

## Healing Within: Fundamentals of Ego State Therapy

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## Healing From Within: Introduction to Ego State Therapy

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WELCOME

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## Introduction and Brief Overview (20 min)

- ▶ Trauma Treatment & Passion for EST
  
- ▶ Definitions
  - Ego State Therapy
  - Ego States
  - Differentiation–Dissociation Continuum
  
- ▶ History

## Ego State Therapy (EST)

*“Ego-state therapy is a psychodynamic approach in which techniques of group and family therapy are employed to resolve conflicts between various “ego states” that constitute a “family of self” within a single individual.”*

*Watkins, H. H. (1993). Ego-state therapy: An Overview. American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis, 35, 232-240.*

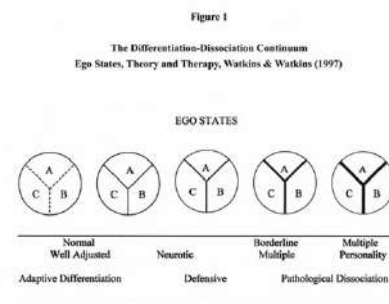
## History of EST

- ▶ EST co-founded by John and Helen Watkins
- ▶ EST has its roots in psychoanalysis.
- ▶ EST is based on theories derived from Paul Federn, a close associate of Freud’s.
- ▶ He believed “that the personality was not simply a collection of perceptions, cognitions, and affects, but that these organized into clusters or patterns, which he called ego states.” (Federn, 1952)

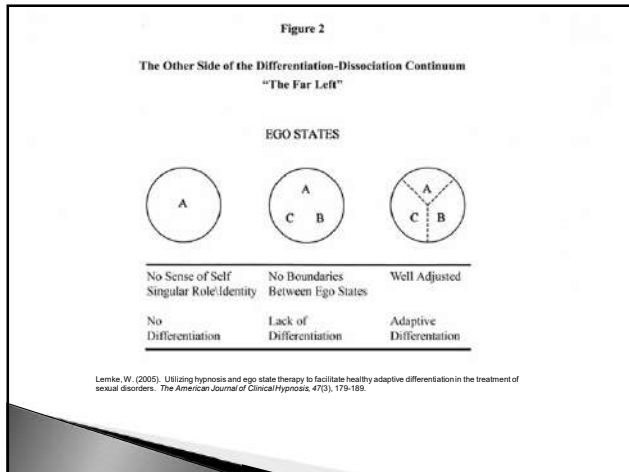
## The Watkins Define Ego States As:

“an organized system of behavior and experience whose elements are bound together by some common principle, and which is separated from other such states by a boundary that is more or less permeable”.

Watkins, J.G. & Watkins, H.H. (1997). *Ego States: Theory and Therapy*. New York: Norton.



Watkins, J. G., & Watkins, H. H. (1997). *Ego states: Theory and therapy*. New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Co.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1B3OV4JKCRU>

## Disney's version of EST: The Kid

**Disney's The Kid (2000)**

**Synopsis:** Russ Duritz is a high-powered, successful "image consultant" whose life is suddenly turned upside down when he magically meets Rusty, himself as an 8-year-old child. Rusty is a sweet, but slightly geeky, awkward little kid who painfully reminds Russ of everything he hated about himself when he was a child--a pudgy little crybaby who was the daily victim of the school bullies--an image Russ has worked hard to overcome and consciously forget. Ironically the kid is also unhappy with who his 40-year-old self has turned out to be. He is not at all impressed by his attractive physique, wealth or seemingly important accomplishments. He can't understand the concept of Russ' job as an image consultant, or why he has forgotten about their dreams of becoming a pilot. All he knows is that he grows up to be a 40-year-old loser--an adult without a wife or even a dog!

## The Defense of Dissociation

- ▶ "Our ordinary language reveals an implicit conversance with a divided self. Such expressions as 'falling apart', 'coming unglued', and 'being beside oneself' imply parts that are not cohesive. The common exhortation 'Pull yourself together' implies parts that are segregated from each other."  
---Elizabeth Howell, *The Dissociative Mind* (2005)

## Ego State Development

- ▶ Through trauma (developing a traumatized ego state doesn't necessarily mean you'll develop DID)
- ▶ Through the introjection of a significant other
  - Internal parent

Watkins, J.G. & Watkins, H.H. (1997). *Ego States: Theory and Therapy*. New York: Norton.

Phillips, M. & Frederick, C. (1995). *Healing the divided self: clinical and Ericksonian hypnotherapy for post-traumatic and dissociative conditions*. New York, New York: Norton.

