



DUFF-NIGHTINGALE PROCEDURE OF HYPNOTHERAPY FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

**An evidenced based cost-effective therapeutic treatment
option developed to enhance the physical and psychological
wellbeing of those diagnosed with dementia and assessed as
1 -5 on Reisberg's Global Deterioration Scale**

Dr Daniel J Nightingale
PCSC; RN; PhD; LD (doc); ADHP (NC); ECCH; UKCP; FNSHP
Clinical Dementia Specialist & Clinical Hypno-Psychotherapist
Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine

Dr Simon C Duff
BSc; MSc; PhD; PGCert (HE); DHP (NC)
Lecturer & Research Tutor at the University of Nottingham's Doctorate in Clinical
Psychology Training Programme & Forensic Psychologist at the Mersey Forensic
Psychology Service, Merseyside NHS Trust

Original September 2009
Recent Update October 2019

BACKGROUND

Simon Duff and Daniel Nightingale have collaborated over a number of years to develop this therapy option.

The model comes after an empirical research project focussing on both short and long-term benefits of hypnotherapy for patients in receipt of continuing care at two dementia services in Liverpool. This work has resulted in the publication of three papers:

- 1. Duff, S.C & Nightingale, D.J, (2005). The Efficacy of Hypnosis in changing the quality of life in patients with dementia: A pilot study evaluation. European Journal of Clinical Hypnosis, 6(2), 20 - 29**
- 2. Duff, S.C & Nightingale, D.J (2006); Long Term Outcomes of Hypnosis in Changing the Quality of life in Patients with Dementia. European Journal of Clinical Hypnosis, 7 (1), 2 - 8**
- 3. Duff, S.C and Nightingale, D.J (2007). Alternative approaches to supporting people with dementia: Enhancing quality of life through hypnosis. Alzheimer's Care Today.8. (4): 321-331).**

This small study was made up of 6 subjects, each in receipt of weekly hypnosis, 6 people in a control group who attended a weekly discussion group and 6 people in a neutral group who received **treatment as usual**.

This therapy option should be made available to all those diagnosed with a primary degenerative dementia. A full assessment to determine the stage of dementia and suitability for therapy should then be carried out by the therapist on those who agree to follow this line of therapy. An appropriate therapy plan can then be developed between client and therapist with family input where appropriate.

An appropriate course designed to teach therapists the assessment and therapy process has been developed by Daniel Nightingale and Simon Duff. On completion of this training programme, therapists are encouraged to become Nightingale Dementia Associates (NDA's) who receive continued support, advice and guidance from Dr Dan, including a monthly Zoom support meeting.

Proven benefits of hypnosis relate to 7 key areas: enhanced levels of concentration; the ability to relax; increased levels of motivation; enhanced abilities in Activities of Daily Living; enhanced immediate memory; enhanced memory for significant events and increased levels of socialisation. By improving these areas, individual quality of life is enhanced whilst associated symptoms such as agitation and anxiety are decreased immensely.

This therapy option is inexpensive and, following relevant training, can be offered worldwide by existing medical and support staff.

THE PROCEDURE

Assessment procedure:

Each client should be assessed for suitability for therapy in the following way and meet the identified criteria:

1. The therapist must first identify that the client has a deficit in at least 1 of the following **3** key areas: **concentration; relaxation; motivation;** and **1 or more** areas of **Activities of Daily Living; immediate memory; memory for significant life events; socialisation.** These deficits must be out of keeping with the person's premorbid personality and character. Face to face interviews with the client and his/her direct relatives and/or carers must form part of this process along with scrutiny of any documented evidence from fellow professionals and/or carers.
2. Ideally, the client must be able to demonstrate to the therapist that he/she has an understanding of the therapy process, aims of therapy and desired outcomes. He/she should be cognitively able to assist in development of the individualised therapy plan. If this is not possible, but this therapy is deemed to be in the best interest of the client, the person's next of kin, along with the therapist, may consent on behalf of the client. Without a next of kin, the therapist, after seeking information from the client's direct carer(s) must make the decision whether to provide this therapy in the best interests of the client. However, when a client clearly refuses to accept this therapy then his/her wishes must be honoured at all times. Consent to therapy forms must be signed by the client or next of kin or therapist prior to commencement of therapy.

3. On assessment, the client must score 1–5 on Reisberg’s Global Deterioration Scale. If the person is assessed at 6 or 7, he or she is not a suitable candidate for this form of therapy.
4. On assessment, the client must not show any signs or symptoms of active psychoses. Any individual being treated for an active psychotic disorder is not a suitable candidate for therapy with hypnosis. This is due to the possible existing state of conscious awareness and any suggestions in trance may be interpreted differently by the conscious mind.
5. The next step is to complete the Private and Confidential Consultation Record along with the Individual details specific to hypnotherapy form:

During this process, the client and therapist (or, where appropriate, next of kin) will identify the goals and desired outcomes of the therapy, produce a therapy plan and agree the necessary contract.

