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**EROTIC HYPNOSIS FETISHISM: IMPLICATIONS FOR SEXUAL
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT, CONSENT, MINORITY STRESS, AND
INTERSECTIONALITY**

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Abstract

Erotic Hypnosis Fetishism: Implications for Sexual Identity Development, Consent,

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Sam D. Hughes

Erotic hypnosis fetishism is a practice involving gaining erotic or intimate pleasure

from engaging in and/or roleplaying hypnosis, mind control, brainwashing, and/or

hypnotic suggestion. Despite its surprising popularity as a sexual fetish interest, little

is known about erotic hypnosis within the peer-reviewed academic literature. To fill

this gap, this dissertation details a study which sought to better understand the social,

developmental, ethical, and motivational characteristics surrounding erotic hypnosis

fetishism. A set of 83 in-depth semi-structured interviews with a diverse set of erotic

hypnosis fetishists was conducted between 2019-2021 (with both researcher- and

community-derived questions), recruited at four erotic hypnosis conferences as well

as via online advertisements and snowball sampling. The interviews were analyzed

via an initial 2-round conventional content analysis, followed by a further 2-round

(and occasionally 3-round) inductive thematic analysis on the content-coded data.

The results of this study indicated that erotic hypnosis fetishists are motivated by a

wide variety of different factors, including the opportunity to explore and play with

aspects of their own psychology, to enhance and achieve other kink interests and to

acquire practical benefits. Participants also reported that while consent was central to

ethical erotic hypnosis, and that engaging in healthy consent practices required a team

collaboration, substantial disagreements persisted in perceptions of the relative risk

and management of consent and safety in erotic hypnosis communities. Furthermore, participants also noted that erotic hypnosis presented both challenges and opportunities for people with disabilities, especially for those who are neurodivergent, in part because of the overlap between erotic hypnosis and hypnotherapy. In the context of religion, faith, and spirituality, participants narrated both stories of conflict and stories of harmony between their erotic hypnosis practices and their faith. Lastly, most participants agreed that the erotic hypnosis community faced substantial challenges related to racial and linguistic diversity, often rooted in colorblindness and the role of language in erotic hypnosis as a practice, but that erotic hypnosis also provided unique opportunities for People of Color. Overall, this study sheds light on this poorly understood fetish community.

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Introduction

Hypnosis has long been conceptualized as a process by which a person enters into an altered state of consciousness, allowing one to experience a more suggestible trance state, in which they can be more easily influenced by the suggestions of others (Orne, 1959). Individual variation in that level of suggestibility may vary widely, especially in relationship to individual's capacity to disassociate (Terhune et al., 2011), and widespread disagreement persists regarding how to even measure that suggestibility (Barnes et al., 2009). Others have rejected the idea that hypnosis is even an altered state of consciousness at all, instead considering it primarily form of imaginative role enactment (Coe, 1966). This state/non-state debate over the nature of hypnosis, and different models of how it functions have endured for a substantial historical period in the academic literature (e.g., Lynn & Rhue, 1991), and still endures today (e.g., Kunzendorf et al., 2018; Lynn et al., 2007). Despite disagreement about what the nature of hypnosis is, hypnosis has seen widespread use in a variety of societal domains. Alongside its long history in clinical pain management (Hilgard et al., 2013), demonstrated effectiveness in clinical hypnotherapy (Flammer & Bongartz, 2003), and as a form of popular entertainment (Echterling & Whalen, 1995), hypnosis has also more recently become the central focus of a community of erotic hypnofetishists, people who experience sexual arousal and/or intimate desire around the experience or idea of being hypnotized or hypnotizing another person. For example, in the last few decades, dozens of national and regional erotic hypnosis conference events have emerged for hypnofetishists to

find a supportive community (e.g., Mephki, 2022), as have many social networking websites aimed at attracting hypnofetishists (e.g., *Hypnosis for Guys*, 2019). Similarly, hypnosis fetishism has become a more visible genre of erotic films and stories, with thousands of erotic hypnosis-themed pornographic materials produced and available online (e.g., *Girls Gone Hypnotized*, 2022; *Welcome to Warp My Mind*, 2022; *The Erotic Mind-Control Story Archive*, 2022).

Moreover, erotic hypnosis fetish groups on FetLife, the world's largest social networking website for people into a variety of different fetish and kink activities, regularly maintain thousands of members, including the largest group, "Erotic Hypnosis" with over 20,000 users (*Erotic Hypnosis*, 2022). This high membership makes it the 168th largest fetish group out of more than 50,000 groups on the site. Major mainstream kink and fetish events, such as International Mr. Leather, even sometimes host special events specifically for hypnofetishists and those interested in exploring erotic hypnosis (e.g., International Mr. Leather, 2019). Furthermore, major news media outlets have even begun covering the fetish, including Cosmopolitan, Vice, The Daily Dot, Mic, Men's Health, and The Observer (Cockerill, 2017; Kleeman, 2015; Piñeiro, 2021; Valens, 2019, 2020a, 2020b, 2021; White, 2012; Winkie, 2018). Despite the rising visibility and apparent popularity of this fetish, very little academic attention has been paid to erotic hypnosis fetishism (for the four exceptions, discussed below, see Chambers, 2020; Gilbert, 2020; Mackay & Mackay, 2021; Wilson, 2022). Critically, to my knowledge, no peer-reviewed research has ever been conducted involving actively engaging the erotic hypnosis community as

part of the research process, or interviewing a large number of people with this interest, so the perspectives available on this fetish practice thus far have been severely limited.

To fill this gap in the literature, as well as consider the implications of hypnofetishism to other areas of academic inquiry, this dissertation project sought to advance the first study of its kind to better understand hypnofetishists, their lives, communities, challenges, and practices, in order to answer three research questions:

1) What themes are expressed when erotic hypnofetishists talk about the origins of, motivations behind, and purported benefits derived from their erotic hypnosis-oriented desires, identities, and practices?

2) How do erotic hypnofetishists conceptualize issues of consent within erotic hypnosis practices and communities?

3) How do other social identity categories like disability/neurodivergence, religion, and race inform and complicate erotic hypnofetishists' experiences?

Given how little previous research has been conducted on erotic hypnosis fetishism, the present study does not put forward hypotheses in a classical hypothetico-deductive scientific model. Instead, this study is designed to gather and analyze people's stories in an effort to develop hypotheses for future study, as well as generate valuable qualitative knowledge in its own right. This line of inquiry is also grounded in a pragmatic, pluralist epistemology (Maarouf, 2019; Morgan, 2014), often employed in mixed-method research, which frames epistemological and ontological positions as potentially useful tools for achieving larger practical goals (in

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this case, helping generate clinically, politically, and individually useful knowledge about erotic hypnofetishists' experiences). Given this epistemological pragmatism, I combine two seemingly contradictory epistemologies—social constructionism (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009) and critical realism (Bhaskar, 2008)—in a multi-step process to evaluate the study's data from multiple theoretical lenses, and in recognition that different research questions can call for different epistemologies (see the Epistemology section below for a more detailed account of the epistemological pluralism in this study). Critical realist epistemologies posit that the meanings behind people's words and communicative behaviors exist as potential objects of study, which researchers attempt to access and understand through analysis, with the recognition of the limitations of these attempts based on our own biases and lenses through which we interpret. Conversely, social constructionism posits that there are no "real meanings" to discover, and instead that meaning is co-constructed between the researcher and the text. I employed both epistemologies, when appropriate, to answer these three research questions. As such, the research design sought to provide initial, exploratory, descriptive answers to these questions, based on extensive qualitative data collected for this study, rather than to test a hypothesis and/or explore cause and effect.

