

Sarah Johnson, Enlightened Earth Hypnosis - Pittsford

I am a private practice Mental Health Hypnotist with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Master's in Counseling all obtained in NYS. After I earned my Bachelor's degree, I worked for three years on an acute care Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Inpatient Unit. Only a small number of patients that came into the Psych. ED were admitted to the Inpatient unit, so we saw the most acute cases of individuals that were either harmful to others or themselves. It was a crash course in psychiatric challenges of every kind. It also offered me a first-hand view of how our current system of mental health has failed so many individuals, watching many children get worse rather than better going through the system. I eventually made the hard choice to leave Psychology and Counseling for the alternative healing modalities after this experience and others like it. Something was missing in the treatment and care of individuals with deep emotional wounds that medication and traditional modalities weren't getting to the bottom of.

I am writing this to bring the reality to light that New York State is behind other states in accepting and including the alternative mental health and healing modalities within your scope of mental health workers. The techniques I specialize in now work well for acute crisis as well as more long-term mental, emotional and physical healing work, and yet I cannot obtain licensure in NYS for my work. Traditional mental health professionals are stretched thin, many aren't taking new clients, and people who are suffering are not getting help in our current system. Time to expand the scope of mental health offerings to include alternative healing modalities.

As a side note, I've been involved in mental health in clinical and school settings for many years. I've found that structure and discipline go hand-in-hand with mental health work. A consistent and safe environment is the first fundamental need in order for effective mental health work to occur. As our state has had less structure and discipline for adults in our legal system, that filters down completely to children and teens as well. Some kids are becoming more brazen and overt in their negative, aggressive and violent behaviors thereby impacting the safety and mental health of others. These are also the kids in greatest need of mental health services themselves to resort to such measures. Many of our schools

are absolutely out of control, and it all comes back to bail reform and the current lack of structure and law in our adult society. New York needs to make massive changes to our mental health and discipline structure at all levels before we simply implode.