



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF HYPNOSIS

Building Bridges of Understanding

ISH TRAINING POLICY GUIDELINES FOR WHO SHOULD BE TRAINED IN CLINICAL HYPNOSIS (Final version 2.1, 28 January 2021)

I. Practice Guidelines Process

These guidelines were prepared by the ISH Board of Governors in response to requests from ISH's Constituent Societies (CS) about training criteria. Specifically, the CS's had concerns about who they could train in the use of **clinical hypnosis**¹. A task force led by ISH Board member and Chair of the Council of representatives Woltemade Hartmann, PhD, first surveyed each of the CS's to learn about their membership and training practices. The task force also collected the varying experiences of many expert trainers teaching internationally. These guidelines are the compilation of these findings and are compatible with the ISH Code of Ethics. These guidelines are specific to the application of hypnosis skills for the **treatment of psychological, medical, dental conditions and disorders**².

II. Purpose and Scope; Guidelines vs Standards

These guidelines are provided to assist ISH Constituent Societies in determining whom they should train in clinical hypnosis. Guidelines facilitate the ongoing systematic development of the profession. Standards are mandatory and generally enforceable. Governmental laws may supersede these guidelines. If these guidelines are of a higher level than a constituent society's current practice, the society is encouraged to consider changing its criteria to meet these recommended guidelines. If the ISH guidelines are less rigorous than those of a constituent society, ISH recommends that the society maintain its own guidelines.

III. Clinical Hypnosis Trainers

- A.** It is recommended that clinical hypnosis CS educators will have completed the advanced level training in clinical hypnosis as defined by their CS, in addition to their professional health care educational degree. It is also recommended that

¹ There is a consensus deficit regarding the definition of clinical hypnosis. This is due partly to the explosion of knowledge regarding the embodied mind and its neuroplasticity. Here we define clinical hypnosis as a set of skills used to treat persons in our care experiencing conditions from psychological disorders and medical illnesses.

² These guidelines do not refer to the application of non-clinical hypnosis nor to applications outside of the health care disciplines.



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clinical hypnosis educators will teach hypnosis skills consistent with their specific field of training and practice.

- B.** A basic course of study in Clinical Hypnosis is of value for all officially recognized health care work providers. The advanced course of study in Clinical hypnosis can be matched to the trainees' expertise. Ideally, ISH envisions that specific hypnosis training programmes will be developed that can provide specialized training to specific categories of health care providers, so that the hypnosis training can best match each trainee's **own training and expertise** (e.g., dental hypnosis training for dentists, paramedic hypnosis training for paramedics, hypnosis training for pain management for health care providers treating pain conditions, hypnosis for depression management for health care providers treating depression).

IV. Trainees

- A. Guideline 1:** Only individuals who are **officially recognized health care providers, researchers** studying the effects and mechanisms of hypnosis, or **students** in an accredited education programme training them to become an officially recognized health care provider or researcher may be trained in Clinical Hypnosis.
- B. Guideline 2:** Only individuals who attest that they will use the hypnotic skills to treat (or in the case of researchers, to study the effects of hypnosis on) the health conditions **within the scope of their expertise** (i.e., they are trained to treat or study those conditions without hypnosis) may be trained in Clinical Hypnosis.
- C. Guideline 3:** Individuals who meet the criteria of guidelines 1 and 2, should be taught **clinical hypnotic skills consistent with their specific field(s) of expertise and training**. Not every health care provider or researcher who meets the two criteria listed above need be taught **all** hypnotic techniques and applications.

V. Definitions and Rational

A. Officially Recognized

The phrase **officially recognized**, was carefully chosen to emphasize the importance of oversight of one's clinical practice. **Officially recognized** describes the individuals who are generally expected and allowed to provide



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treatment for medical, dental, or psychological health care in their country. The guidelines do not specify an academic degree, practice license or length of study to describe the health care providers and researchers who may be taught clinical hypnosis because of the great variations that exist between countries.

Different countries officially recognize health care providers in different ways. These laws and rules may change over time within a specific country. It may be a governmental agency, an organizational process, licensing, or certification that provides the standards, recognition, and management of the practitioners so that the public is protected. Often, but not always, health care providers are licensed by a state or national government to provide health care. Sometimes licensed non-governmental organizations such as a Medical Council or Psychological Council / Board are responsible for issuing the licenses required to provide treatment of psychological or medical health conditions. In some countries, states, provinces or geographical localities the law requires that health care providers hold certain certificates, which may require them to have gone through a specific course of training and supervision. Other countries officially recognize people as health care providers by requiring that they have a specific degree (e.g., medical degree for physicians, social work degree for clinical social workers, and the like).

B. Health Care Providers

Health care providers are the people who treat **medical, dental, and psychological health conditions and disorders**. Health care providers may benefit from utilizing hypnosis skills applied to **their fields of expertise** to increase the efficacy of treatment of those health conditions for which they are trained to treat.

Consistent with the ISH code of ethics, these guidelines explicitly recommend that individuals who are not designated health care providers **not** be taught **clinical hypnosis** skills.

C. Health Conditions and Disorders

Health conditions include psychological, dental, and medical health conditions treated by health care professions. Health care providers, depending on their discipline and training, have the expertise and experience to treat specific health conditions; no health care provider has the expertise and knowledge to be able to treat **all** health conditions.



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Training in Clinical Hypnosis is best organized by targeting the needs and expertise of the students. Trainers thus keep in mind the intention of the training and the student's discipline/field of study. Trainees are responsible for practicing in ways consistent with the code of ethics of their profession and of ISH's, i.e., limiting the use of hypnosis within one's scope of practice. *Trainees should attest that they will act in ways consistent with this critical guideline.*

VI. Between-country differences

ISH recognizes that there are critical between-country differences regarding which specific health care disciplines are considered the most appropriate treatment providers for various health conditions, and believes that the differences should be respected. Each constituent society is in the best position to determine how the guidelines presented here should be specifically applied in their own country.