6. Finally, the client, witness – in the form of relative or fellow health care professional - and therapist will sign the Client’s Consent to Hypnotherapy form.
7. Once all this has been completed, and with the permission of the client or next of kin, the therapist should write to the client’s GP to inform him/her of the pending therapy plan. A copy of the plan could also be sent and the GP asked whether he is aware of any medical reason(s) that would exclude the client from entering the planned therapy.

Therapy procedure:

There are eight stages to this therapy. They are:

1. Teaching 5 deep breaths technique to the conscious mind.
2. Induction
3. Trigger
4. Deepener
5. Ideo Motor Response (IMR)
6. Therapy

7. Removal of IMR

8. Termination

I shall detail each of these stages.

1. Teaching 5 deep breaths technique to the conscious mind

– It is important that the client is taught ways in which he/she can find immediate self relaxation should the need arise outside of therapy. The therapist can help the client achieve this by teaching him/her the 5 deep breaths technique. This will also be taught to the subconscious mind during the therapy stage.

2. Induction – the therapist must ensure the client is comfortable and that the room being used is conducive to this kind of therapy. There must be no likelihood of disturbance and external noise must be kept to a minimum. The therapist can request that the client fixes his/her gaze on a point on the ceiling or, if the client prefers, eye closure can be immediate. The therapist commences to induce a state of relaxation by speaking in a calm, quiet voice that will fall in with the client's natural breathing rhythm. The therapist will talk the client through the relaxation stage by starting at the top of the head and working down to the tips of the toes. This is known as the hypnagogic phase.

3. Trigger – the therapist will use a trigger word which, in effect, gives the client a sign that it is perfectly safe to enter a deeper state of relaxation, or the hypnotic phase. The word will be one that is familiar to the client and agreed beforehand, for example, '**when I say the word relax, you will find yourself entering the most peaceful state you wish to enter at this moment in time. A state that is peaceful, tranquil, safe and secure.**' If the therapist is happy that this state has been achieved, then it is time to move on to the deepening stage. However, if the client's pallor, breathing and movements indicate he/she is not entering the hypnotic phase, then the therapist must return to the induction stage and repeat the progressive muscle relaxation process.

4. Deepener – It is now time to take the person into a deep trance like state. The deepening technique will be based on guided imagery and metaphor. A place of safety – a place where the person loves to go, where he/she feels at ease, at peace and where the person has no feelings of threat, anxiety or fear will have been established with the client prior to commencement of therapy. However, our work has demonstrated that the **Nightingale's Forest and Stag**

Technique achieves excellent results with those who have no phobias of forests, animals or any allergies to plants or animals. For this reason, Nightingale and Duff have included the script for this technique in this model (**where it is not possible to use this technique, the therapist will need to identify a more appropriate technique based on evidence gathered during history taking as part of the assessment process**). Please ensure you use the person's name throughout:

'Now that you are relaxed and feeling safe and secure, I want you to relax even further – and find yourself surrounded by a brilliant white light. This brilliant white light makes you feel warm and at peace with your inner self. Just enjoy being engulfed by this brilliant, warm, bright light. You're feeling more comfortable. More relaxed, more at peace. Any feelings of anxiety are drifting away, leaving your body and leaving the light. Now I want you to imagine leaving this room, still surrounded by the light, the light that will protect you at all times. That's good. As you leave this room, you can see before you 10 steps, 10 steps that lead down from this room to a big beautiful forest. Now, I want you to take the first step down, and, as you do so, you feel more relaxed, more at peace. That's it, well done. Now, take the second step, and the third. With each step that you take, with each breath that you take and with each word that I speak, you become more and more relaxed, deeper and deeper, safer and safer, calmer and calmer. Nothing can harm you and there is nothing troubling you any longer. That's good. Now, take the fourth step down, and the fifth. You are more relaxed, more at peace. Take the sixth step, and the seventh. You are so perfectly relaxed, happy and contented as you continue to take the eighth step down into that beautiful forest. Good. Now take the ninth step. Now, I want you to take the tenth and final step into that beautiful, bright forest. As you do so, you can feel the golden leaves beneath your feet. You can hear the crunching of the leaves as you begin to walk through the forest. Feel the leaves beneath your feet. Good, very good. This is the most beautiful forest you have ever seen. You feel so safe, so secure, and you are free to walk and walk for as long as you like. As you take a deep breath, you can smell the pine from the trees; you can smell the sweet scents from the flowers. As you glance around, you can see flowers of all kinds, all shapes sizes and colours; so beautiful, so peaceful; a peace that you can clearly feel within yourself. As you walk deeper and deeper into the forest, surrounded by that beautiful bright light, you feel more and more relaxed. That's good. Now I'd like you to glance upwards, up between the branches of the tall trees – trees that are standing so proud, so confident, and so strong. As you glance upwards you feel the sun breaking through those branches. You can clearly feel the warmth from the sun on your face. You are

