

# PHA Guidance Note - 004

## Hypnotherapy Conducted Using Video Technology

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This Guidance Note is provided to Practitioner members of PHA Inc. This does not constitute PHA Policy. Each member should be aware of this Guidance and based upon own/individual circumstances, determine whether or not this guidance is applicable to their individual practice of hypnotherapy.

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### Introduction

With the development of the Internet, the increases in technology availability, availability of smartphones and tablets and the improvements in both quality and availability of video calling, there has been a consequential impact of all of this on the practice of hypnotherapy.

One of the most dramatic changes has been the advent of practitioners offering hypnotherapy sessions remotely via Skype, FaceTime or some other video calling functionality. These modes of service delivery are offering an additional method to reach and follow up with potential or existing clients previously unavailable to the profession.

### Purpose

The purpose of this Guidance Note is to alert PHA Members to some of the considerations that should be addressed prior to organising or offering remote hypnotherapy sessions using technology.

Above all else, practitioners have a duty-of-care to their clients and the focus of this note is to highlight and raise these duty-of-care considerations. This Note will not address the practicalities of conducting business remotely (ie. methods of payment, completion of induction forms/consent forms etc.).

### From the Client's Perspective

There already exists an ongoing concern by a large percentage of people about hypnosis and hypnotherapy. While we as practitioners understand that these concerns are generally centred both upon a lack of understanding of what hypnosis is and the negative portrayal of hypnosis in the popular media, there is nonetheless still an ongoing distrust of hypnosis from the uninitiated.

Consequently, many potential clients when considering engaging a hypnotherapist remotely, may have concerns about the technology failing and as a result being left 'trapped' in hypnosis. This concern should be acknowledged and addressed prior to conducting the hypnosis session.

Consideration should also be given, at the very onset of the hypnosis session, to installing a suggestion that "if nothing is heard for a few minutes (e.g. 5 minutes) then the client will come fully alert, feel wonderful and be very much in control of all faculties" (or similar). This should effectively relax the client and address their concerns.

## **From the Practitioner's Perspective**

There are a number of negatives evident in conducting hypnotherapy via technology and while none of these should preclude consideration of this method by the practitioner, everyone should be aware of some of these. In particular:

- There is no way to ensure that distractions are removed from the client's location,
- The volume of your voice and instructions are not within your control in the same way as a face-to-face session,
- It is not possible to incorporate any touch for induction or suggestion purposes,
- The practitioner has a very limited scope of view so if the client moves during the session, you may lose sight of the client,
- It is very difficult if not impossible to watch for ideomotor responses or non-verbal indicators.
- You have no control over the client's environment.

All of these (and others that may become evident dependent upon the client, the location etc.) can impact negatively on the conduct of a hypnotherapy session.

Due to these possible issues occurring, the practitioner needs to make allowances within their sessions to ensure that their client remains safe at all times, and use alternative methods of induction where necessary, to ensure that the session provides the client the results that both the client and the practitioner are seeking.

Where results are not achieved using this method of delivery, then the practitioner should recommend to the client, that they seek assistance from another practitioner for face to face consultation by referring them where possible to another practitioner in the clients area or location.

## **Other Considerations**

Other considerations that may need to be researched/addressed prior to engaging in remote hypnotherapy conduct are:

- It is always be preferable to conduct at least one face-to-face session with the client prior to engaging technology for treatment purposes, however, this may in some instances not be possible or practical.
- The practitioner should check whether or not there are any jurisdictional restrictions placed upon the practice of hypnotherapy in both the client's and your location.
- Whether or not your professional indemnity insurance will provide cover for sessions conducted via technology (many Insurers may not), both within and outside of Australia, and what their requirements are for conducting remote sessions.
- Where such professional indemnity insurance is in place ensure you have sufficient cover for you to conduct sessions via technology,
- That full safety considerations have been undertaken or addressed (as the practitioner has no control over this aspect, it is suggested that the safety aspects be covered in the "General Consent" agreed to and signed by the client prior to the conduct of the session.
- Whether the practitioner needs to undertake further training, including both the conducting of such sessions and use of the technology involved.
- That acceptable and reliable technology is in place for both the practitioner and the client.

## **Conclusion**

As previously stated, the purpose of this Guidance Note is to alert PHA members to some of the considerations and some of the difficulties that conducting remote treatment sessions can produce.