

## ՀՈԳԵԲԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

### THE IMPACT OF ERICKSONIAN TEACHING TALES ON INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING, ACTIVITY AND MOOD

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The object of this research is Milton Erickson's method of non-directive hypnosis, according to which trance possesses a therapeutic nature, and the capacity for unconscious learning increases during a trance state. Erickson's methodology enables the elimination of a client's acquired conscious limitations and, through the use of teaching tales, utilizes accumulated life experiences, knowledge, and skills to shape positive behavior. The purpose of the research is to study the impact of Ericksonian therapeutic tales on changes in an individual's mental states. The research methods include a linear formative experiment and testing. The following instruments were administered: the "Well-being, Activity, and Mood" questionnaire (V. Doskin) and the Ericksonian teaching tale "Learn to Get Up" . The experiment was conducted in three stages: initial testing, a 21-day formative stage involving daily trance sessions, and final post-testing. Based on the experimental study, it was revealed that a teaching tale heard in a trance state activates an individual's internal resources and potential. The application of Ericksonian therapeutic tales induced significant positive shifts: mood improved by 18.4%, well-being by 13.6%, and activity by 9.1%. These results confirm that the Ericksonian

method effectively facilitates psychological regulation and fosters a more constructive behavioral framework.

**Keywords:** *Ericksonian hypnosis, trance state, teaching tales, psychological states, well-being, activity, mood, unconscious learning.*

## INTRODUCTION

M. Erickson's methodology is a form of non-directive hypnosis, during which the client imperceptibly enters a trance state. Through specialized communication techniques, their internal resources are activated to facilitate the learning of problem-solving skills. A distinctive feature of this method is that it is based on cooperation with the client rather than the suppression of their will (Gordeev, 2014).

Trance is a mode of mental activity involving both the conscious and unconscious levels of the psyche. It serves as an intermediary link between these two types of mental activity and does not imply a loss of consciousness or rigid control (*A Guide to Ericksonian Hypnotherapy*, 1997). In Ericksonian hypnosis, trance is a state where the subject's attention shifts from the external environment to the internal psychic world, with the hypnotist's voice guiding this internal focus. Consequently, external stimuli do not distract the client, their conscious limitations are bypassed, and as a result, the intensity of learning new things within the trance state increases. This is an active process of unconscious learning, fundamentally different from the notion of hypnosis as a passive or regressive state.

Trance is an altered state of consciousness that is neither wakefulness nor sleep. It only needs to be established once; subsequently, it can be re-induced through "symbolic" associations (such as a specific color, sound, or a memory associated with the initial trance). Each individual experiences the state of trance uniquely, depending on their personality and life history. In a trance state, everything seems to occur of its own accord. For instance, a person's arm may rise independently (a phenomenon known as "arm levitation"). Such processes often evoke surprise and conscious incongruity. Sensations, mood, fantasies, and associations arise spontaneously at the subconscious level and remain at the threshold of consciousness. How an individual learns to respond to these spontaneous manifestations largely determines their degree of mental health and well-being (Gilligan, 1997).

M. Erickson introduced the innovative idea that the essence of trance is inherently therapeutic (Ginzburg, Yakovleva, 2008). To induce the trance experience, Ericksonian hypnosis utilizes the client's unique psychological characteristics and motivations, avoiding standardized approaches that tend to ignore the client's individuality and desires (Erickson, 1995).

Erickson posited that clients' problems are linked to conscious limitations acquired throughout life. The purpose of trance is to attenuate these limitations. When consciousness is liberated from prejudices and obstacles, learning can occur spontaneously at an unconscious level. Thus, an Ericksonian hypnotherapist first eliminates the client's acquired limitations and then assists in utilizing accumulated life experiences, knowledge, and skills by performing restructuring at the unconscious level (Erickson, Rossi, et al., 2000).

In Ericksonian hypnosis, the terms "conscious" and "unconscious" are utilized. The human mind consists of two parts: the conscious and the unconscious. The conscious mind analyzes, criticizes, reasons, directs, and focuses attention; it is responsible for speech, abstract thinking, and conscious effort—functions associated with the left hemisphere. In a trance, the left hemisphere operates more passively, and all the therapist's efforts are directed toward freeing the consciousness from rigid frameworks and conscious limitations (Gilligan, 1997).

