



European Society of Hypnosis

In Psychotherapy and Psychosomatic Medicine

Ethical Guidelines

Introduction

The following guidelines are intended as a guide for Constituent Societies. The European Society appreciates that many Societies will have their own Ethical Guidelines and these are not intended as a replacement but as a reference and support to Constituent Societies.

It is also accepted that members of Constituent Societies will have their own professional codes of conduct. These guidelines are again not intended as a replacement, but refer only to the use of hypnosis. It is therefore expected that Members of Constituent Societies will abide by their own Professional Code of Conduct, and conduct themselves according to the highest standards of their Profession.

Mission Statement

The European Society of Hypnosis is dedicated to promoting and maintaining the highest professional standards in the practice of hypnosis for clinical or experimental purposes, and in the dissemination of information concerning hypnosis.

Ethical Guidelines

1) Professional conduct with patients or subjects

- 1.1 All ESH Constituency Societies should limit their membership to those who are professionals in their own right, and, in their use of hypnosis they should adhere strictly to the standards demanded of them by their own profession.
- 1.2 Members should always give first priority to the welfare of the patient of the experimental subject when using hypnosis.
- 1.3 Proper safeguards should be maintained whenever a patient or subject is exposed to unusual stress or other form of risk. If stress or risk is involved, the patient or subject should be informed and should give consent. When in doubt the practitioner should consult with appropriate professional colleagues.

/continued 2

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Ethical Guidelines – Page 2

2) Applications of hypnosis to professional work

- 2.1 Members of Constituent Societies who intend using hypnosis, for whatever purpose, are advised that they should attend training courses according to their Society's recommendations.
- 2.2 Hypnosis is considered a psychotherapeutic modality and an adjunct to other forms of scientific or clinical endeavours, so that competence in hypnotic techniques alone is not acceptable as a basis for professional service or research.
- 2.3 Members of Constituent Societies should therefore at all time remain aware that they should use hypnosis only for those purposes for which they are professionally qualified and within the strict limitations of their professional work. This implies that those members who use hypnosis for some clinical or therapeutic purpose should have undertaken, or be undertaking, a professional qualification in that therapy recognised by the appropriate relevant National Authorities, e.g. Health Body, Education Body.
- 2.4 A member's use of hypnosis in his or her professional work should be fully compatible with the terms of reference of his or her work, and the expectations of his or her superiors, employers and professional association.

3) Private Therapy

Members of Constituent Societies should only undertake private therapy if this is compatible with the rules of their professional association and the terms of reference of their work. They should restrict their private work to those problems which they would be recognised as qualified to undertake within appropriate Health or other Body.

4) Hypnosis and lay person

- 4.1 A member of a Constituent society of ESH should not support the practice or teaching of hypnosis by those ineligible for membership, except in the case of item 4.3.
- 4.2 A member of a Constituent Society of ESH shall not give instruction involving the teaching of hypnotic techniques to individuals or groups which include persons currently ineligible for membership of an ESH Constituent Society. Lectures informing lay persons about hypnosis are, of course, permitted provided they do not include demonstrations or didactic material involving hypnotic induction techniques. Lay people are those who currently are considered ineligible for ESH Constituent Society membership.
- 4.3 Exceptions are made to students in training in the appropriate sciences or professions. It is recognised that hypnosis may be appropriately used by Health Professionals, e.g. paramedical assistants under the supervision of a person whose credentials and training would permit membership of an ESH Constituent Society and who has an agreed commitment to its rules.

ESH Ethical Guidelines – Page 3

- 4.4 Consultations with lay representatives of the press or other media of communication are permitted in order to benefit the knowledge and understanding of the public in matters pertaining to hypnosis. Talks with lay representatives of the press and radio or TV appearances are welcomed so long as these are consistent with the aims of the Society and its Ethical Guidelines.

5) Hypnosis and Entertainment

Hypnosis should never be used as a form of entertainment.

No member of ESH shall offer services for the purposes of public entertainment or collaborate with any person or agency engaged in public entertainment.

6) Final Comment

It is recognised that no Code of Ethics can possibly cover all the practices considered ethical or all of those practices which would be considered unethical.

As stated at the outset, it is expected that all professionals, whether in clinical or academic practice should abide by their own Professional Codes of Conduct and the Laws and Statutes of their own Country. Should a Member of a Constituent Society by their behaviour commit illegal or unacceptable acts either professionally or in their adherence to their Country's own Laws etc., the ESH would expect that their own National Hypnosis Society would take appropriate action as regards to that Member.