To orient you to the structure of this dissertation, I will first begin by briefly reviewing the scant literature on erotic hypnosis. Next, I will provide a typology of erotic hypnosis practices and media artifacts, based on my own informal observations of the community over 11 years, to help familiarize readers who may not have

exposure to the erotic hypnosis community. Then, I will review four related literatures focused on topics relevant to my research questions, though not specifically about erotic hypnosis. These literatures include 1) the meanings, motivations, and origins of kink and BDSM (an abbreviation for Bondage and Discipline, Domination and Submission, Sadism and Masochism)-oriented desires and behaviors, 2) conceptions of consent within BDSM communities, 3) minority stress theory, and 4) intersectionality theory. Next, I will discuss my own positionality and epistemologies as a researcher in approaching this project, then detail the methods used to collect the data. Following that, I will report the results of five thematic analyses of the dataset and conclude with a discussion of the implications.

Review of the Minimal Literature on Erotic Hypnosis

While there have been a few casual references to erotic hypnosis across a few studies, often simply mentioning it as something that exists, or including it in a list of kinks (e.g., Block, 2015; Hamer, 2016; Webster, 2020; Woo, 2020), to date, only four studies to my knowledge have sought to explore erotic hypnosis as a central object of study in a peer-reviewed academic journal. The first, an article based on a larger linguistics dissertation, explores one subculture within the erotic hypnosis community—the online gay men's dumb jockification community—in which gay and bisexual men who are sexually aroused by the idea of hypnosis being used to turn oneself or others into the stereotypical figure of an American "dumb jock", participate in an online community forum for other men who share this interest

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(Chambers, 2020). The results of the study found that men on the analyzed forum often played with language, such as the intentional misspelling of words or misuse of punctuation, to perform a kind of hegemonic masculine dumbness, as part of their erotic exploration of masculine identity.

Similarly, two other studies to explore erotic hypnosis also focused on artifacts from online spaces: erotic hypnosis pornographic videos (Gilbert, 2020; Mackay & Mackay, 2021). These studies also explicitly centered gender, finding that much of the erotic hypnosis pornographic content they looked at centered on combining hypnosis with sissification (sexual arousal at the idea of a man being made feminine or turned into a girl). Gilbert (2020) speculated that cisgender men and transgender women might have different relationships with these videos, with the former experiencing it as an erotic fetish interest involving humiliation and forced feminization. Conversely, they speculated that transgender women might experience the videos as affirming of their gender identity, and as a helpful tool for converting lingering shame or doubt about their transition or identity into erotic pleasure. These videos, often edited together as a collage of very short clips of pornography with written words and audio laid over the top, also sometimes explore racially-charged themes, such as the idea of hypnotizing the viewer to "worship Black cock"(Mackay & Mackay, 2021). This focus on racial domination within the erotic hypnosis pornographic context dates back to at least the early 20th century, in which a "stag film", an early form of silent film pornography, titled *The Hypnotist* (1930), features a Black hypnotist character hypnotizing a White woman and her husband into having

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sex with the hypnotist, though other scholars (e.g., Vorachek, 2009) have noted

sexual themes involving eroticizing hypnosis and ethnicity even earlier in the novel

Trilby (Du Maurier, 1894), featuring a stereotypically anti-Semitic representation of

Svengali, a Jewish mesmerist who hypnotizes a sexually objectified singer to improve

her performances.

Lastly, a recent bachelor's thesis was published by an undergraduate in

Prague, detailing an online ethnography and series of interviews with seven people,

lacking demographic data, with an interest in erotic hypnosis (Wilson, 2022). This

thesis, approaching the online erotic hypnosis community primarily from a humanist

lens, rather than a social scientific lens, identified that online erotic hypnosis

communities as providing a place for sexual affirmation and solidarity, but also for

financial exploitation, addiction and isolation. However, because the data for this

thesis relied heavily on a psychologically struggling friend of the author who was

heavily abusing drugs, characterized his experience with erotic hypnosis as an

addiction, and was being financially exploited, it is difficult to capture a wide range

of experiences among people with an interest in erotic hypnosis based on those

experiences To wit, only one of the 83 participants in the dataset collected for this

dissertation characterized their interest in erotic hypnosis as an addiction. Lastly, the

thesis focused only on online communities, so data on in-person interactions and in-

person long-term relationships involving erotic hypnosis was not available.

Given that all of these previous studies have focused only on online artifacts

of the erotic hypnosis community, there is a substantial gap in the literature, in that

only one study has involved actually talking to erotic hypnosis fetishists to explore their experiences and perspectives. To help begin to fill this gap in the literature, this study was designed as a participatory community activity, as well as a series of in-depth interviews to help better describe the phenomenon of erotic hypnosis. This study is situated among an intellectual tradition of previous qualitative exploratory studies examining poorly-understood kink and fetish interests (e.g., for age play and diaper fetishism, see Hawkinson & Zamboni, 2014; for haircut fetishism, see Mitchell, 2021; for pup play, see Wignall & McCormack, 2017). Given the lack of previous studies on erotic hypnosis, my approach necessitates relying heavily on other literatures from which to draw inspiration for contextualizing the four research questions I am exploring in this study.

A Typology of Erotic Hypnosis Community Practices and Media Artifacts

Erotic hypnosis fetishism takes on a wide variety of forms in the existing erotic hypnosis community landscape. For those unfamiliar with the fetish, understanding exactly what this fetish looks like when enacted on a practical level may be challenging. To help orient readers who don't have much exposure to erotic hypnosis communities, fetishists, or content, I have provided a typology below in an attempt to describe a wide variety of practices and media content produced by and for the erotic hypnosis community. This typology is based solely on informal observations of the erotic hypnosis community, based on my own extensive involvement over the past 11 years, rather than on formally and systematically collected data or previous literature. As a result, I ask the reader to use this section

solely as a guide for familiarizing themselves and visualizing these practices, and as a series of informal observations, rather than as claims being made with scientific rigor.

In-Person Hypnosis

For some participants in erotic hypnosis fetishism, their practices may take the form of doing hypnosis with a partner in-person. In these contexts, typically one participant will take on the role of a hypnotist, and the other as a hypnotic subject. Some partners may also "switch", swapping roles, or with both participants acting as both hypnotist and subject either sequentially or simultaneously.

The hypnotist will then use one or more of a variety of techniques to induce a hypnotic trance state in the subject, including, but not limited to, progressive muscle relaxation inductions (in which the subject is asked to visualize each part of the body relaxing in sequence), eye-fixation inductions (which may utilize spirals, swinging pocket watches, flashing lights, hand motions, and other visual stimuli for a subject to fixate on), kinesthetic inductions (in which patterned physical movement in the body and/or touch is used to induce trance), pattern-interrupt inductions (in which the hypnotic establishes a sensory, verbal, or other pattern, then suddenly interrupts it to "shock" the mind into a trance state), confusion inductions (in which the hypnotic subject is overloaded by having to process or memorizing too many stimuli or too much information, in an effort to "confuse" the mind into a trance state), guided visualizations (involving providing the hypnotic subject with a series of imaginative practices to induce a trance state) and post-hypnotic trance triggers (in which the hypnotic subject who has previously been hypnotized and given a post-hypnotic

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suggestion to fall into trance based on a specific trigger, often a word or specific touch). Hypnotists will often, upon inducing a subject into a hypnotic trance state, will also use a variety of "deepening" techniques, which may involve any of the induction methods used above, as well as other verbal practices, such as feedback loops (e.g., "the deeper you go the better you feel, the better you feel, the deeper you go").

Once sufficiently deep into a trance state, the erotic hypnotist will often provide suggestions to the hypnotic subject, which may involve conditioning particular stimuli to particular feelings (such as experiencing arousal at the sound of particular words, or in response to specific forms of touch), constructing a subjective identity-based headspace (such as imagining oneself as a dog or cat to embody that mentality and series of behaviors), being given post-hypnotic suggestions (commands and experiences to be followed after coming out of trance), engaging in sexual intercourse while under hypnosis, giving explicit commands for the hypnotic subject to follow while in trance (such as kneeling, masturbating, stripping, putting on a particular fetishistic outfit, etc.), creating positive perceptual hallucinations, (e.g., "you feel your hands being bound with rope"), creating negative perceptual hallucinations (e.g., "you can't feel anything in your genitals") and/or manipulating a subject's emotional state (e.g., "you are feeling blissfully happy).