## Ego State Development

- ▶ Through normal differentiation
- ▶ Created for resources

Watkins, J.G. & Watkins, H.H. (1997). *Ego States: Theory and Therapy*. New York: Norton.

Phillips, M. & Frederick, C. (1995). *Healing the divided self: clinical and Ericksonian hypnotherapy for post-traumatic and dissociative conditions*. New York, New York: Norton.

## Frederick and Phillips

“Ego states are energies within the greater personality. They are not real people who are simply smaller or younger than the greater personality but rather aspects or energies of the individual. Ego states are adaptational. They always come to help.”

(Frederick & Phillips, 1995)

## A little bit about ego states and inner voices...

- ▶ Language and thought
  - Children use speech to communicate socially and to help them solve tasks
  - *Private speech* - Use of language for self-regulation
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pulZ3jgLM6o>
- Important tool of thought during early childhood
- **Children internalize inner speech, which becomes their thoughts**
- More private speech = more social competence

Vygotsky, L. (1962). *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

## Principles of EST

## Principles

- ▶ **Transference**
  - Emotional response based on present figures becoming past figures
    - Can vary depending on ego state
    - An ego state can also be perceived as a past figure by other states
- ▶ **Resonance**
  - Therapeutic Self
  - Co-experience (the art of being very present)
  - Maintaining just the right amount of objectivity
- ▶ **Body connection**
  - Physiological changes (video clip)
  - Psychosomatic symptoms
    - specific to certain ego states
  - Allowing the body to speak
  - Where do ego states reside
  - Somatic Bridge

Pandemic: Abandonment

Pandemic: Telehealth

## Principles

- ▶ **Attitudes towards Ego States**
  - Resonance without criticism/judgement builds alliances
    - Align with purpose of the part
    - Assume all parts are listening (see next slide)
  - Keep in mind 'type of ego state' eg child, traumatized, introject, etc.
    - Listen to understand not to reply
    - Follow before leading
    - Be age appropriate and consider developmental strategies
- ▶ **Conflict within**
- ▶ **Resources/solutions are within**
- ▶ **Pacing**

Pandemic: Politics

Pandemic: Remind your clients and yourself

## Principles

- **Dependency**
  - Therapist boundaries
- **Trust**
  - Transparency yet boundaries
  - Varies among ego states
  - May be intermittent
  - Consistency
- **Fusion versus Integration (Back to the Continuum)**
  - 4 C approach for working with D.I.D. (next slide)

Telehealth?! Yours and Theirs

Pandemic: Environment Consistency

## The Four C's

- ▶ **Cooperative:** Attempting to get along (ending the internal war)
- ▶ **Collaborative:** Working together as a team for optimal functioning and conflict resolution
- ▶ **Coconscious:** An awareness in which other ego states/alters including the one that's considered the 'host' can 'experience' the feelings, thoughts, and behavior of other alters. (term coined by Morton Prince, 1906)
- ▶ And the fourth, **Coincide:** (A cooperative, collaborative, coconscious system where each ego state is experienced as part of the self.) Miriam-Webster's definition: "to occupy the same place in space, the same point or period in time, or the same relative position.")

Lenke, W. (2007). Fostering internal cooperation through the use of imagery in the treatment of dissociative identity disorder. Journal of Trauma & Dissociation, 8(4), 53-68.

## EST Principles

Keep in mind...

- Every ego state is important
- Every ego state has an adaptive purpose
- Align with purpose not approach
- Develop therapeutic relationships with **all** ego states
- Pace/strategies need to be based on the whole self

## Activating and Accessing Ego States

## Identifying & Accessing Ego states

### Telehealth considerations for EST:

- Keep in mind your **relationship**/your treatment plan/pacing
- Cautious: sticking with phase 1 work/no exploratory work.**
- Given the times, helpful to access strengths/resourceful states/comforting states
- What is client's ability for her/him to stay present, e.g. co-aware, co-conscious.
- Keep in mind role of state dependent memory and how this may be impacting your clients and/or yourself.

## Identifying & Accessing Ego states

### Being Hypnotic

- Talking through/calling out
- Drawing/journaling

### Hypnotic techniques

- Regression techniques
- The Dissociative Table Technique
- Ideomotor signaling

### Identifying & Accessing Ego states ---Talking Through

- ▶ “I know there’s a part of you that wants to be here and yet there’s a part of you that isn’t quite ready to talk....do you think it would be ok with that part of you to allow the other part to write.....”
- ▶ “I know there’s a part of you that is completely enraged with your wife but there’s another part of you that obviously still loves her and wants to work it out ....”

