



# Using Skype for hypnotherapy

**Trevor Eddolls looks at some ideas about how to use Skype with clients.**

**Having clients in the same room as you gives you the ability to read their body language and observe the GSR numbers changing – and generally gain feedback about how the session is going.**

**But, there are times when that's not possible – a client may not live near, or they might have issues with leaving the house. In that case, it makes sense to use the technology available and go ahead with the session.**

Using Skype allows you to still get some feedback because you can see your client and they can see you, whereas a phone session doesn't provide this visual feedback.

Skype is owned by Microsoft, and, for the technically-minded, it provides voice communications and multimedia sessions over Internet Protocol (IP) networks, such as the Internet – usually shortened to VoIP (Voice over IP). The software is free to download (from <http://www.skype.com/en/download-skype/skype-for-computer/>), and free to use between devices attached to the Internet (i.e. personal computers).

The benefits of using Skype are that it allows people to access hypnotherapy sessions from the comfort of their own homes (or hotel room if they're away).

It's perfect for people with mobility problems or anyone suffering from agoraphobia and also for people who find it difficult to accommodate visiting a therapist into their busy lives, such as shift workers, parents, and full-time carers. Some people feel more safe-and-secure being at home rather than at a clinic or someone else's house. It can take place regardless of the client's location – they could be an existing client who has moved out of the area, or a new client from some way away, including abroad. Clients don't need to travel to your clinic, which saves them the stress of that journey – there's

no need to worry about traffic jams or parking. And Skype is encrypted as it is transmitted, so the communication and the whole session remain private and confidential. Using Skype can be as successful as being in the same room. For the therapist, it's important to think about what message you're sending when the client first sees you on Skype. I'm not suggesting that you need to spend an hour in make-up, but you might want to check in the mirror that you don't have anything on your face (like crumbs from that sandwich you ate quickly)!

You want to ensure that the client can clearly see your face – so think about lighting. The client needs to be able to see you nodding and smiling when they talk. And you want to check your background. Does it look professional? If not, you might perhaps want to try locating your laptop somewhere else. A professional-looking background with neutral colours can work best. You also want to find somewhere that isn't picking up a lot of background noise.

Once a client has contacted you and said that they would like hypnotherapy using Skype, you need to test it to make sure the technology works and that the volume levels are right. You can agree a time when the client can Skype you, and that will ensure that they know how to use Skype and the broadband works OK. Some areas have BT Infinity and other higher-speed offerings – and some areas don't. If the Skype connection keeps failing in the test, it's probably not worthwhile trying to do a live session.

Your client needs to be in a quiet room where you can have a private conversation and they won't be disturbed when they go into trance. You may need to discuss this with the client, if they haven't thought about it already. You need them to be sitting somewhere that's comfortable for the trance session, but also where you can see their face and watch their breathing rate. You need to ensure that the volume levels at both ends are good. You need to be able to

hear them and they need to be able to hear you over the top of your music.

The next big question is payment. You'll want your client to pay upfront. They can transfer the money into your account or they can pay by Paypal (if you use that).

Once everything is tested and works, you can go ahead and run a live session. Make sure that payment has arrived in your account and be ready a couple of minutes before the client is due to call you. You'll also need to have a phone number, in case the Skype session crashes half-way through. You may need to phone your client to bring the session to an end.

Clearly, if they can answer the phone, they have come out of trance. Pre-warn them that this might happen, but hopefully it won't. You can always include some instructions for these possibilities at the start of the session.

Some people stop after the talking part and get the client to listen to a CD. That way you ensure the session that they receive has the highest sound quality. I find that I prefer to do a session live because it gives me the same flexibility that I have with a client in my consulting room. But you need to be sure that you have a quality Skype connection.

The technology is getting better and better and more-and-more rural areas are getting decent quality broadband connections, so it's now possible to use Skype for video calls to most places (assuming your broadband connection is good). That means using Skype is becoming an acceptable way of delivering therapy to clients.