The trance experience is associated with the activity of the right hemisphere of the brain, which is typically underutilized in the daily lives of most individuals. The right hemisphere is responsible for creativity, intuition, kinesthetic sensations, musical and visual-spatial perception, spontaneity, and extrasensory abilities; it is the domain of unconscious processes. This is also where the sources of human fears, anxieties, and neurotic experiences reside. By communicating directly with the subconscious, Ericksonian hypnosis helps eliminate the root causes of problems and stimulates the search for creative solutions.

The essence of Ericksonian hypnosis lies in appealing to the individual's creative subconscious and facilitating unconscious learning within a trance state. M. Erickson stated: "Most of our life is determined by the unconscious" (Erickson, 2016). A similar idea was previously expressed by the founder of psychoanalysis, S. Freud, who believed that human behavior is primarily driven by unconscious impulses and desires (largely sexual) (Erickson, Rossi, Rossi, 2000). While Freud viewed the unconscious mainly as a "hidden reality" with unprocessed content, Erickson reimagined it as a source of positive resources (Peter, 2024). The

fundamental difference in their approaches is that Erickson regards the subconscious not as a source of problems, but as a vast reservoir of potential resources and opportunities. This powerful reservoir of resources is often unrecognized by most people in their daily lives, whereas hypnosis allows one to access and activate it for the individual's benefit.

According to M. Erickson, hypnosis facilitates learning and increases the readiness to accept change. In Ericksonian hypnosis, the individual does not lose self-control and is not guided by the will of another person. The trance induced through hypnosis is a natural state that people experience repeatedly; it can occur during daydreaming, meditation, prayer, or during repetitive physical exercises (Matthews, Conti, & Starr, 1999).

In a trance state, internal sensations are perceived more vividly than external stimuli; the client begins to intuitively grasp the meaning of dreams, symbols, and other manifestations of the subconscious. During trance, the hypnotherapist's suggestions encounter less critical resistance; however, if they conflict with the patient's values, they are either partially assimilated or entirely rejected. When the hypnotherapist's suggestions are accepted, stable changes occur in the client's behavior, awakening their innate capacity for unconscious learning. Within the trance, the individual connects with a reservoir of unused knowledge accumulated throughout their life. By recalling forgotten skills, they can render their behavior more constructive. The impact of Ericksonian hypnosis is enduring and leads to intrapsychic changes, such as personal growth and self-discovery.

Ericksonian hypnosis follows a specific sequence of steps:

- Induction (Introduction),
- Establishment of trance,
- Utilization/Suggestion (Manipulation of consciousness),
- Emergence from trance (Gilligan, 1997).

The clinical signs of a trance include dilated pupils, a fixed gaze and posture, slowed blinking and swallowing reflexes, relaxed muscles, slowed breathing, diminished response to external noise, delayed motor reactions, and spontaneous movements such as hand levitation or fluttering eyelids.

In his work with trance, M. Erickson (Erickson, 1995) frequently and skillfully wove in teaching tales—stories from his own life or the lives of his relatives. These instructional stories are the "trump card" of Ericksonian hypnosis; they lend a unique charm to the therapy and

enhance its effectiveness. These trance narratives are also referred to as therapeutic metaphors, which can influence the unconscious and foster positive behavioral patterns. Through these teaching tales, the hypnotherapist provides new information, evokes new sensations, and encourages novel experiences. New perspectives can be conveyed to the client in both waking and trance states. Clients often identify with a character in the therapist's story, thereby internalizing the qualities, knowledge, and skills necessary to successfully resolve their own problems, subsequently applying this new experience in real life (Valyak, 2011). The application of Ericksonian therapeutic stories is an effective means of overcoming a wide range of psychological issues. These include depressive disorders, phobias, high anxiety, psychosomatic disorders, and addictive behaviors. Concurrently, research aimed at activating subconscious resources and the application of Ericksonian methods for the regulation and improvement of an individual's mental states can be further integrated into psychotherapeutic practice.

