BOOK REVIEWS:

Hypnosis and Counselling in the Treatment of Chronic Illness
By David Frank and Bernard Mooney

From the beginning, the authors of *Hypnosis and Counselling in the Treatment of Chronic Illness* recognize what seasoned hypnotherapists know - everyone can *be* hypnotized if they want or need to be - this is especially *true* for people who are suffering. The authors align Erickson and Carl Rogers as a therapeutic model by briefly discussing how each believed that the client has all the resources required for healing already within them. This is offered as a powerful attitude with which to engage in counseling and hypnosis.

Thin books, only 124 pages of text, demand more from authors. Frank and Mooney have sifted through shelves of history, research and case studies to offer a quietly compelling treatise advocating the use of hypnosis as an integral part of a comprehensive treatment plan for chronic and potentially terminal illnesses.

As part of their observations, the authors note cases that have resulted in individuals experiencing remission or cure (individuals who had been previously diagnosed as "imminently terminal") have not been given the attention deserved to such phenomena.

The overall tenet of the authors is that the mind has a significant effect on the immune system. The book begins by offering a succinct historical overview of hypnosis along with addressing the more common myths, misconceptions and fears associated with hypnosis. This could be useful in generating informed participation and support in individuals considered chronically or terminally ill, and their family or other involved individuals.

Psychoneuroimmunology is one of the few big words used, making for "friendly reading' for the non-clinician or physician. Reluctant clinicians and physicians might benefit from the discussion in Chapter 4. Only a Placebo Effect, which addresses the roles of faith, belief, expectation and imagination in hypnosis, counseling and healing.

How to implement hypnosis and counseling with the chronically ill is predominately left to other sources although the case studies illustrate what is possible. The authors offered cases that utilize the client's own resources and imagery. A particularly clever client generated imagery of herself as a game show winner in which she won bits of herself as the prize until she ultimately won her whole self.

In Chapter 7, Emotional Health, the focus is shifted to the significance of a healthy self-esteem and offers suggestions and references for how to begin establishing self-esteem early with children as well as how to reestablish healthy self-esteem in adults. While the connection is not explicitly drawn in any concluding section - there is the implication throughout the book that creating and maintaining an expectantly hopeful and healthy emotional outlook is paramount in the treatment of chronic and terminal illness.

I am planning to pass this book along to a reluctant oncologist.

Reviewed in
The Milton H. Erickson Foundation Newsletter, Vol.24, #2- Summer, 2004
By Deborah Beckman M.S., LPC, NCC  Dallas, TX

*The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc., is a federal nonprofit corporation. It was formed to promote and advance the contributions made to the health sciences by the late Milton H. Erickson, MD, during his long and distinguished career. The Foundation is dedicated to training health and mental health professionals.*

In *Hypnosis & Counselling in the Treatment of Chronic Illness*, authors David Frank and Bernard Mooney, Ph.D., work from the theoretical premise that many illnesses, including cancer, that have been traditionally viewed as organic or purely physical are, in fact, stress-related problems that can be effectively treated with counseling, and hypnosis in particular. The authors suggest that hypnosis and counseling extend beyond the often identified application of treating symptoms, in some cases, to providing the primary tool to effect a cure or complete remission in chronic illness. I find this assertion both bold and refreshing because it builds on the premise that human beings have the mental capacity to impact positively their health and well being. This position does not negate or even suggest that people should avoid more traditional, mainstream Western medical treatments, but rather that we should approach with open minds the question of identifying true curative factors in recovery from chronic
illness. …

Reviewed by: Thomas J. Barr, Ph.D., Louisville, CO. American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis
July 2003. The American Society of Clinical Hypnosis is the largest U.S. organization for health and mental health care professionals using clinical hypnosis. Our members are psychologists, psychiatrists, clinical social works, marriage and family therapists, mental health counsellors, medical doctors, masters level nurses, and dentists.