### Identifying & ACCESSING Ego states --- Regression & Hypnotic Techniques

1. Age regression
2. Affective bridge
3. The somatic bridge (BASK bridge)
4. Transitional objects
5. Ideomotor signaling
6. Dissociative Table Technique

### Accessing Ego states ---The Dissociative Table Technique

*“Imagine a space, where all of the parts of you can come together, The space can be however you’d like it to be, perhaps there is a table with chairs for each part, I’m not sure, but make it just how you’d like it to be for you. I know that you have ----- (list any parts that you are already aware of), but I’m not sure who else might be present, notice where everyone is, how old they look, and where they are in relation to each other. Just notice everything you can and if it would be ok, you can now let me know what you’re experiencing” (vs what you see.)*

Fraser’s (2009) “Dissociative Table Technique” Revisited, Revised: A Strategy for Working with Ego States in Dissociative Disorders and Ego-State Therapy. Journal of Trauma & Dissociation, 4(4), 5–28.

### What’s Next? Exploration and Utilization

- ▶ Explore:
  - System/layout
  - Age
  - Relationships
  - Strengths
  - Purpose
  - Whatever you can find out that’s helpful
- ▶ Therapeutic Approach



Before approach, lets discuss the use of Clinical Hypnosis & Use of Hypnotic Language...

### The Use of Clinical Hypnosis and/or Being Hypnotic

- 1) What is Hypnosis
- 2) How is it used clinically
- 3) How is it used with EST
- 4) Where can you get training

What is Hypnosis?

What Is *Trance*?



### TRANCE

#### TRANCE

- Human ability
- State of sustained concentration, absorption and/or intentional or unintentional focused attention



## So what is clinical hypnosis?

- ▶ A procedure? (By a health-care professional)
- ▶ An experience?
- ▶ A state?

## Definitions

- ▶ Diversity of viewpoints / no single universal definition
- ▶ APA Division 30 (2014) Definition:
  - **Hypnosis:** *"A state of consciousness involving focused attention and reduced peripheral awareness characterized by an enhanced capacity for response to suggestion."*
  - **Hypnotic Induction/now Elicitation:**
    - *"A procedure designed to induce hypnosis."*

## Trance experiences

- ▶ Can be:
  - Enjoyable, constructive, positive
  - Neutral (highway hypnosis, auto-pilot)
  - Awful, painful, traumatic, destructive, negative
- ▶ In therapy we want to:
  - Invite and elicit and provide opportunities for CONSTRUCTIVE trances
  - Decrease DESTRUCTIVE trances

Adapted from Reinhold's ISSTD 2018 ASCH Presentation

## Why use clinical hypnosis...

(clinical-by trained healthcare providers)

- ▶ Most trance experiences are automatic/unconscious thus without intentional purpose
- ▶ Offers a deliberate, skilled invitation for a purposeful trance state
- ▶ For unconscious exploration or symptom management

Adapted from Reinhold's ISSTD 2018 ASCH Presentation

## Why use clinical hypnosis...

- ▶ Research demonstrates
  - "hypnotic communication and suggestions effectively change aspects of the person's physiological and neurological functions." ([www.asch.net](http://www.asch.net))
  - Raz, A. (2004). Atypical attention: Hypnosis and conflict reduction. In Posner, M.I. (Ed.), *Cognitive neuroscience of attention* (pp. 420-429). New York: Guilford Publications.
  - Raz, A., Shapiro, T., Fan, J., Posner, M.I. (2002). Hypnotic suggestion and the modulation of Stroop interference. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 59, 1155-1161.
  - Psychologist John Ridley **Stroop**, the **Stroop effect** is our tendency to experience difficulty naming a physical color when it is used to spell the name of a different color.
- ▶ For unconscious exploration or symptom management
- ▶ For ego strengthening and skill building
- ▶ In a hypnotic state: Suggestibility is heightened

## Hypnosis: The Unconscious Mind & Ego States

- ▶ Much of ego state influence is unconscious
- ▶ Hypnosis provides a venue for giving voice to the unconscious, thus providing a platform for ego states to communicate
- ▶ Provides tools for fostering internal and external communication with states that may not be conscious to self
- ▶ Provides a means of exploring unconscious contributing factors to psychological/physiological conditions
- ▶ Can provide structure for dissociative clients

"Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will control your life and you will call it fate." -Carl Jung

Hypnosis is a state of highly focused attention, with a constriction in peripheral awareness and a heightened responsiveness to social cues.

