



Flourishing as a health care practitioner? From risks of empathy to paving your ways to professional satisfaction and happiness with hypnosis.

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Abstract

- Health care professionals, psychotherapists, dentists are particularly at risk of **burnout, compassion fatigue or vicarious traumatization** as they face human pain and suffering.
- Aspects of **empathy**, the role of **mirror neurons** and how we perceive the pain and suffering of others will be reviewed.
- After reviewing some risk factors, I will introduce some methods and ways to recover and/or prevent.
- **'Compassion satisfaction'** and **'resilience'** are key concepts. How and by which methods are they activated and improved?

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Abstract

- Hypnosis deserves a central role within a whole strategy to **re-balance oneself**. In/with hypnosis one finds ways 'back home' to reconnect with oneself, find **engagement, satisfaction, motivation** for future work. One develops an **inner locus of control** to be better prepared in facing the storms of human life and work, and promote processing of experiences.
- Therapists/health care workers find how to become **more resilient** and **engaged** the positive antidotes of burnout and compassion fatigue.
- Only by consciously taking care of one self can health care professionals and their clients benefit from a long-lasting and satisfying career.

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1. Health care workers at risk?

- Confrontation with emergency, illness, death, accidents, traumatic situations, attacks, pain, anxiety, stress...
- Change of perception and schema of the world
- Basic feeling of safety, control, expectancies, predictability..shattered

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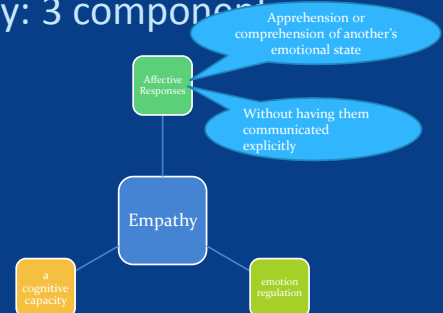
1. Health care workers at risk?

- DSM-5 diagnostic criteria PTSD.
- A. Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways: Directly experiencing the traumatic event(s). Witnessing, in person, the events(s) as it occurred to others. Learning that the traumatic events(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend. In cases of actual or threatened by death of a family member or friend, the events(s) must have been violent or accidental. **Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to adverse details of the traumatic event(s)** (e.g., first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse). This does not apply to exposure through electronic media, television, movies, or pictures unless this exposure is work related."

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Empathy: 3 components

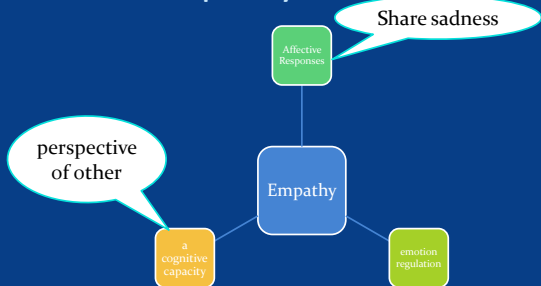


Decety and Jackson, 2006

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Risks of Empathy



Decety and Jackson, 2006

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Empathy

- Mirror neurons
- Discovery mirror neuron system in monkeys (V. Gallese, Rizzolatti, Fogassi)
- Similar system in humans. Motor mirroring neuron system

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Empathy

- Sensory mirroring system - further research revealed the existence of a sensory mirroring system as the neuronal basis for understanding another person's percepts and feelings (Saarela et al, 2006)

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Empathy and Mirroring

- We understand the emotional and affective states expressed by others with the help of the neural architecture that produces such states in ourselves (Decety and Jackson, 2006).
- **I understand you because I can make a representation of what you experience, express and share with me.**



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Empathy and Mirroring

- **Corresponding brain areas** are activated when subjects act themselves, feel or perceive or when they observe another individual in similar situations and infer their feelings or intentions from their non verbal behaviour.
- *Saarela, M. V and others, 2006*

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Empathy

- **Watching** another person having a particular experience automatically **activates the neuronal network** that is usually involved in processing the same experience ourselves. (Gallese, 2003) (Preston, 2002)

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Empathy

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Empathy and Mirroring

- Activity in the insular cortex elicited by a disgusting smell is also elicited by the sight of the facial expression of disgust. (Wicker, B. 2003)



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Empathy and Mirroring

- Activity in the secondary somatosensory cortex elicited by being touched is also elicited by the sight of someone else being touched. (Keysers, 2004)

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Empathy and Mirroring

- Seeing someone **suffering pain**, and observing this person's facial expressions activates pain circuitry in the other.
- **Seeing someone you love and care about in pain** activates one's own pain circuitry even more!
- Activity elicited in anterior cingulate and anterior insular cortex by a painful stimulus is also elicited by the **knowledge** that a **loved one is receiving a painful stimulus.** (Singer, T. 2004)

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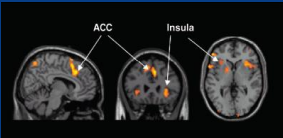
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Fig. 1. Sagittal (left), coronal (middle), and horizontal (right) views of activation sites in the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) and insula elicited in individuals watching pain in others.