I came to know Mr. Frank following a review of his book, “Hypnosis and Counselling in the Treatment of Chronic Illness”. I have been meeting regularly with him and I must say that I am impressed by his person centred counselling approach combined with hypnosis. I myself have personally benefited from it.

I highly recommend him to anybody who is willing to use his approach to solve emotional difficulties.

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How much does our mental state influence physical disease? Is disease just bad luck, or could other factors such as stress play an influential or even a pivotal role? If stress can negatively influence the immune system, can reducing stress by such means as counselling and hypnotherapy actually improve life expectancy? These are the question the authors of this book decided to ask themselves, following the observation of an unexpected increase in life expectancy of a woman who had twice had breast cancer, after she had been treated by one of them with hypnosis. They decided to look at the evidence to support the use of hypnosis and counselling in the treatment of chronic illness and much of what they have found challenges the medical model that tends to be adhered to by Western Medicine.

The book starts with an excellent chapter, which summarises well the history and theories of hypnosis. In the next chapter there are a number of case studies illustrating various benefits ranging from prolonged life expectancy to individual cures. The main question they ask is, “why hasn’t this been looked into more?”

And, what about the placebo effect? We have some illustrations in the book of its incredible power. In the 1950’s arterial ligation surgery was used for the treatment of angina, despite relatively high morbidity, until it was compared with a control group of chest incision only, who actually did better and without the morbidity! The authors suggest that the placebo effect is a form of self-hypnosis and an example of the power that human beings have of treating themselves, even for major diseases, when they are in the right therapeutic environment. If this is so, are hypnosis and psychotherapy a means whereby the patient can be helped to use this amazing self-healing ability?

… Those of us interested in the mind-body connection will find David Frank and Bernard Mooney’s book full of interesting research, case-presentations and thought provoking questions. It is a book which must be read with an open mind.

Reviewed by Dr Ian Walton of the Midlands Branch of the British Association of Medical and Dental Hypnosis for PrimHE journal

… The benefits of counselling and hypnotherapy in aiding patients to utilise their innate healing ability is something we are all aware of, but often underestimate. Hypnotherapy in particular has had a chequered past thanks to the showmanship associated with it, and hence it is often pushed into the corner of neglect and scepticism. The authors’ accounts of the phenomenal results that have been attained by tackling those “underlying issues” make one once again sit up and take note of what is possibly being missed out of a large proportion of our therapies. Science and medicine are now discovering how a persons own immune system can be “tricked” into action resulting in some phenomenal results where cancers are cured by
ones’ own innate immunological capacity, but is this not what has been done effectively for many years through hypnosis and counselling?

“The man in the street” and sometimes medical practitioners do not give sufficient credence to the benefits one can obtain from counselling, and this is often to a patients detriment. Something as simple as correcting ones attributional style can have such incredible flow on effects in terms of physiological well-being – once again pointing to Psychoneuroimmunology in action. This is definitely a field that will gain greater recognition, and well due accolade in time to come.

All in all, an enjoyable, easy reading, yet highly informative book that motivates one not to lose sight of those often indirect effects of counselling and hypnosis, and how these can often have such phenomenal impact on chronic illness.

Reviewed by Phillip De Ronchi, Murdoch University, Western Australia. For ‘Psychotherapy in Australia’ Journal is a professional psychotherapy and counselling journal for the thinking therapy practitioner. It provides an independent forum to foster communication across the broad range of professionals involved in the field.

"Hypnosis is an effective and powerful but under-rated and under-utilized tool in the psychological treatment of cancer and other conditions. This book seeks to explain the underlying theory and practice of hypnosis and the counselling process in the treatment of cancer and healing in general, in a clear, eminently readable fashion, illustrated with numerous case studies. It should have general appeal not only to students of psychology and health professionals but also those in the wider community."
- Dr Carol Burton MA, PhD, MAPsS, Clinical Neuropsychologist. Melbourne, 3001.

