



Know the Codes

If you wish to know the precise use of terms in the psychological or medical environment, the terms are defined (and given specific code numbers) in two standard reference works. These are the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (currently in the fifth edition and therefore often abbreviated as "DSM5") and the International Classifications of Diseases of the World Health Organization. The tenth edition is the official guide for the United States. These volumes provide a coding system that allows all human problems to be classified, even sub-clinical difficulties like "caffeine-induced insomnia" or "nervousness." If you are a serious practitioner earning a living as a hypnotist, you probably will wish to own these volumes for reference.

Both DSM5 contains codes used to describe routine human problems that are not the focus of a mental or medical disorder. These codes are called "V-Codes."

As the conditions described are not medical or psychological disorders (and therefore not officially part of the licensed professions), a hypnotist may safely use them in record keeping. The common DSM5 V-Codes a Consulting Hypnotist might employ are listed below.

V61.90 Relational Problem Related to a Mental or Medical Condition

V61.20 Parent-Child Relational Problem

V61.10 Partner Relational Problem

V61.80 Sibling Relational Problem

V62.81 Relational Problem Not Otherwise Specified

V62.82 Bereavement

V62.30 Academic Problem

V62.20 Occupational Problem

V62.89 Religious or Spiritual Problem, or a Phase of Life Problem

V62.40 Acculturation Problem

V68.20 Request for Expert Advice

Both DSM5 and ICD-10 contain codes that are used for subclinical problems such as smoking or simple obesity. While hypnotists may work with these conditions, there is debate about using the formal codes for record keeping. Technically, as these disorders are regarded as subclinical, the use of the codes by hypnotists is permissible. However, it may be wise to avoid any use of these codes in your records so that no one can ever put you on the defensive by challenging your right to work with conditions listed as disorders in the diagnostic and statistical manuals. A better solution is to use the V-Code for "expert advice" to indicate that the client sought expert training from you in using his or her own



hypnotic abilities to cope with the problem indicated in parenthesis. Therefore, you might list smoking cessation hypnosis as "V68.20 (smoking)" and weight management hypnosis as "V68.20 (weight loss)." Additionally, many sub-clinical conditions are captured by the V-Code for Phase of Life Problem or Spiritual Issues, V62.89.

ICD-10 contains a different system for coding that is much more complex. It is probably best simply not to use it at all. However, if you do, the code that corresponds to the V-Code for "Phase of Life Problem" or Spiritual Problem (V62.89) in DSM5 is Z65.8 in ICD-10.

As hypnotism is a different form of human service than psychology or medicine, unless you are licensed to practice medicine, psychology or some form of counseling, it is dangerous to use the terminology of those professions in your records. Therefore, avoid words like "depression," "anxiety," "compulsive," and "phobia." Similarly, avoid using the words "psychological," "medical," "clinical" or "counseling." As far as reasonably possible, use other descriptive language instead.

We recommend you always follow the Guild's Recommended Terminology for Hypnotic Practice. Recent Supreme Court decisions have tempered this somewhat and it has become safer to use words like "anxiety" in an informal sense. However, there is always some risk when such language.

Finally, you will sometimes be asked for the code for the "intervention" you are making by working with your client. ICD-10 uses the code "PCS GZFZZZZ" as the code for hypnotism. DSM5 does not contain any such code but another manual, the Current Procedural Terminology manual published by the American Medical Association (abbreviated CPT) does. The CPT code for hypnotic interventions is "90880." In order to avoid appearing to be engaged in the unlicensed practice of medicine or psychology most practitioners avoid using these codes in records. However, such codes are useful when corresponding with the members of other professions.

Can You Take Insurance?

The quick answer to this question is that you probably cannot take insurance as payment for your hypnotism services. Nor should you want to.

Insurance companies exist to earn money for their stockholders. The only way they earn money is to sell policies and not pay claims. Therefore, they are always looking for a legal way to deny a claim against one of their policies. If you are a member of certain