David Spiegel MD  
jnci.oxfordjournals.org JNCI | Editorials 1281

## Definitions

- ▶ A Process of therapeutic communication whether it's formally used (induction vs conversational hypnosis or by tailoring suggestions in spontaneous trance states)
- ▶ Keep in mind:
  - Susceptibility
  - Suggestibility
- ▶ With ego states
  - Suggestions are given to the ego state needing them

## Definitions

- ▶ Hetero-hypnosis or formal hypnosis vs self-hypnosis
  - There is a **relational** aspect
    - Trust and authority/belief enhances suggestibility
    - Fosters expectation

## Be a Mr. Jensen

- ▶ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p5286T\\_kn0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p5286T_kn0)
- ▶ Utilization
- ▶ Didn't even know I was doing it 'unconscious'
- ▶ Moment in time, "I will never forget it", the destructive trance shifted.
- ▶ Symptom into a solution....

## The Power of Suggestion

- ▶ John Watkins (1978) also referenced this when discussing the importance of the therapeutic relationship.
- ▶ Therapeutic interventions, whether analytic or behavioral, carry far greater weight with the suffering one because they draw upon one of the most widely used and successful healing principles known to man: the constructive impact of oneself upon another. It has been estimated, if one considered all methods of treatment ever used by all healing arts persons in all ages and throughout all societies in the world, that more people have been treated by one interpersonal technique alone, suggestion, than by all other approaches, physical, surgical, or pharmacological. This attests to the immense power that human relationship has in altering physiological and psychological processes. (p.251)

## Ego State *Therapeutic Approach*

## EST/Indications for use:

- ▶ Diagnostic
  - PTSD
  - Borderline PD
  - Selective mutism
  - Dissociative Disorders
  - OCD
  - Anxiety disorders
  - Depression
  - Eating disorders
  - Conversion/somatic Sexual Disorders
- ▶ Presenting issues
  - Exploratory (Not conscious of why a symptom manifests)
  - Evidence of internal conflict
  - Use of 'Parts' language
  - Relational
  - Evidence of identity alteration
  - Kids (the 'bad' me versus the 'good' me)

Applications really are endless

## Presenting EST to Clients

- ▶ Discuss use of clinical hypnosis
- ▶ Discuss normal multiplicity
- ▶ Discuss state-dependent memory
- ▶ Discuss their presenting 'indications' for EST use
- ▶ Emphasize that it's about accessing their own internal resources
- ▶ That it's also a way to explore 'unconscious' aspects related to their presenting problem

## Therapeutic Approach

1. The therapeutic relationship (WITH APPROPRIATE BOUNDARY SETTING!) (TELEHEALTH & Boundaries)
2. Assessment/diagnosis/Treatment Plan  
If EST is indicated...
3. Addressing issues of safety/stability (How EST can help)
  - Consistent with trauma, phase oriented treatment
  - Consistent with SARI model (Phillips & Frederick, 1995)

## Therapeutic Approach

1. Managing presenting anxiety (Ego state strategies)
2. Accessing and identifying ego states (Keep in mind overall treatment plan, what is needed?)
3. Ego state exploration (age, internal relationships, roles, purpose, etc.)
4. Understanding the system/role (PURPOSE) of parts/internal layout
5. Identifying inner strengths and resources (EARLY ON-where you start)

## Therapeutic Approach

8. Changing self-destructive behavior and/or dysfunctional behavior (job restructuring—use of metaphors etc, transformation or reassignment) (Cooperation)
9. Identifying and resolving internal conflicts (Collaborative)
10. Teaching AND integrating skills/educating (affect regulation)
11. Trauma work
  - Fostering coconsciousness for DD's affect regulation/Processing trauma/developmental repair/Sharing and integrating traumatic material (Coinciding)
12. Follow-up concerns/maintenance

## Structuring Work

1. Establish internal place of comfort
2. Practice and reinforce ability to 'get there'
3. Proceed to 'meeting space'
4. Proceed with therapeutic tasks (EST)
5. Guide back to the internal place of comfort
6. Reorient to office
7. Process/debrief

\*Trauma Patients are often in an altered state of consciousness. However, it can still be beneficial to structure sessions.

## Please Return!!!

\*Tips for those who have difficulty re-alerting:

- 1) If working with a "far away" ego state, talk with the ego state closest to the host prior to coming back...it's a much easier transition for the client
- 2) Ground the client to your office...suggestions for her to feel fabrics, feel the floor under her feet, wiggle her feet, feel her hand touching the chair, etc.
- 3) Remind those who are trying to "stay out" to go back in because you need 'so and so' to return, assure them if they have more to say, they can journal or you can talk further during the next session.

## Clinical Applications

## Questions?

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