Hypnotists may also bring their subjects out of trance using a variety of methods, such as counting numbers, guided visual imagery, letting them literally fall sleep until they awaken naturally, or allowing the subject to wake up from trance on

their own time. Hypnotists may also re-induce their subject into trance repeatedly and wake them up repeatedly in rapid succession in a process called "fractionation", often used to induce deeper trance states and/or create a subjectively pleasurable fractionated state, sometimes called being "hypno-drunk".

Live, Computer-Mediated Audio-Visual Chat Hypnosis

Some hypnotic subjects will go under for a live hypnotist via methods that don't require being in-person, such as using chat programs like Skype, Zoom, or Discord to listen to the hypnotist's voice and have trance induced. These practices may involve one, both, or neither party being on camera, and most of the same methods (with the exception of some kinesthetic induction methods, or some visual methods if cameras are not on) are used to induce trance in the hypnotic subject. By relying on a computer-mediated method of doing hypnosis, recording the experience via screen-capture technology becomes much easier (which may be a good or bad thing based on the participants' preferences and consent), which can result in some live, computer-mediated hypnosis sessions turning into 3rd-person erotic hypnosis pornography (see below) after the fact.

Live, Text-based Hypnosis

Some participants in erotic hypnosis rely on computer-mediated methods that don't involve using a webcam or audio chat program, and instead rely on text-chat functionalities. These methods are more common in erotic hypnosis chatrooms, but are also sometimes done via Skype, Zoom, or Discord, without relying on an audio-visual call. This method is also heavily used by deaf and hard-of-hearing erotic

hypnosis fetishists (see Results section on Disability below for details). When using text-based hypnosis, the hypnotist gives a series of chat messages to the subject in an effort to induce trance. Typically, these are simply a transcribed set of the words that would be spoken in a verbal induction (such as progressive muscle relaxation or guided visualization), but can also take advantage of the unique visual features of text, such as capitalization, line breaks, and punctuation to creature unique induction methods, such as breaking every word of the induction into its own line to create a "stream" of words for the participant to focus on, and generative visual rhythmic movement via the text movement, or using capitalization of trigger words (e.g., "SLEEP NOW") to draw emphasis or break patterns. Participants also are more likely to provide explicit suggestions around keeping the hypnotic subject's eyes open so they can read the incoming text, rather than closing their eyes, which is common in other forms of induction.

Erotic Hypnosis Conventions

One central feature of the erotic hypnosis community is the erotic hypnosis convention, a gathering of erotic hypnosis fetishists for fun and education (typically in-person at a hotel, though some conventions began taking place virtually in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic). Dozens of erotic hypnosis conventions, usually with hundreds of attendees, take place annually throughout the United States, with a small number organized outside of the U.S. Most erotic hypnosis conventions feature workshops for education about erotic hypnosis technique, consent, and other erotic hypnosis-focused topics, and many also boast play spaces for erotic hypnosis,

formally organized consent teams for handling consent violation allegations, and

opportunities for more platonic socialization. The earliest of these conventions,

Hypnocon (*Hypnocon*, 2023), began in 1998, focused on the gay men's erotic

hypnosis community. However, many other conventions not primarily focused on gay

men have evolved since, with some of the largest conventions being Charmed

(*Charmed!*, 2023) and the New England Erotic Hypnosis (un)Conference (Mephki,

2023).

Group Hypnosis

Some methods of doing hypnosis don't take place between a single hypnotist

and single subject, but instead are broadcast among multiple subjects. These most

commonly take place in erotic hypnosis workshops and classes as erotic hypnosis

conferences, in which a hypnotist invites an entire group to go into trance via an

induction. This can also happen unintentionally in a class setting, in which a person

demonstrating a hypnotic technique might accidentally find audience members who

are listening going into trance. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to in the

community as "splash", alluding to the "Splash Zone" in the front row of water-

performances such as those at SeaWorld. Some group hypnosis techniques can also

take place in computer-mediated settings, such as audio chatrooms on Discord, in

which a hypnotist takes under many people in the room simultaneously. This also has

the feature of some participants coming into the room after an induction has already

started, creating differently timed trance experiences for different participants, and a

risk of potentially unwanted interruptions.

Roleplay Hypnosis

Some people into erotic hypnosis may engage in in-person, text-based, and audiovisual practices resembling hypnosis, but without the induction of an actual trance-state. Instead, these participants roleplay the state of being hypnotized for erotic pleasure, in ways that are similar to other forms of sexual roleplay. This may be done because one or more the participants lacks experience with actual hypnosis, can't be hypnotized, can't hypnotize others, prefers not to go into an actual trance states, or is faking going into trance for a partner who believes they are actually hypnotizing their partner. Some erotic hypnosis fetishists will explicitly specify if they are looking for real hypnosis, roleplay hypnosis, or both in social media profiles on fetish-oriented websites.

1st-Person Erotic Hypnosis Pornography

Some erotic hypnosis fetishists interact with erotic hypnosis via pornographic representations of hypnosis explicitly intended to be pornography for erotic hypnosis fetishists. These pornographic representations come in a variety of forms; only some of which involve inducing a trance in the viewer. In 1st-person erotic hypnosis pornography, the pornographic scene is shot in such a way that the viewer can imagine they are hypnotizing the performer in the pornographic film, often via a 1st-person point-of-view shot. In some cases, the words of the hypnotic induction are spoken off-screen by another performer to create the illusion of the pornographic viewer hypnotizing the performer on-screen, and in other cases the words of the hypnotic induction are unspoken, and instead imagined. Some performers will use

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wordless imagined induction methods, such as the performer watching a spiral, or being induced via a technology, such as a microchip, rather than a verbal induction. It is very rare that 1st-person erotic hypnosis pornography features the performer genuinely going into a trance state, and instead is usually roleplayed for the pleasure of the viewer, who will typically masturbate to this content. Much of the content produced by Girlsgonehypnotized.com (*Girls Gone Hypnotized*, 2023) is a good example of this type of pornography.

2nd-Person Erotic Hypnosis Pornography

Other erotic hypnosis pornography featuring a performer takes place in the 2nd-person, in which the performer is ostensibly hypnotizing the viewer. Unlike live computer-mediated hypnosis, this is a pre-recorded piece of pornographic content in which the viewer imagines a live interaction. The performer will often use verbal and eye-fixation induction methods to induce the viewer into a trance state, and the community reports highly mixed effectiveness of these methods, with many unable to go into a trance state for this type of pornography at all, but still enjoying it as a piece of erotic content in and of itself. Others sometimes are able to go into a trance state from this content. Most of the erotic hypnosis content produced by HypKink is a good example of this type of pornography (*HypKink*, 2023).

3rd-Person Erotic Hypnosis Pornography

Finally, some pornographic content involving erotic hypnosis does not feature the viewer in an imagined role as either a hypnotist or a hypnotic subject, but instead as a "fly-on-the-wall" observer, in which 2 or more performers engage in real or

roleplayed hypnosis for the pleasure of the viewer. This type of pornography is not intended to induce a trance in the viewer. Much of the erotic hypnosis content produced by *Film911* (*Hypnosis - Film 911*, 2023) is a good example of this type of pornographic content.

Erotic Hypnosis Audio Files

Unlike second-person pornographic representations, which are highly visual, some people create erotic hypnosis content entirely in the form of audio files typically intended to hypnotize the listener. In these files, the performer does a verbal hypnotic induction on the listener or occasionally narrates a story featuring erotic hypnosis. Members of the erotic hypnosis community also report varied effectiveness of these types of files, with some able to enter a trance state from them, others unable to, and some using these only to masturbate to, even without achieving an altered state of consciousness. The primary repository for this type of erotic hypnosis content on the internet is Warpmymind (*Welcome to Warp My Mind*, 2022).

