

Gut Trust

Hypnotherapy for IBS, “Will I cluck like a chicken?”

Hypnotherapy for Irritable Bowel Syndrome? Does this mean that IBS is all in the mind? The answer is No, it's not all in your mind, but your mind can help you to dramatically reduce the symptoms of this illness.

It is now estimated that one in three people in the UK will suffer from IBS at some point in their life. To help overcome the sometimes debilitating symptoms many sufferers are now turning to Complementary Therapies, such as Hypnotherapy.

The use of hypnotherapy is becoming more and more widespread as a treatment for IBS and is being used alongside more conventional medicines in hospitals and medical practices. Hypnosis is a very safe and gentle therapy which can help to greatly reduce the symptoms of IBS, sometimes to a level where they are no longer noticeable.

As a Hypnotherapist I see many people each week who suffer from IBS and who have learned through friends or colleagues about hypnotherapy. My aim is to work with each client and to help them learn how to regain control of their body and their lives.

Even before I became a Hypnotherapist I was aware of IBS. My family has a history of stomach and bowel complaints, my brother has Crohn's disease and my sister has IBS. I was therefore used to people cutting out different foods from their diet's, of urgent needs for the toilet and also watching them suffer from severe stomach pain and bloating. I had always assumed that there was nothing that they could do to help relieve their symptoms, apart from take the different drugs prescribed by the Doctor.

Like many people I had always assumed that IBS was a purely physical condition, and that the mind and body were separate entities. But our knowledge is rapidly changing and today we are much more aware that the mind and body are connected and influence each other constantly.

Who hasn't had the experience of being extremely nervous before an exam, interview or a meeting, and of feeling sick or having to run to the toilet? Well those effects were caused by your mind, there was no physical ailment. Your mind is a powerful tool.

When I began training as a Hypnotherapist I started to realise that Hypnosis could help IBS. In order to be able to help my clients I underwent further hypnotherapy training specifically for IBS and have gone on to run a successful IBS program at my hypnotherapy practice, seeing clients from 8 to 88 years old. The majority of my clients find that hypnotherapy helps them to reduce their symptoms and regain control of their lives.

When a new client comes to see me for help with IBS often the first thing they will say to me is,

“I don’t really believe in hypnosis it but you are my last hope, I have tried everything else and may as well give it a go.”

No pressure then!

After that positive start to the first session I explain to them that hypnosis uses a trance state, which is a normal state that we all find ourselves in daily, a daydream type state, similar to when you are lost in a good book or engrossed in the television. I reassure them that they will always retain control, I haven’t yet had anyone cluck like a chicken or sing like Elvis!

When in that wonderfully relaxed state the mind becomes more open to positive suggestions, and clients will only accept suggestions that they want to accept. As all my clients are keen to reduce their symptoms they are only too happy to work with me and accept my positive suggestions for change.

Hypnosis uses the power of the mind, the same power that caused you to feel ill before an exam, or get the jitters before getting married, and to harness that power, turn it around to help you to feel calmer and more in control.

A session with a Hypnotherapist is a safe, relaxing experience, and can be used along side conventional medicines. Most clients leave the session feeling wonderfully calm and relaxed.

During the first session I will discuss hypnosis with the client, and their specific IBS symptoms. I will find out what they would like to achieve in coming to see me. For some clients they want to reduce their pain levels, others want to be able to travel without worrying, or to stop be obsessed with where the toilets are. The aim can be to get out of a vicious circle of thoughts of worrying about IBS symptoms which leads to anxiety, which brings about the symptoms.

Together we will talk about specific triggers such as business meetings, going on the train, visiting in-laws To name just a few!

At first some clients are embarrassed to discuss their symptoms but they soon come to realise that I understand the symptoms of IBS and provide a safe, caring and confidential environment.

After this discussion I will lead them into a gently relaxing hypnotherapy session, aiming to relax their mind and body and to help the body start to come back into their control. Clients sit in a comfortable chair, feeling calm and relaxed. I record this session and ask

them to listen to it daily and to come back in three weeks for the next stage of their hypnotherapy treatment.

Overall I see clients for 5 sessions spread out over a number of months. During this time most clients find that their symptoms greatly reduce and that they feel more in control of themselves, their body and their lives.

Recently I worked with a wonderful lady of 88 years, who had been suffering from severe IBS for at least 20 years. She had stopped travelling, or even leaving her house before lunch due to the severity of her IBS symptoms, not surprisingly this was causing her to feel quite low. Apart from her IBS symptoms she was fit and healthy and wanted to enjoy her life.

During our first session she left me in no doubt that she did not 'believe' in hypnosis, but her daughter had suggested she try it as she had tried everything else.

This was another great start to a session!

But I like a challenge and as I talked I could see her visibly becoming calmer, the small shake in her hands stopped and her breathing became easier. At the end of this first session she still looked dubiously at me, and to be honest I was not sure that she would come back for her next session.

But then three weeks later, there she was in reception with a big smile on her face, and she asked me "What did I do to her?" Her symptoms had subsided dramatically and she was looking much happier and starting to enjoy life once again. She was even considering going on a holiday with her family, something she had not done for years!

The transformation can in some cases be quite dramatic, and it is wonderful to see my clients becoming happier, more relaxed, and enjoying their lives as the session's progress.

If you are considering seeing a Hypnotherapist please choose one who is registered with a recognised body such as the GHR, General Hypnotherapy Register or the NRAH, National Register of Advanced Hypnotherapists. Also make sure that they have experience in treating people with IBS. The hypnotherapist should always confirm that you have seen your Doctor and had IBS diagnosed.

Kimberly Willis, PhD, GHR and NRAH Registered.
10 Harley Street, London and Sheffield

www.life-dynamics.co.uk

tel. 0845 643 9541

Email: kimberly@life-dynamics.co.uk