

Therapists put to sleep myths of hypnosis

Practising the art of subconscious healing focus of gathering

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STAFF REPORTER

You are getting sleepy. Very sleepy.

While many equate hypnosis with watching friends act out embarrassing scenarios on stage at university or corporate events, clinical hypnotherapy is increasingly being used to help people overcome fears and deal with stress.

That was the message being sent yesterday by professional hypnotherapists at information sessions and hypnosis demonstrations across the city during World Hypnosis Day.

"We access the subconscious mind where all of your patterns and behaviours are," said Georgina Cannon, a clinical hypnotherapist and director of the Ontario Hypnosis Centre in Toronto.

"So if, for example, you have a fear of authority, we have to access the subconscious where that fear began and change it. That's what we do."

World Hypnosis Day began five years ago when a worldwide network of hypnotists decided common misconceptions about hypnosis – that people's minds can be taken over or that people can be made to forget things – needed to be corrected, according to Cannon.

"Stage hypnosis is entertainment," said Cannon, shortly before lecturing to 70 people at the Comfort Suites Hotel on Dundas St. "The people that go up on stage expect to have fun. When they come into the clinic, it's a different thing."

Cannon added that the use of hypnotherapy – essentially the same as meditation – is becoming more mainstream, with moms using "hypnobirthing" and athletes using hypnosis techniques to improve performance.

Debbie Papadakis, founder of Toronto's Hypno Healing Institute, said people should never underestimate the power of their minds.

"Through hypnosis we can tap into our hidden power, dispel fears and limiting beliefs, heal our mind and body and make positive and lasting changes in our lives in order to reach our full potential," she said.

Papadakis held a hypnosis demonstration at the institute on Keele St. near Dundas St.

Gabriele Moussa, who attended Cannon's information session, said hypnotherapy and past life regression – the process of learning about one's previous lives, if one believes such a thing is possible – have helped her professional career in the financial sector.