Media Collage and "Gooning" Hypnosis Content

This type of content, most heavily focused on in the existing erotic hypnosis literature (Gilbert, 2020; Mackay & Mackay, 2021), features a video intended to induce a trance state in the viewer, but does so not via a pornographic performer hypnotizing the viewer, and instead features a collage of other pornographic media superimposed on a spiral, with superimposed text and audio. This type of content also appears much more likely to feature instructions to inhale amyl nitrates (i.e., "poppers"), an inhalant primarily used by men (and especially gay and bisexual men)

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at particular intervals to enhance the intended altered state of consciousness. It also often includes instructions to masturbate and stop masturbating at specific intervals in order to prolong an orgasm for an extended period of time (sometimes referred to as "edging") or ritualistically masturbating while drooling, chanting, and/or performing visually stereotypical features of empty-mindedness, sometimes referred to as "gooning" (Herring, 2019). This category of content also much more heavily appears to feature themes revolving around sissification and raceplay than other forms of erotic hypnosis media, such as worshipping "Big Black Cock" or becoming a "horny bimbo". A great deal of the content on Hypnotube.com falls into this category (e.g., *Femdom - Hypnotube*, 2023).

Erotic Hypnosis Erotica

Some erotic hypnosis fetishists interact with their fetish interest via erotica, text-based stories written for readers to enjoy. These are not typically meant to hypnotize the reader, but instead function similarly to 3rd-person erotic hypnosis pornography as erotic hypnosis fantasies, except in written form. The primary repositories for this type of erotic hypnosis content are MCStories (*The Erotic Mind-Control Story Archive*, 2022), short for "Mind-Control Stories", and Gayspiralstories for gay men's content in particular (*Gay Spiral Stories*, 2023).

Erotic Hypnosis Instructional Books

To learn to do erotic hypnosis, many learn via practice with a partner or learn via a non-erotic hypnosis setting, but some people in the community have also created instructional books, typically with advice, hypnotic scripts, and activities, to help

people practice their erotic hypnosis skills. The most widely-recommend book in the community for learning erotic hypnosis is *Mindplay* (M. Wiseman, 2017).

Illustrated Erotic Hypnosis Pornography

Some erotic hypnosis content created for erotic hypnosis fetishists takes the form of illustrated and animated content, often with speech-bubbles superimposed over the illustrated characters to portray a hypnotic scene in a single image or series of images. Some erotic hypnosis illustrators, especially those affiliated with the furry community, also take custom commissions from members of the erotic hypnosis community to draw themselves or their furry personas in erotic hypnosis-based situations (i.e., "fursonas"). Twitter User @SpacePupSilver is one prolific example of this content creator (Space Pup Silver, 2023).

Photo- and Video-manipulations

Some people into erotic hypnosis create content meant to function as erotic hypnosis pornography by using photo or video manipulation tools to take images and videos that may not be originally intended to even feature hypnosis. This can take the form of superimposing spirals over the eyes of an image, adding text intended to feature dialogue, or even using deep-fake technologies to turn an image into a video featuring erotic hypnosis audio content. Twitter user Superhero-Destroyer is a good example of photomanipulation content (Superhero-Destroyer, 2023).

Fetishistic Unintentionally Pornographic Media Clips

Some people into erotic hypnosis will collect and catalogue media clips from mainstream films and television which feature hypnosis. Typically, these clips are not

intended to be pornography, and sometimes even come from children's cartoons, but are experienced as pornographic and sexually arousing by some erotic hypnosis fetishists. This type of collection among fetishists (referred to as a fetishist's "Bible" early in the research literature by Stekel, 1952), is now available on several YouTube channels. Hypnomaster3914 (HYPNO master, 2023), a YouTube channel is an example with hundreds of collected representations of hypnosis in mainstream television and film. Many of these channels have content organized explicitly by the gender of the person being hypnotized being the hypnotist, for the convenience of the viewer to sort through clips that match their sexual orientation.

Artificial Intelligence Chat Programs for Hypnosis

More recently, the improved quality of AI chatbots available publicly on the internet has led some erotic hypnosis fetishists to use these chatbots for erotic hypnosis, such as getting the chatbot to attempt to hypnotize the user, or to simulate hypnotizing and controlling the chatbot. Many chatbots not intended for this purpose can be relatively easily used to simulate erotic hypnosis if their language model is well-developed enough, but some chatbots are specifically created and trained for the purposes of erotic hypnosis. For example, Character.ai (e.g., @Zman64_Official, 2023) has some chatbots capable of simulating an erotic hypnosis induction with the person they are chatting with.

Erotic Hypnosis Video Game Content

Some participants in the erotic hypnosis community have even taken the step of coding entire interactive videos games featuring erotic hypnosis and/or techniques

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to hypnotize the player for the purpose of erotic pleasure, though there are only a few examples of these, given the substantial work often involved in coding a video game. One example of such a game is Sublime Compliance (Nyx Goddess Games, 2022).

As this section has demonstrated, erotic hypnosis practices and media appear to take on a wide variety of forms and characteristics based on my own informal observations of the community over the past ten years. However, the academic literature on the subject remains sparse. As a result, the next four sections will focus on what is known about other kinky practices and kinky people to provide inspirations for the analyses done in this study.

Inspiration 1: The Meanings, Development, and Motivations of Kink-Oriented Desires and Behaviors

While no work has been conducted on how hypnofetishists understand the meaning of their experiences, a great deal of research has been conducted to better understand how people with an interest in other sexually diverse practices, such as BDSM (Bondage/Discipline, Domination/Submission, Sadism/Masochism), kink (sexual and intimate consensual practices that fall outside of conventional sexual norms), and non-hypnosis-oriented forms of sexual fetishism construct the meaning of their experiences and relationships (for a review, see Hammack et al., 2019). These meanings are highly diverse and varied (Barker & Langdridge, 2009).

For some, kink practices are conceived of as an escape from the burdens of conscious awareness of the self (Baumeister, 1988). Others consider kink practices as a process allowing a person to enter into an altered state of consciousness, or

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"headspace" (Ambler et al., 2017), or to experience a kind of lived psychodrama involving what might be called the Jungian shadow to help heal from past experiences of trauma, though this motivation seems comparatively rare (Hammers, 2014; Hughes & Hammack, 2020; Ortmann & Sprott, 2013). Other kinky people construct meanings in relationship to other social identities a person may hold, such as transgender men who seek to re-experience a boyhood that they were denied through age-oriented roleplay (Bauer, 2018) or kink practices involving the exploration of gender identity through performing a stylized gender-conforming or non-conforming role (Hennen, 2008). Others might use kink to explore social identities beyond identities as human, such as people who engage in "pup play" (Boyd, 2018; Garrett, 2020; Langdridge & Lawson, 2019; Lawson & Langdridge, 2020; Wignall & McCormack, 2017), taking on performative and embodied canine roles as a form of identity exploration, recreation and social relation. Some conceive of kink broadly as a form of leisure or play (Newmahr, 2010), allowing for an exploration of creativity and a development of skills. These "skills" can even be seen as a form of advertising oneself as a potential partner in an imagined neoliberal sexual marketplace (Weiss, 2011). Others conceptualize kink as a way to explore boundaries, consent, and control (Bauer, 2014).

When asked to provide their own speculations as to the origins and motivations behind their kink interests, kinky people rely on a wide variety of discourses that closely mirror those used by other sexual minorities (Hughes & Hammack, 2020). These narratives can include "born this way" and biological

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narratives that foreground the role of biological essentialism, nurture narratives that highlight and center external influences, and blended narratives that highlight how externally-motivated origins can later develop into a more intrinsic, essentialist conception of a kinky self (Yost & Hunter, 2012). This external/intrinsic concept has also been replicated in other studies looking at the origins and motivations behind interests in sadomasochism (Labrecque et al., 2021).