Physiological research in pain processing indicates that the **ACC** plays a role in the affective dimension of pain, particularly those related to behavioral responses associated with avoiding or escaping a painful stimulus. This region combines attentional and evaluative functions with that of establishing emotional valence and response priorities.

The **insula** is involved in monitoring the physiological state of the body. It receives direct input from the body's major pain pathway.

Interestingly, both the ACC and the insula are found to be activated by the mere sight of pain in others.



ACC Insula

A social-Neuroscience Perspective
On Empathy. Jean Decety; Philip Jackson

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Emotional contagion

- Emotional states can be transferred directly from one individual to another by mimicry and 'emotional contagion' (Hatfield et al., 1994).
- This can be done by the copying of emotionally relevant bodily actions, particularly facial expressions, seen in others (Zajonc, 1985)

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Emotional contagion

- Being with someone who is in a particular state of mood can be contagious.
 - Students randomly assigned to a mildly depressed room-mate became increasingly depressed over a three month period (Howes et al., 1985).



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And what about helping professions?

- Confrontation with physical/psychological/social/family problems, conflicts, suffering, pain
- Intensity of emotions in others
- Contagion?
- Depersonalisation and using filters not to be involved in others suffering.....indifference.....compassion stress and fatigue & burnout

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Better psychotherapist?

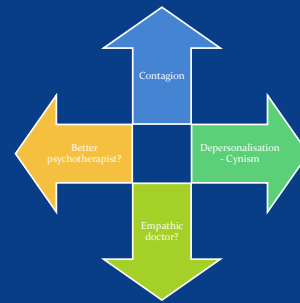
- Professional work centered on the relief of the emotional suffering of clients automatically includes **absorbing information** that is about suffering and that suffering as well.
- The caregiver's empathy level with the traumatized individual plays a significant role in this transmission.
- Empathy presents as a coin with two faces: being an important **non-specific factor for successful therapy it puts therapists at risk.**

(Figley, 1995)

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And what about helping professions?



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Empathy and Hypnosis

- Empathy as measured by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) assesses perspective-taking, fantasy, empathic concern and personal distress (Davis, 1983, 1994).
- Wickramasekera II (2003) found statistically significant relationships between **empathy and hypnotic ability - hypnotizability**.
- Support for the idea of **integrating hypnosis as prevention/therapy for being too empathic?**

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Empathy and Hypnosis

- Relationship between emotional contagion and hypnotizability was investigated (Cardena et al., 2009).
 - Emotional contagion : measured with a self-report measure, the emotional contagion scale (Doherty, 1997).
 - Significant correlations could be seen between **emotional contagion** and **hypnotizability**, particularly subjective measure of hypnosis (SES – Subjective Experience Scale and ISHD – Inventory Scale of Hypnotic Depth).

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Empathy and Hypnosis

- **Empathic Involvement Theory of Hypnosis**
 - Experience of hypnosis : embodied in system of neuronal networks in brain that utilize empathy
- Strong empathic experiences : all that is necessary to induce hypnotic - like phenomenology
- *Wickramasekera II, 2015*

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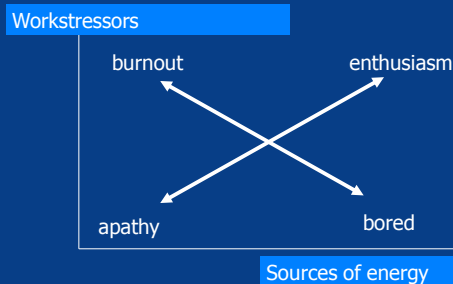
Empathy and Hypnosis

- Working with hypnosis
 - Rapport, attunement, carefully observing, pacing are emphasized
 - Is this **increasing the risk** for burnout or compassion fatigue?
 - Or on the contrary, do those who are trained and work with and in hypnosis have **more means to prevent** burnout and compassion fatigue
 - Do we, as therapists working with hypnosis, have **more access to resources**, can mobilize hope, enjoy evolution and satisfaction for our clients?

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Job - Engagement



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Compassion satisfaction/Job-engagement

- Ratio positive/negative affect
 - At least a 3 to 1 ratio promotes flourishing
 - (*Frederickson & Losada, 2005*)
- Social support
 - Most significant factor associated with higher scores of compassion satisfaction
 - (*Killian, 2008*)
- Challenge in helping
- Successes - sharing successes

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Flourishing

- Compassion satisfaction mitigates compassion fatigue.
- The energy from compassion stress can be switched to positive energy and pave the way for flourishing, with **experiences of joy** in helping others (Radey, 2007)
- Level of **reported social support** was the most significant predictor of compassion satisfaction in Killian's (2008) study.