### **METHODOLOGY**

**Research Objective:** To examine the impact of Ericksonian therapeutic stories on an individual's psychological states. According to the hypothesis, it is assumed that Ericksonian teaching tales presented in a trance state influence changes in an individual's well-being, activity levels, and mood. **Methodological Framework:** The study is based on the fundamental principles of the systemic nature of the psyche and causality. **Sample:** The research group consists of 30 young adults, with ages ranging from 20 to 25 years. **Research Methods:** The following were utilized during the study: linear formative experiment, and testing.

In a linear experiment, the same group serves as both the control and the experimental group. Variables are fixed prior to the experiment. Following the experimental intervention, the state of the research subject is measured according to the controlled characteristics (Mikaelian, 2018).

**Variables:**

- **Dependent Variables:** Manifestations of well-being, activity, and mood.
- **Independent Variable:** The Ericksonian teaching tale.

**Instruments:**

1. The "Well-being, Activity, Mood" (WAM) questionnaire (by V. Doskin).
2. The Ericksonian teaching tale titled "Learning to Stand Up".

The objective of the WAM questionnaire is to assess the individual's current psychological state. The methodology comprises 30 bipolar items, and the subject must select the manifestation that best describes their current state (Psychological Tests for Professionals, 2007).

The Teaching Tale: "Learning to Stand Up". In this Ericksonian story, it is emphasized that individuals possess the necessary resources to solve any problem, though they may not remember their existence. The story is presented in an abridged version:

"One of my sisters was an infant and had just begun to crawl. I watched with great excitement as my sister grew and learned not just to crawl, but to stand. You yourself do not know how you once learned to stand, nor do you know how you learned to walk... You do not realize how you walk. You do not remember how you learned to stand on your feet. You discovered how to do it when, reaching up with your hands, you tried to move forward. The whole weight fell on your hands, and accidentally you realized that you could shift the weight to your legs. How difficult it was when your knees began to buckle on their own, as you learned to keep them straight... Then you found that you had to learn to direct your attention to your knees, then to keeping your hips straight and your feet apart. And then, finally, you were able to stand with legs wide apart and hands holding onto something... You must learn how to maintain balance in all body movements... Then comes the hardest part: learning to stand only on your feet, letting go with your hands... Finally, after gaining enough skill in maintaining balance, you were able to stand on one foot. That is a terribly difficult task... Then you put one foot forward and shift the body's center of gravity. Your knees buckled and you sat down. You got up again and sat down again. Finally, you learned to put one foot forward and took a step; it seemed to work. You tried again and it worked again. Then you took a third step with the same foot and fell. It took a long time to learn how to alternate feet: right-left, right-left. Now you have the ability to swing your arms, turn your head, look right and left. You are able to walk successfully, paying not the slightest attention to how you keep your knees and hips straight" (Erickson, 2016).

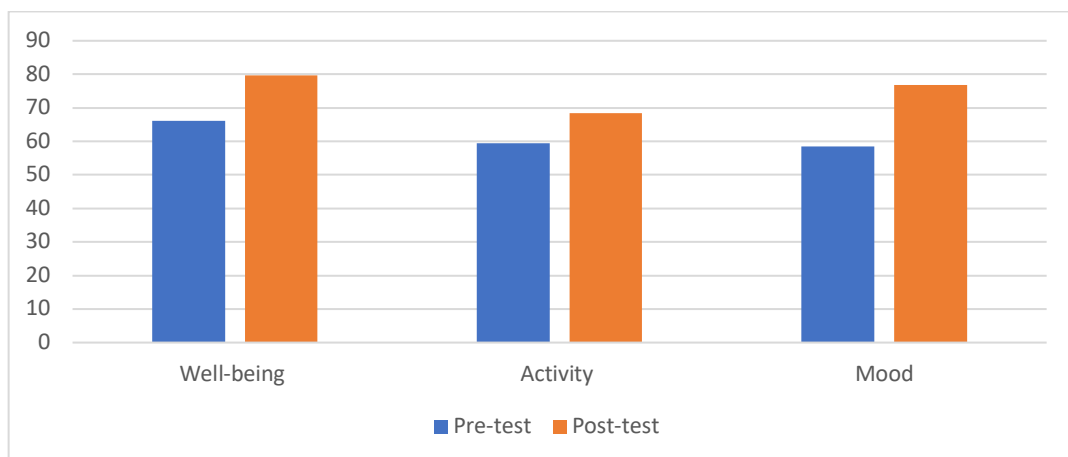
## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the first stage of the study, the "Well-being, Activity, Mood" (WAM) questionnaire was administered. Among the young adult participants, the highest baseline score was recorded for well-being (66.1%), followed by activity (59.4%) and mood (58.4%). During the second stage—the formative phase—participants listened to an audio recording of the Ericksonian teaching tale, "Learning to Stand Up," for 21 consecutive days. The participants listened to the story in a quiet environment in the evening, immediately before going to sleep. This approach was based on the premise that the subconscious can be effectively influenced during trance, and that every individual enters a natural state of trance for a period of time before falling asleep (Dispenza, 2017).