Given that hypnofetishism relies on engaging the imagination via hypnotic suggestion, it is possible hypnofetishism may allow for the exploration of an expansive variety of different sensations and experiences capable of being imagined. Resultantly, it seems highly likely that all of the kinds of meanings and motivations identified in the BDSM literature may apply to hypnofetishists as well. Furthermore, there may also be unknown meanings and motivations that are unique to hypnofetishism, which this study sought to identify.

Before moving on, it is critical to acknowledge that scientific inquiry into the motivations and origins behind kink and fetish practices has often historically been situated within a tradition of clinical pathologization, unjustly and inaccurately treating kink-oriented desires as *de facto* evidence of psychopathology (Brown et al., 2020; de Block & Adriaens, 2013; Kleinplatz & Moser, 2005). I highlight this problematic and unjustly pathologizing framework so as to contrast it with my own goals of studying the meanings, development, and self-identified motivations for engaging in erotic hypnosis. I ask these research questions not out of a desire to pathologize, "cure", or "treat" people who have these interests, but instead out of a

desire to better understand the experiences of sexually diverse people, and how they describe and understand their own identities, desires and practices. All stories have beginnings. So, understanding how erotic hypnofetishists talk about the origins of their interests may help to amplify the voices of non-clinical and non-criminal kinky populations in the literature, rather than relying on voices taken from predominately clinical and criminal settings (for a more thorough discussion of the historical, philosophical and moral considerations involved in studying the origins, development and motivations of kink-oriented desires, see Hughes, in prep).

Inspiration 2: Consent, BDSM, and Kink

Consent, the process by which people involved in a kink-oriented behavior indicate their willingness to engage in that behavior, is routinely considered to be a cornerstone of what ethically distinguishes kink- and BDSM-based practices from abusive acts (Beres & MacDonald, 2015; Dunkley & Brotto, 2020; Pitagora, 2013). Keeping in mind that erotic hypnosis fantasies often entail the idea of controlling or manipulating another person's behavior (potentially against their will), how erotic hypnofetishists conceptualize consent may play an important role in understanding these erotic practices and desires. While the vast majority of research on sexual consent has been focused on non-kink-oriented sexual behavior (for a recent review, see Fenner, 2017), there is also a substantive empirical research literature exploring issues of consent within BDSM and kink communities.

For instance, many studies have explored the process and factors involved when BDSM-oriented partners negotiate a scene of BDSM activity with one another,

often highlighting the importance of safewords (Bennett, 2018), hard and soft limits (Beerschoten, 2020), and thorough, detailed negotiation (Holt, 2015). Similarly, the prevalence of four competing acronym-based philosophies of the ethics of consent: SSC (Safe, Sane and Consensual) RACK (Risk-Aware Consensual Kink), PRICK (Personal Responsibility, Informed, Consensual Kink), and the 4 C's (Caring, Communication, Consent, and Caution) has also been discussed (Goldberg, 2018; Kaak, 2016; Williams et al., 2014). The complexity and nuance of these philosophies within the BDSM community have even been suggested to be a useful guide for the law in better conceptualizing consent outside of the BDSM context (Bennett, 2018).

These competing philosophies also point to either the relative acceptance or intentional complication and troubling of conventional neoliberal notions of consent (i.e., the idea that individuals are completely free and independent agents able to rationally make contracts and agreements completely unaffected by the influence of social pressures, such as heteronormativity) (Bauer, 2021; Fanghanel, 2020; Nielsen, 2010). For example, Safe, Sane, and Consensual approaches tend to frame some kink-oriented practices as inherently unsafe, and therefore, unethical, regardless of if each participant freely consents to engage in the practice. Similarly, the concept of being "sane" in Safe, Sane, and Consensual has been criticized as exclusionary towards people with diminished mental capacity and other forms of neurodivergence, in line with similar critiques of framing disabled people as inherently free of sexual needs (e.g., Milligan & Neufeldt, 2001). People who adopt a PRICK or RACK perspective, conversely, tend to view individuals in a more neo-liberal, free-agent-based

framework, indicating that people involved in kink are personally responsible for being fully informed and aware of the risks involved in any kink activity they engage in (though PRICK makes this more explicit). CCCC, on the other hand, is less focused on people being freely able to consent to specific activities, as it is more commonly used in 24/7 Master/slave relationships (sometimes called Total Power Exchange relationships), recognizing that consent is not always clear and direct at all times, and that sometimes people in altered mental states such as "subspace", an altered state of consciousness associated with often intense submissive BDSM activities, (Ambler et al., 2017) are unable to safeword or indicate a revocation of consent, even if they want to.

Furthermore, the unique philosophical challenges of people with an interest in consensual non-consent (often abbreviated CNC within the kink community) have also been documented, often through analysis of literary texts (e.g., Tsaros, 2013), but also through some empirical interviews (Sorin, 2018). Consensual non-consent is a term describing a kink interest with a few potential meanings: A) the consensual removal of a participant's general ability to revoke consent, either within a scene, or within a larger relationship context (such as a 24/7 Master/slave relationship), B) The consensual roleplaying of a scene of kink activity in which themes of non-consent are enacted (e.g., a rape roleplay scene), and C) a consensual agreement in which a participant agrees to be forced to do or undergo something as a later time, even if they later decide they don't want to. This third meaning is sometimes called a Ulysses Contract, named after the passage of the Ancient Greek epic poem, *The Odyssey*, in

which Ulysses, the main character, has himself tied to a ship's mast before passing the sirens, and instructs his men not to untie him when he is entranced by their song, no matter how much he begs to be untied at a later point.

A large number of empirical studies have pointed out the potential benefits of CNC scenes, especially for survivors of sexual assault and sexual abuse, seeking to reenact those experiences with a sense of mastery, for the purpose of healing (Califia, 2000; Hammers, 2014, 2018; Hughes & Hammack, 2020; Ten Brink et al., 2020; Thomas, 2020). However, far less is known about people who engage in the use of practices which may deliberately and consensually impair consent, such as the consensual use of drugs, sleep deprivation, or, most relevantly for the present study, hypnosis. Erotic hypnosis is unique among many other kink activities in that the appeal of the fetish, for many individuals involved, is primarily the fantasy of a violation of consent (i.e., being under the control of another person, being forced against one's will to think, believe, feel, behave, or identify in particular ways, as determined by the hypnotist). Like consensual non-consent, erotic hypnosis may entail individuals having to navigate and develop their own ethics of consent. One hope is that this study will help to provide some context and insights for better understanding the conceptions of consent and consent practices engaged in by people who are especially interested in hypnosis.

Some work on consent in the BDSM context has also focused on the treatment of consent at the community-level, rather than individually (Barker, 2013). Some studies and BDSM community materials have discussed the process of blacklisting

and self-policing, in which BDSM communities seek to expel individuals who engage in non-consensual behavior (Holt, 2016; Wiseman, 1996), as well as the importance of early internet communities in spreading awareness of non-consensual behavior and abuse within BDSM contexts to help create some of the blacklisting practices used today (Lieff, 2017). Other work has focused on the challenges met by individuals who have experienced BDSM-related consent violations in communicating those experiences to the police (such as the fear of being blamed, a lack of understanding by police, or being outed as someone into BDSM) (e.g., Haviv, 2016), or the general criminalization of consensual BDSM (Bennett, 2021). It's likely some of these challenges may also extend to hypnofetishists, both because of the general criminalization in some jurisdictions against mixing sex and hypnosis (e.g., Rape, 1939), but also the lack of understanding among police about the impact of hypnosis on consent, in light of the long history of the misuse of hypnosis to create unintentionally false memories (see Wagstaff, 2009 for a discussion of this misuse).