"I found this book very interesting and informative as well as being very readable. It is very well researched with fascinating case study material, and builds a strong case for the value of hypnosis in the treatment of cancer and chronic illness. This book would be of particular interest to doctors, nurses, counsellors and anyone involved in the care of people with chronic or life-threatening illness."
- Wendy Laughlin MSc, Dip Couns, RNT, RN, RM, RHV, Course Coordinator (Counselling), Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol

"This brief tract defines hypnosis, summarizes important historical aspects, reports case and group studies, and outlines therapeutic uses as an adjuvant to control of symptoms and control of advancement of the disease. This treatise is an easy read without obscure jargon or outrageous claims. It honestly alludes to the time, energy and skill required by the practitioner who wishes to use this modality of treatment. It deserves to be on the reading list of medical personnel and their cancer patients and also on the list of those with medical or scientific curiosities."
- K.L. Muth MD, FRCS, CRCS (C), Surgeon

"It is valuable to see the importance of the mind and the body working together when it is often assumed what is needed is just a particular medical prescription to deal with chronic illness. The most interesting part of the book is when the authors discuss their own case studies and the reader wants to go on reading more of them. . . . useful for practising counsellors to enlarge their approach and for medical staff interested in alternative and holistic therapies. . . . of interest to anyone with a desire to improve their own or others' lives."
- Dr Linnea Glynne-Rule, Senior Lecturer and Research Co-ordinator, Cornwall Education Centre (retired)

"This book provides a stimulus to the practising counsellor to consider the application of hypnosis to their work, specifically with regard to working with patients suffering chronic illness. Although a variety of conditions are examined, the authors particularly concentrate on cancer and make a powerful argument, through case studies, for therapists to give more attention to the possibility of making more explicit use of hypnosis. . . . this is an interesting and challenging book."
This book then goes on to examine the science of hypnosis and myths surrounding the subject of hypnosis in therapy. This would be useful for a therapist who perhaps needed to give a talk on hypnotherapy and required well-researched references.

_Hypnosis and Counselling in the Treatment of Chronic Illness_ opens an important debate on the place of using hypnosis in cancer treatment. Challenging prevailing attitudes in medicine today, this book poses the crucial question: Why is hypnosis ignored when there is so much evidence to support its benefits? Evidence presented in this book argues the therapeutic and healing properties of hypnosis. The book systematically examines the possibilities of integrating hypnotherapy into the cancer treatment program and the nature of the opposition to its common use. In the course of its analysis, this work reaches interesting conclusions about the mind-body connection, which is nowhere more evident than in the treatment of life-threatening diseases. It also raises questions about the direction medicine has taken, and on what changes of direction it could take in the future.

_Hypnosis and Counselling in the Treatment of Chronic Illness_ is significant to all those who have an interest in the ways we treat disease, arguing compellingly for the use of hypnosis with cancer patients as well as other areas of disease such as asthma, ME or chronic fatigue syndrome (myalgic encephalomyelitis) and general pain relief. It also looks at the benefits of using hypnosis for such things as childbirth, stammering and many emotional health issues. This work provides crucial insight into the body's healing abilities, an insight that we cannot afford to ignore. It gives the practitioner the well-researched statistics derived from medical trials in regards to hypnosis versus such things as drug therapy, the placebo effect, psychotherapy and basic counselling.

This book would be of particular interest to doctors, nurses, counsellors and anyone involved in the care of people with chronic or life-threatening illnesses. This could be a good introduction to the uses of hypnotherapy for practitioners who are interested in alternative and holistic therapies. …

LYNDALL BRIGGS
Vice President
_Australian Society of Clinical Hypnotherapists_

… The search for common elements produced the following theory:

Lack of love and attention in childhood (love not demonstrated verbally, emotionally or physically) + Unresolved bereavement or loss in childhood or later + Low self-esteem + Self-blame = Illness, through an immune system weakened by the loss of will to live. …

Not a “how to” book by any means, it is nonetheless thought provoking material at its very best.

Lyn Macintosh Australian Society of Clinical Hypnosis