The story was presented under conditions that favor the activation of the brain's alpha rhythms, which facilitates the induction of a trance state (Kondrashov, 1998). The duration of the experiment was set at 21 days, as this is widely considered the timeframe necessary to break old habits and stereotypical thought patterns in favor of adopting new ones. Thus, the participants listened to the narration of the story every night before sleep.

In the third stage of the study, to verify the proposed hypothesis, a follow-up test was conducted using the same WAM questionnaire. According to the results, a positive dynamic was recorded across all indicators of the psychological states being studied. Following the formative stage of the experiment, well-being remained the highest indicator (79.7%); however, a shift occurred in the other factors: mood rose to the second position (76.8%), followed by activity (68.5%).

The data obtained before and after the experiment were compared. These indicators are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Changes in Well-being, Activity, and Mood Indicators Before and After the Application of the Ericksonian Method

The chart illustrates a significant increase in all three psychological indicators following the 21-day intervention. The well-being indicator rose from 66.1% to 79.7%, activity increased from 59.4% to 68.5%, and mood improved from 58.4% to 76.8%. Both before and after the experiment, the highest indicator remained well-being (66.1% and 79.7%, respectively). The mood indicator, which was the lowest prior to the experiment, rose to the second position following the intervention (from 58.4% to 76.8%). Despite its recorded growth, the activity indicator ranked third after the experiment (moving from 59.4% to 68.5%). Consequently, as a result of the linear formative experiment, the participants' well-being improved by 13.6%, activity levels increased by 9.1%, and mood rose by 18.4%. The most significant positive shift was observed in the mood indicator. This evidence confirms the overall effectiveness of the experimental intervention.

### CONCLUSION

- Teaching tales heard within a trance state exert a profound influence on the individual's subconscious, activating their inherent resources and potential.
- The application of Ericksonian therapeutic stories induces positive shifts in an individual's well-being, activity levels, and mood. Specifically, influencing the subconscious through Ericksonian techniques contributes to a significant improvement in both mood and overall well-being.
- In future expansions of this research, the impact of Ericksonian therapeutic stories on self-esteem will be examined, and a comparative analysis of the method's effectiveness across different age groups will be conducted.