Beyond the qualitative research exploring the conceptions of consent within the BDSM community, a smaller body of research has focused on attempting to quantitatively assess attitudes regarding consent among kink populations. This work has found, in general, that kink-oriented people tend to endorse more positive attitudes around consent, such as lower levels of benevolent sexism, rape myth acceptance, and victim blaming (Klement et al., 2017), though this effect may not extend to heterosexual leather-identified men in particular (Worthen & Haltom, 2020). While the present study does not include these types of quantitative measures

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(in part because the sampling is purposive, not representative), the results of this study may shed some qualitative light on attitudes common amongst our diverse sample of hypnofetishists around their own attitudes and perspectives on consent.

Inspiration 3: Sexual Minority Social Stigma and Minority Stress Theory

While little is known about the challenges faced by erotic hypnosis fetish communities in the academic literature, many popular sources point out ways in which erotic hypnosis fetishists have been harmed both by interpersonal stigma and prejudice, as well as systemic, structural, legal, and administrative bans on erotic hypnosis content and practices. For example, some state laws still in force today are written in such a way that the mixing of sex and hypnosis legally constitutes rape (e.g., Rape, 1939), and erotic hypnosis content is currently sometimes banned on many online content distribution platforms, such as Patreon and OnlyFans (Valens, 2019, 2020b). Moreover, "hypnosis" is often banned as a search term on a wide variety of mainstream pornographic and live camming sites (Hall, 2021). Hypnofetishists have also experienced temporary removal of their groups and content from FetLife (the world's largest social networking website for kinky people, see Yan, 2019), and despite much of the hypnofetish material having returned to the site, many erotic hypnosis groups are invisible to searches on the site, and new groups attempting to use the word "hypnosis" in their group title remain banned from the site (see Figure 1). Hypnofetishists have also been accused of engaging in child endangerment when hypnotizing minors to engage in fetishistic acts, such as hypnosis demonstrations in high school psychology classes (Farrier, 2019), and may potentially

face complex issues involving professional licensure among those seeking be licensed as hypnotherapists.

Despite erotic hypnosis-specific experiences of discrimination and stigma not being presently documented in the academic literature, much more is known about the barriers and challenges faced by other kink and fetish communities more broadly. For example, people into kink, BDSM, and/or sexual fetishism sometimes face employment discrimination (Iannotti, 2014), undue pathologization from professionals in clinical psychology (Kolmes et al., 2006), an assumption of criminality (Greenblatt, 2016), the presumption of being broken or traumatized (e.g., Southern, 2002), unjust treatment in child custody dispute proceedings (Klein & Moser, 2006; Wright, 2014), the explicit legal banning of their consensual practices (Weinberg, 2016), and internalized stigma derived from a culturally-circulating master narrative of pathology, especially when disconnected from a kink community (Hughes & Hammack, 2019). These processes have been suggested to explain some empirically-identified health disparities among kinky people (Bezreh et al., 2012; Sprott & Randall, 2017).

The potential mental health effects of this kind of social oppression aligns with those predicted by minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003), the view that social stigma against a person's sexual minority status (originally conceived in the context of LGB people) can lead to a person internalizing that stigma and concealing their identities as a response, becoming hypervigilant against threats of their identity being discovered. These psychological mediators are, in turn, theorized to lead to disparities

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in physical and psychological health, such as HPA-axis dysregulation problems, anxiety, and depression (Eldahan et al., 2016; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2013). However, the theory also purports that being a part of a sexual minority community acts a protective factor against negative mental health outcomes (Szymanski & Owens, 2009; Tatum, 2016). Some of my own empirical work has supported this view with both qualitative and quantitative, cross-sectional, correlative evidence (Hughes & Hammack, 2019, in prep).

After documenting the popular evidence of stigma and discrimination against erotic hypnosis fetishists, and reviewing the academic evidence of stigma and discrimination against other kink practitioners, it seems likely that hypnofetishists will report challenges in alignment with minority stress theory, including many of the kinds of discrimination and oppression experiences reported by other people into kink, BDSM, and other forms of sexual fetishism, though additional specific challenges may also emerge that are unique to hypnofetishists. This study also sought to identify what kinds of challenges and stigma are experienced by hypnofetishists. Doing so is a prerequisite step for identifying opportunities for social change and dismantling of structural and interpersonal systems of oppression that unjustly discriminate against hypnofetishists. At the theoretical level, this study will also help to discover potential preliminary evidence of whether the model proposed by minority stress theory might extend to adequately describe the stories and experiences of erotic hypnofetishists.

Inspiration 4: Intersectionality Theory and Multiple Axes of Diversity

Erotic hypnosis fetish communities are not monolithic. Each individual and community group among the broad category of hypnofetishists brings to bear a wide breadth of social identities, lived experiences, and positionalities that likely would be poorly represented by sweeping, universalizing, general conclusions about hypnofetishists. Instead, Intersectionality Theory, the lens through which multiple axes of identity-based oppression compound and create qualitatively unique experiences of oppression (Bowleg, 2008; Crenshaw, 1989) provides a helpful lens to analyze the potential similarities and differences between different hypnofetish communities, as well as the experiences of diverse individuals within those communities. What follows is an exploration of literatures related to three axes of social identity (i.e., race, disability, and religion) and their relationship to kink identity and practices. While substantial qualitative data was collected on other social identities as well (such as sexual orientation, gender, age, parental status, and political ideologies) these analyses are being omitted from the present study, in an effort to keep the length reasonable for a dissertation. These were selected for this dissertation merely because they were the first three analyses completed, and not to signal that they are the most important. All social identities categories can have important impacts on lived experience and especially given that they can intersect in qualitatively unique contexts, should not be ranked against one another. These results will, however, be published in later publications following the completion of this dissertation.

It is important to note at the outset that while intersectionality theory is primarily interested in how *oppression* can compound across multiple axes, and this study will likely have implications for questions of oppression, the goals in studying diversity among hypnofetishists are not merely to solely document and catalogue experiences and dynamics of oppression across the axes of multiple social identities. Doing only that would likely serve to simply replicate a problematic history of studying people who experience oppression only through the lens of their oppression and seeking to document their "damage" (Tuck, 2009). Instead, I also seek to explore other dynamics (including more positive, strengths-oriented, and simply qualitatively unique experiences) which may relate to the experience of holding both an identity as a hypnofetishist, and as one or more other social identities.

Race, Ethnicity, Nationality and Kink

The vast majority of kink research has centered on the experiences of White kinksters, a problem repeatedly noted in the research literature as a limitation of the field (Cruz, 2016; Martinez, 2021; Sheff & Hammers, 2011). The present study seeks to work against this problematic trend by not only recruiting a substantial presence of People of Color in the dataset, but also by exploring the unique ways in which race, ethnicity, and nationality can intersect with hypnofetishism by asking participants explicit questions about their experience of race and hypnofetishism.

In the BDSM context, some work has highlighted experiences of racial bias and stereotyping experienced by kinksters of color. For instance, researchers have documented the experience of non-consensual racial fetishization, being essentialized

to one's racial identity, and the tendency for White kinksters to "explain away" the overwhelming Whiteness of BDSM communities by appealing to economic and educational factors, without critically reflecting on why those factors are racialized in the first place (Jackson, 2017; Martinez, 2021).

Beyond the general need to explore these research areas in more depth, unique racial, national, and ethnic dynamics may also emerge in the context of hypnofetishism specifically. For instance, the recent cultural phenomenon of the film "Get Out" (Peele et al., 2017), heavily features both racism and hypnosis as primary plot points, and some psychoanalysts have read hypnosis in the film as a metaphor for White projection of racial stereotypes to be internalized by People of Color (Samuels, 2020) and the experience of everyday racialized violence (Landsberg, 2018). Similarly, hypnosis is often portrayed as a clinical treatment technique, which might trigger some People of Color's higher rates of skepticism towards scientists and medical practitioners (Baker, 2020; Batelaan, 2021; Bolger & Ecklund, 2018; Schnittker, 2003), who have historically and contemporarily done significant harm and injustice to People of Color (Brandt, 1978; Dovidio et al., 2008; Tait & Chibnall, 2014). Thus, it's possible that cultural discomfort over hypnosis in particular, both as a clinical technique, and as a culturally salient metaphor for racial trauma, may have unique meanings and impacts on hypnofetishists of color, which may be interesting to explore.