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Professional Quality of Life Scale (PROQOL)

- When you help people you have direct contact with their lives,
- Compassion can affect you in positive and negative ways
- 30 Questions
- Score:
 - Compassion Satisfaction?
 - Burnout (one of the elements of compassion fatigue)
 - Secondary Traumatic Stress

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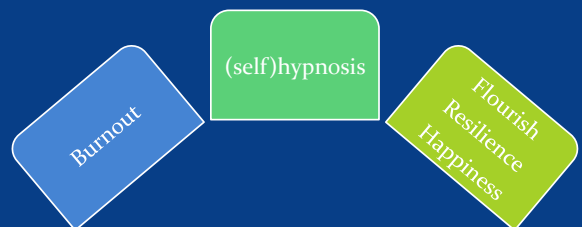
Professional Quality of Life Scale (PROQOL)

- Swedish version
- **Skattningsformuläret PROQOL (PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE) för att bedöma professionell livskvalitet**
- http://www.proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html

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Resilience & Flourishing



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Psychological antibodies????

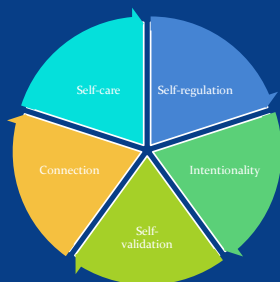
- In parallel with immunisation for diseases....
- How would a psychological antibody look like ...
- How to help inoculate individuals with this capacity for health?



Resilience

- Five professional resiliency skills or “antibodies” identified
 - (1) self-regulation
 - (2) intentionality
 - (3) self-validation
 - (4) connection
 - (5) self-care.
- Gentry and Baranowsky , 2013
- In hypnosis these skills can be developed in a creative way

Wheel of resilience



Connection and Support

- Less work related symptoms by professionals perceiving support by colleagues, friends, community
 - Gibbonnes et al, 2011 – Vander Ploeg & Kleber, 2003 – Choi, 2011,
- In hypnosis people can relive support
 - Appreciation received?
 - Support?
 - Positive feedback?

Self- Care / Self-regulation

- Regularly practicing self-hypnosis
 - Modulation of arousal – breathing – quiet mind
 - Entering your private space, your bubble, covered by some imaginary layers of calming/ soothing colours
 - Sculpting a second skin: imagery/movement/imagining movement
 - Mirroring hands and creating one's own private space – some containment, setting boundaries
 - Me – self / not me
 - Listening to myself – what is my body telling me? My heart? My mind? What is lingering?
 - Letting go

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Self-Regulation

- A special place of serenity imagery
- Facilitating problem solving



- McCarthy, P 2005

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Self-care

- Therapy
 - Possible correlation between therapists who meditate and the therapeutic outcomes of their clients.
 - As the therapist models better self-care, the client may replicate that behavior at home. Both these factors contributed to improved outcomes.

(Alvarez de Lorenzana, 2008)

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Self-care

- When a therapist has a quiet mind, he or she can notice more accurately what is happening, rather than overlaying a theory onto the client or reacting to what the client brings into the therapy session.



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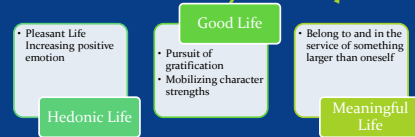
Exercise



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Routes to Happiness



Using all 3 routes
A FULL Life

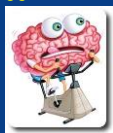
Seligman et al, 2004 & Peterson et al, 2005

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Hypnosis

- **"Brain training"**
 - Focus attention in hypnosis
 - Activate cognitions and emotions of happiness
 - Relive or construct elements of happiness
- **Like a muscle? Strengthen circuits of happiness"**
- **"BRAIN-GYM"**



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Hypnosis

"Home coming"

- Connection with core - self and creation of an inner room
- Modulating arousal
- Safety and security/empowerment
- Letting go
- Setting boundaries
- Revisiting past positive experiences
- Reviewing earlier motivation
- Seeing objectives
- Re-energizing oneself
- Feeling connected and supported

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Hypnosis deserves a role in the professional's self-care practice.

- In/with hypnosis one finds ways '**back home**' to reconnect with oneself, find engagement, satisfaction, motivation for future work.
- One develops an **inner locus of control** to be better prepared in facing the storms of human life and work, and promote processing of experiences.
- Therapists/health care workers find ways to **validate themselves**, to work creatively and experience compassion satisfaction.
- Only by consciously taking care of one self can health care professionals and their clients benefit from a **long-lasting and satisfying career**.

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Conclusions

- Health care workers & psychotherapists : at risk of compassion stress and fatigue
- Emphasis on prevention and finding ways to get compassion satisfaction and to flourish is important
- Developing Resilience and the different aspects or "antibodies" can have a primary role in the prevention
- Relationship hypnotizability and empathy – risk for compassion fatigue – more effect of hypnosis
- Self hypnosis can be experienced and learned in individual and group sessions.

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THE INTERNATIONAL
SOCIETY OF HYPNOSIS



Conclusions

- Important role of social support.....belonging to a community, inspiring and supporting each other
- Exchange of information and connections among societies and their members
- ESH www.esh-hypnosis.eu
- Thank you for inviting and organizing
- Thank you for being here
- Dr. Nicole Ruyschaert

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