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## РЕЗЮМЕ

### ВЛИЯНИЕ ЭРИКСОНОВСКИХ ОБУЧАЮЩИХ ИСТОРИЙ НА САМООЩУЩЕНИЕ, АКТИВНОСТЬ И НАСТРОЕНИЕ ЛИЧНОСТИ

**Марине Микаелян, Клавдия Мкоян**

Объектом данного исследования является метод недирективного гипноза Милтона Эриксона, согласно которому транс обладает терапевтической природой, а способность к бессознательному научению возрастает в состоянии транса. Методология Эриксона позволяет устранить приобретенные сознательные ограничения клиента и, посредством обучающих историй, использовать накопленный жизненный опыт, знания и навыки для формирования позитивного поведения. Целью исследования является изучение влияния эриксоновских терапевтических историй на изменение психических состояний личности. Методы исследования включают линейный формирующий эксперимент и тестирование. Были использованы следующие инструменты: опросник «Самочувствие, активность и настроение» (САН) (В. Доскин) и эриксоновская обучающая история «Научись вставать». Эксперимент проводился в три этапа: начальное тестирование, 21-дневный формирующий этап с ежедневными сеансами транса и итоговое пост-тестирование. На основе экспериментального исследования было выявлено, что обучающая история, услышанная в состоянии транса, активизирует внутренние ресурсы и потенциал личности. Применение эриксоновских терапевтических историй вызвало значительные положительные сдвиги: настроение улучшилось на 18,4%, самочувствие — на 13,6%, а активность — на 9,1%. Эти результаты подтверждают, что эриксоновский метод эффективно способствует регуляции психических состояний и формированию конструктивных поведенческих моделей.

*Ключевые слова:* Эриксоновский гипноз, состояние транса, обучающие истории, психологические состояния, самочувствие, активность, настроение, бессознательное научение.

## ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ

ԷՐԻՔՍՈՆՅԱՆ ՈՒՍՈՒՑՈՂԱԿԱՆ ՊԱՏՄՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ՆԵՐԳՈՐԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ  
ԱՆՁԻ ԻՆՔՆԱԶԳԱՑՈՂՈՒԹՅԱՆ, ԱԿՏԻՎՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԵՎ ՏՐԱՄԱԴՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՎՐԱ

### Մարինե Միքայելյան, Կլավդիա Մկոյան

Սույն հետազոտության օբյեկտը Միլտոն Էրիկսոնի ոչ դիրեկտիվ հիպնոսի մեթոդն է, համաձայն որի՝ «տրանսն» ունի թերապևտիկ բնույթ և տրանսային վիճակում մեծանում են անգիտակցական ուսուցման հնարավորությունները: Էրիքսոնյան մեթոդաբանությունը թույլ է տալիս վերացնել այցելուի ձեռքբերովի գիտակցական սահմանափակումները և ուսուցողական պատմությունների միջոցով օգտագործել կուտակված կյանքի փորձը, գիտելիքներն ու հմտությունները՝ դրական վարքագիծ ձևավորելու համար: Հետազոտության նպատակն է ուսումնասիրել Էրիքսոնյան թերապևտիկ պատմությունների ներգործությունն անձի հոգեկան վիճակների փոփոխության վրա: Հետազոտության մեթոդներն են գծային ձևավորող գիտափորձը և թեստավորումը: Կիրառվել են հետևյալ մեթոդիկաները՝ «Ինքնազգացողություն, ակտիվություն, տրամադրություն» հարցարան (Վ. Դոսկին), Էրիքսոնյան ուսուցողական պատմություն՝ «Սովորիր վեր կենալ»: Գիտափորձն իրականացվել է երեք փուլով. նախնական թեստավորում, 21-օրյա ձևավորող փուլ՝ ամենօրյա տրանսի սեանսներով, և վերջնական կրկնակի թեստավորում: Փորձարարական հետազոտության հիման վրա պարզվել է, որ տրանսի վիճակում լսված ուսուցողական պատմությունը ակտիվացնում է անձի ներքին ռեսուրսներն ու ներուժը: Էրիքսոնյան թերապևտիկ պատմությունների կիրառումն առաջացրել է զգալի դրական տեղաշարժեր. տրամադրությունը բարելավվել է 18,4%-ով, ինքնազգացողությունը՝ 13,6%-ով, իսկ ակտիվությունը՝ 9,1%-ով: Այս արդյունքները հաստատում են, որ Էրիքսոնյան մեթոդն արդյունավետորեն նպաստում է հոգեկան վիճակների կարգավորմանը և կառուցողական վարքագծի ձևավորմանը:

*Բանալի բառեր. Էրիքսոնյան հիպնոս, տրանսի վիճակ, ուսուցողական պատմություններ, հոգեվիճակներ, ինքնազգացողություն, ակտիվություն, տրամադրություն, անգիտակցական ուսուցում:*

*Հոդվածը ստացվել է՝ 15.12. 2025*

*Հոդվածն ուղարկվել է գրախոսման՝ 19.12. 2025*

*Հոդվածը երաշխավորվել է տպագրության՝ 10.01.2026*