Lastly, hypnosis is also often portrayed culturally as a means of humiliating or degrading a person, such as the classic trope of a person being turned into a chicken

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in a hypnosis stage show, often with dubious consent (Echterling, 1988; Stroud, 2013.). This kind of humiliation might be perceived as a substantial threat to a person's "face", a sociological concept referring to the respect, deference, politeness, or culturally-understood sense of self, or status of a person (Ho, 1976). Given the heighted importance of face in some cultural, ethnic, and national contexts compared with others (Strecker, 1993), it is also likely that the facial threat presented by hypnosis in the form of public humiliation might also engender unique responses and experiences among participants who come from cultural contexts in which face is given more or less importance, which I hope to explore in this study.

Disability and Kink

Hypnosis has clinically been used for a variety of disabling conditions, especially those related to pain, given that the subjectivity of pain can be managed via the mind much more effectively than other conditions (Hilgard et al., 2013)**.** Similarly, some recent work has pointed to kink and BDSM practices as also potentially helpful practices for the management of pain, especially among chronic pain sufferers (Sheppard, 2018, 2019)**.** Given that erotic hypnosis occupies a boundary between kink and hypnotherapy, it seems reasonable that we might see similar dynamics emerge among those using erotic hypnosis for pain management in the present study. Additionally, very little is known about the intersection of kink and disability in general, as only a handful of studies, most of which haven't even been published in peer reviewed journals, have discussed these intersections. For instance, one undergraduate honors thesis found that BDSM practitioners who had an autism

diagnosis reported higher rates of sensory-oriented BDSM behaviors (Boucher, 2018). Exploring the experiences of people with disabilities (both physical and psychological conditions) may help to better articulate these intersections and help contribute to expanding that literature, which currently remains small.

Religion, Spirituality and Kink

While a great deal of work has been done outlining theoretical parallels between spirituality and kink, such as how kink practices are often ritualized and share many features with religious and spiritual traditions (e.g., Cahana, 2012; Carlström, 2018; Greenberg, 2019; Klement, Lee, et al., 2017; Robertson, 2017), very little work has been done on how kinky people navigate issues of religion and religious identities, with the exception those who come from neopagan contexts (Fennell, 2018; Kaldera & Harrington, 2009; Kraemer, 2012; Mueller, 2018). The present study may help to expand on this literature as well, by asking participants about their own religious identities and their relationship to erotic hypnosis. Especially given that hypnosis is sometimes lumped in with "New Age" practices like meditation or mysticism, hypnosis has been vilified among some conservative religious traditions in the United States. This vilification has been present since the "Satanic Panic" of the 1980s and early 1990s, one component of which was a moral panic about children and teens being brainwashed by "backmasked" music lyrics in popular songs (Kennaway, 2012). Thus, it is also possible that some participants will have experienced conflict between their religious and kink identities, which may be

fruitful to explore, to better understand the intersections of erotic hypnosis and religion.

The Present Study

Little is known about hypnofetishism in particular, so the primary goal of this study is to generate knowledge about hypnofetishists and the social contexts in which they occupy and live. I am guided by three research questions, each of which is inspired by a review of a parallel literature:

1) What themes are expressed when erotic hypnofetishists talk about the origins of, motivations behind, and purported benefits derived from their erotic hypnosis-oriented desires, identities, and practices?

2) How do erotic hypnofetishists conceptualize issues of consent within erotic hypnosis practices and communities?

3) How do other social identity categories like disability/neurodivergence, religion, and race inform and complicate erotic hypnofetishists' experiences?

To answer these questions, details on the methodological approach employed in this dissertation project can be found in the section below.

Method

This study sought to better understand the characteristics of erotic hypnosis fetishism, as well as the experiences of erotic hypnosis fetishists. In order to accomplish this goal, I have conducted a participatory community research activity with erotic hypnosis conference attendees to understand what questions erotic hypnosis community members wish to have answered by research. I have also carried out 83 semi-structured in-depth interviews, which were analyzed via a conventional content analysis, followed by a reflexive thematic analysis, each of which was conducted in collaboration with research assistants. What follows is an overview of epistemological and positionality-related considerations, as well as a detailed outline of the methods used, as well as ethical considerations in this study.

Epistemology

This project adopts a pluralistic, pragmatic approach towards epistemology. Rather than adopting a single framework to work from, I operate under the assumption that different research questions call for different epistemic frameworks to answer different aspects of each question, and that seemingly contradictory frameworks can work in tandem to produce valuable qualitative knowledge. I adopt a pluralistic approach to epistemology in 3 ways. First, the 2-step approach used towards data analysis (see Data Analytic Approach below for details) reflects this framework, with the initial conventional content analysis focusing primarily on a critical realist epistemology, while the later inductive thematic analysis of that

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content-coded data adopting a more social constructionist approach, applying these frameworks sequentially.

For example, to explore questions of intersectionality between race and hypnofetishism, a content analysis can help to identify which portions of the interviews should be coded into a content category like "Race" or "White". These content categories posit that some portion of a text is "about race", as though meaning is present in the text and must be extracted (a realist approach). Simultaneously, I adopt a critical realist lens by reflecting on how both me and my research team's own experiences and identities with race might distort or enhance our ability to accurately assess whether a portion of the text is actually "about race". Even the question of what content categories, once coded, should be considered as being "about race" for the purpose of their inclusion in the later inductive thematic analysis of race in the erotic hypnosis community are also limited by these experiences and perspectives, necessitating open and reflexive dialogue among a racially diverse set of researchers to more accurately avoid excluding portions of the text which might not appear to be "about race" to many White researchers.

Relatedly, this project also adopts a framework suggested by Standpoint Theory (Harding, 2004), a theoretical framework which contends that individuals who occupy marginalized positions in systems of oppression tend to better understand those systems of oppression as a result of their marginalization. Thus, in the above example, I center the voices of researchers of color, whose perspectives are likely to be more accurate and informed about whether or not something is "about race", in

conversations about definitions and coding disagreements regarding race and ethnicity.

Following the content analysis, I took on a more social constructionist epistemological framework when doing the thematic analysis, which conceptualizes meaning-making as a co-constructed social process and does not presume there is some "real meaning" present "out there" about the text that we are seeking to "uncover". Instead, these meanings are constructed, sometimes consciously, and sometimes unconsciously by practitioners themselves and in conjunction with their relationships, identities and the social worlds in which they live, and generate more rich and detailed thematic codes compared with the more surface-level content codes. In other words, a critical realist epistemology is being used to determine which excerpts of the text are worthy of investigation under a given research question, and a social constructionist epistemology is being applied to construct and interpret meanings out of those chosen text excerpts.

The second way in which this project adopts a pluralist, pragmatic epistemology is in how I apply epistemological frameworks towards each research question. Each of the three research questions in this study target seeks to produce two different kinds of truths: historical truths and narrative truths (Spence, 1982; Spence & Wallerstein, 1984). Historical truths derive from a Freudian tradition, in which the interpreter treats a text as an archeological investigation, digging through to find the real, historical, meaning of what is there to find, such as the cause or origins of a behavior or feeling. Conversely, narrative truths are purely socially constructed,

concentrated on how we make meaning of stories and experiences, rather than whether what is discussed occurred in some kind of objective reality.