glowing with confidence; with strength; with happiness. You walk deeper into the forest and in the distance, you can see a slight hill. It isn't very steep, and you are drawn towards this hill. As you get closer and closer, and as you feel more and more relaxed, more and more confident, you notice the biggest, proudest and most beautiful stag standing on this hill; and he is looking down at you. You look up at him and gaze deep into his eyes. You climb the slight hill and stand side by side with the stag. As you do so, you can feel the warmth of his body against yours. You are joined side by side. You have become one. You have the pride of that stag; you have the confidence of that stag; you have the self esteem of that stag; you have the inner strength of that stag'.

5. Ideo Motor Response (IMR) – before therapy can begin, it is essential that the therapist achieves an IMR. The critical factor must be opened to allow access to the subconscious mind, and the IMR will indicate that this is so. It will also indicate to the therapist that the client is ready to accept therapy whilst in the hypnotic state. An IMR should be requested in the following way:

'In a few moments time I shall say the word **LIFT**. When I say the word **LIFT** in a few moments time, the index finger on your right hand – that's the finger next to the thumb on your right hand – will feel so light that it will simply rise from where it is now laying. You won't be making it move, and you won't stop it from moving. It will simply rise higher and higher of its own free will. So, when I say the word **LIFT** in a few moments time, the index finger on your right hand – that's the finger next to the thumb on your right hand – will feel so light that it will simply rise from where it is now laying. So, ready – **LIFT**'.

Assuming the IMR or SMR is achieved, the therapist can continue...

'I would like to say thank you to your subconscious mind for allowing me to help you address the problems you are currently experiencing. If you are truly ready to accept help at this moment in time, the index finger on your right hand can now fall in line with the rest of the fingers on that hand. It can relax for a while. If, at any time, you want me to stop, that very same finger, the index finger on your right hand, will indicate this by rising in to the air.'

Once the finger has relaxed, the therapist can move on to the therapy stage of the process.

(If no IMR can be obtained, the therapist must seek a SMR)

6. Therapy – ‘I’d like you to sit down now. That’s it. Glance down at the forest, at your forest. Just in front of you is an empty basket. What I want you to do is take any feelings of anxiety you may have, any feelings that trouble you and any feelings that cloud your mind and put them, one by one, inside the basket. You are surrounded by that beautiful bright light, a beautiful bright light that is helping you to see these troubles clearly. Good. Well done. Now, I want you to watch that basket, filled with all the things you have put inside, simply float up into the sky; high, high into the sky until they’ve gone, gone away forever. Now, I’m going to remain silent for 60 seconds, that’s 1 minute of my time. This 1 minute of my time can be as long or as short as you want it to be because you are in hypnotic time. During this time of silence, I want you to enjoy the feelings of inner peace and tranquillity that you now have (**remain silent for 1 minute**). That’s it. Well done. Now, I want to tell you that when you leave this forest and return to full alertness, you do so safe in the knowledge that at any time, any time at all, you can simply close your eyes, take 5 deep breaths and find yourself back in the forest, back on this hill with this stag where you can find that inner peace once again. I also want to tell you that once this session is over, and between now and the next time I see you in a therapy situation, you will find that your concentration is much better – in that, I mean you will be able to concentrate on the things that matter for longer periods of time; indeed, you will find that you will be able to concentrate long enough to complete the task you need to complete; you will find that you are able to relax in the way that you want to relax; indeed, you will find that you will be able to relax much easier and for longer periods, free from worry and anxiety; you will find that you will be more motivated, more motivated to do the things you want to do, to achieve the things you want to achieve and you will also find that you will remember things for longer periods of time; indeed, you will remember the important things, the things you want to remember, the things that are important and special to you. Also, between now and the next time I see you in a therapy situation, you will find that you begin to enjoy life again; indeed, you will enjoy socialisation, you will enjoy spending time with your friends and those close to you, you will enjoy meals and all the other things that happen in your life from day to day. Now, I am going to remain silent for 60 seconds, that’s 1 minute of my time. This 1 minute of my time can be as long or as short as you want it to be because you are in hypnotic time. During this time of silence, I want you to firmly cement those suggestions in your subconscious, or memory (**remain silent for 1 minute**).

