacked the integration that more sequential building blocks may have offered. There were only brief exercise periods, and little time for feedback. But it did give an excellent opportunity for individuals to decide if hypnosis is a good fit for their own therapeutic styles. It provided an inspiring overview of the place of hypnosis in psychotherapy and stimulated these three reviewers to proceed further. The series gave exposure to some of the best know teachers of Ericksonian approaches and modeled how integration of hypnosis into clinical practice can be achieved.