7. Removal of IMR/SMR – It is essential that the IMR/SMR is removed prior to termination of therapy. Failure to do so could be

detrimental to the client. The IMR/SMR is to be removed thus:

'Now, I would like to hand control of the index finger on your right hand back to your conscious mind. So now, your conscious mind is in full control of all the fingers and thumbs on both hands (**pause briefly for 10 seconds**).

8. Termination – In order to reduce the risk of parasympathetic bounce back, the therapist must terminate this session gradually in the following way, remembering to use the person's name:

'Now, it is time to leave the forest and return to the here and now. However, you do this safe in the knowledge that at any time, any time you choose to do so, you can close your eyes, take 5 deep breaths and find yourself back in the forest surrounded by the brilliant white light, back on the hill with the stag, back in the most relaxed state you wish to be in. For now, it is time to come back to the here and now. I will help you do this through a count of 10. As I count up from 1 to 10, you will climb each of the 10 steps. As you do so, you will become more and more alert, more and more awake, more and more aware of your conscious state. So, ready.... Begin to walk away from the forest towards the steps, the 10 steps that you can see ahead of you. That's it – good. Keep walking towards those steps. As you reach them, I want you to turn around, take one last look at the peace and tranquillity, the peace and tranquillity you are bringing back with you. Good. Now, turn around and face the steps again. Good. 1 – take the first step up to this room; 2 – take the second step up to this room; 3 – take the third step, and as you do so, you can feel the chair beneath your body; 4, 5 – you are half way back to this room now, and you can clearly hear my voice; 6 – you can feel the floor beneath your feet; 7 – you are beginning to hear the noises in the room; 8 – you are beginning to feel more awake, more alert now; 9 – you can hear the sounds outside and see the light in the room; and 10 – you are now fully alert and back in the room, you feel refreshed, full of energy and ready to face the day ahead. You can no longer see the brilliant bright light, though it remains around you. You can open your eyes whenever you are ready to do so'.

(Assuming the client has returned to the full alert state, orientate him/her to the time, date and place. If the person has not returned to the full alert state, return to the forest and repeat the termination process. You may find that you have to do these 2 or 3 times and more assertively each time).

Always spend a few minutes with the client after therapy. Offer a drink and observe for any signs of parasympathetic bounce back. Discuss how the person feels and offer any necessary reassurances.

Should you wish to do so, you can conclude the therapy with CRC – see below for script. CRC relates to Calmness and Relaxation = Confidence. If you are working with a client who is very low in confidence and who may find relaxing very challenging, the inclusion of CRC would be beneficial.

If an abreaction occurs during therapy, the therapist must implement the following procedure:

- ❖ Speak reassuringly and make sure of the individual's comfort and safety
- ❖ If possible, allow the process to terminate itself
- ❖ When the incident concludes, end the therapy with some CRC (Calmness and Relaxation = Confidence) and terminate the session appropriately
- ❖ Should the individual wish to do so, discuss the experience.

The CRC script is as follows **(this is part of the CRC script courtesy of the National College of Hypnosis and Psychotherapy:**

'Because you are relaxing so well, when this session is over you will keep with you as much as you need of the feeling of calmness and relaxation that you have now...and this inner feeling of calmness and relaxation will remain with you...in fact...as each day goes by...you will feel yourself becoming more and more mentally calm...your mind will become crystal clear...your worries will seem less significant...your problems assume their true proportions. At times things and people may still annoy and upset you...that's perfectly natural...but nothing and no-one will worry you to the same extent...nothing and no-one will upset you to the same extent...your thinking will no longer be dominated by exaggerated problems and as the days go by and you feel yourself becoming more and more mentally calm...so too you will feel yourself becoming more and more physically relaxed...and this means that when you're working...it won't matter what job you're doing...it won't matter where you are...it won't matter who's with you...you'll only be using those muscles and that amount of energy necessary to do that job...the remainder of your body will be relaxing...and in this way you'll conserve energy...energy that you will need to enjoy life to the full...in the same way...while you're walking...you'll not be rushing...you'll be taking everything in your stride...using only those muscles and that amount of energy necessary for you to walk...the

remainder of your body will be relaxing, again...a further conservation of energy. Also...when you're sitting down...it won't matter where you are...it won't matter who's with you... when you are sitting down your whole body will be relaxing...as the days go by...and as you're becoming more and more mentally calm and more and more physically relaxed...so too you will feel more and more confident...because when we feel mentally calm and physically relaxed then we feel confident and free to be ourselves...so as the days go by and as you're becoming more and more mentally calm...more and more physically relaxed...so too you'll be feeling more and more confident. You will be more confident in yourself...more confident about whatever you're doing...more confident in your ability to cope with things and with people...but above all...more confident and more optimistic about the future.'