Research questions in the present study call for the investigation of both kinds of truth. For instance, consider the research question: "What themes are expressed when erotic hypnofetishists talk about the origins of, motivations behind, and purported benefits derived from their erotic hypnosis-oriented desires, identities, and practices?" Some benefits reported by erotic hypnofetishists take place entirely (or nearly-entirely) in the context of meaning-making, such as the process of gaining insights about their own self. These are questions about how people make meaning of their kinky desires and behaviors, rather than investigating each discrete, historical individual cognition and affect that was brought about by erotic hypnosis as a practice. Other origin stories relate more closely to the world of historical truth, such as a person's interest in erotic hypnosis preceded or was preceded by their exposure to media featuring hypnosis. (Though of course, the meaning of these historical facts and subsequent interpretation as a "a cause" is socially constructed, but historical precedence is a necessary component of causation). As a result, it is likely that even when conducting a social constructionist-oriented thematic analysis, some questions of historical truth might "leak in", such as the order in which developmental events are occurring. Thus, pluralism seems like the most pragmatic approach to take towards epistemology given the nature of the questions.

Lastly, the third way in which I adopt a methodologically pluralistic stance towards epistemology in this study is centered around this study's goals. This study

seeks to both 1) generate variables and testable hypotheses regarding the experiences of erotic hypnosis, which may, in turn, guide future research from a hypothetico-deductive framework, and 2) generate valuable qualitative knowledge in its own right, by providing a "thick description" (Geertz, 2008) of the experiences of erotic hypnofetishists, which may be insightful or useful for those seeking guidance in similarly situated situations (such as a therapist working with a hypnofetishist client), even if it isn't producing testable hypotheses.

The former goal is rooted in a critical realist, post-positivist tradition, in which variables are thought of as stable, discrete targets for study, which other researchers can similarly attempt to measure and apply, to control and predict outcomes, and in turn help guide policy and clinical training. Pointedly, I adopt a critical lens to this question by concentrating on the ways in which variables might differ between social groups, such as differing racial groups, disability groups, and religious groups), and seek to link it to existing literatures which focus on social inequality and injustice (minority stress theory, and intersectionality).

The latter goal, focused on creating valuable qualitative knowledge in its own right, fits more comfortably within a social-constructionist framework, as thick description necessitates considering social context, uniqueness, and the individual person, rather than treating experiences behaviors, feelings, and desires as easily standardizable and collapsible across groups. Ultimately, both lenses, though based on contradictory assumptions, can work in tandem to address different steps in a

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methodological approach, different aspects of a research question, and different study goals, and I apply both in the present study.

Positionality and Reflexivity

As a White, gay, male, American, erotic hypnosis fetishist and hypnoswitch (someone who takes on roles as both a hypnotist and hypnotic subject), my positionality plays an important role in the topic and design of this project. The motivation for this project was, while in part theoretical, also personal. I have experienced a great deal of challenges in my own life around my experiences as an erotic hypnosis fetishist, which also motivated my research questions to better understand the experiences of others. Similarly, my gay identity and my experience in both gay and pansexual erotic hypnosis spaces provided me with certain insights into differences between these spaces which motivated my questions of intersectionality between fetish identities and sexual orientation (though this specific intersection will be explored in detail in later publications, rather than this manuscript).

My White identity also influences my design and interpretation of this study. Participants in the erotic hypnosis spaces I went to were often overwhelmingly White. While extensive sampling work was done to oversample People of Color in this dataset, it was also likely the case that there are communities of color interested in erotic hypnosis that are difficult to find, and to which I would never be privy because of my own racial identity.

Even though we were able to recruit a fairly racially diverse sample (see below), participants of color may also still have been less likely to talk about

experiences of racism they have had in the erotic hypnosis community, out of concern that they might provoke White fragility in me as an interviewer. I left questions about race near the end of the interview in an effort to maximize rapport before asking those questions, but still recognize that this might be a limitation brought about by my own positionality. Conversely, there are also unique advantages as a White interviewer when interviewing White participants in particular. Three White participants used racial slurs in front of me when talking about race, which has important implications for how they think about and enact race within the community. However, it is very unlikely that they would have used those racial slurs in front of an interviewer of color, given the emotionally and politically charged nature of communicating a slur to a person who has likely been victimized at least once in the past by the linguistic deployment of racial slurs.

Recruitment

Phase 1): Collaborative Participatory Community Activity

Recruitment took place over three phases. In the first phase, participants were recruited in-person at two San Francisco Bay Area erotic hypnosis conferences (both of which took place in 2019, before the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic): MindQuake, a conference for the broader pansexual community, and Hypnocon, a conference for the gay men's community. Attendees at these events were invited to participate in Phase 1 of the study when entering the conference space. During Phase 1, event participants who were given an informed consent document (See Appendix A) and gave their verbal informed consent were asked to anonymously submit any

questions they would like to see added to the study's interview protocol, by writing

them on a large public notepad situated on an easel for passers-by to see. Participants

were also given the opportunity to vote for questions they liked on the notepad,

regardless of whether or not they submitted a question themselves. Participants could

vote for as many questions as they wished. I did not keep track of participant

demographics during Phase 1, in order to protect anonymity and encourage

participation from a community that might feel otherwise reticent to participate.

However, I did keep track of the number of people that participated to the best of my

ability, noting that over 30 people participated in this activity at each conference

while I was present.

Next, the top 3 most vote-receiving questions generated during Phase 1, which

weren't already represented in the interview protocol, were then asked to participants

during the interviews. In the event of a tie, more than 3 questions would be asked. If

the participant was recruited at MindQuake, they were given the MindQuake-

generated questions. Similarly, if they were recruited at Hypnocon, they were given

the Hypnocon-generated questions. This participatory approach was adopted to help

ensure that the communities who were engaging in knowledge production labor via

the interviews, also benefitted from the production of that knowledge by having their

own questions answered, not just mine.

This practice was also conducted to help ensure that the research was

responsive to community need, and prevent the study from resulting in "research that

creates nothing but books" (Lewin, 1946). The participatory approach also benefited

recruitment for the following phase, by helping people "buy-in" to the research, knowing it will be responsive to the needs of their community.

Phase 2) Recruitment for Interviews

In the second phase, participants at these conferences were then invited to be interviewed. If they wished to be interviewed, they were given two choices: an in-person interview at the conference, or a remote interview after the conference. Everyone who wanted to be interviewed in-person at the conference was given an opportunity to do so by signing up for a time slot to be interviewed in a separate, private room in the hotel, and given an informed consent document designed for in-person interviewing (See Appendix B). Participants who indicated an interest in participating but were not available or willing to be interviewed in person during the conference time, were alternatively invited to put their email onto a list of emails to complete a post-conference interview remotely.

Because I received so much interest in remote interviews, participants who selected this second option were also asked to fill out a demographic survey online, with an online-specific informed consent document (See Appendix C), so recruitment decisions could be made on the basis of intentionally oversampling for diversity. Given that this study is not intended to be a representative sample of the community, but instead is a purposive sample with a goal of capturing experiences of diversity and intersectionality within the erotic hypnosis community, this oversampling was appropriate to the research goals. This purposive sampling was also especially critical

because the vast majority of the initial participants who wished to participate in-person at the conferences were White cisgender men.

Phase 3) Supplemental Recruitment for Interviews

Relying on a process of memo-writing and the constant comparative method adopted from grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) it was determined that additional participants needed to be recruited, as I was not nearing saturation after the initial plan to interview 30 people. Thus, additional recruitment took place via three methods. First, participants were recruited for interviews at two additional conferences, EEEHU, and E-Quake, conferences in 2020 which were moved to an entirely online format in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Second, participants were also recruited via online advertisements in several erotic hypnosis community spaces (predominately Discord groups), as well as via snowball sampling from people who had already participated or heard about the study. Lastly, I also posted a truncated version of those advertisements on my own Twitter and Facebook pages, in an effort to reach people who had heard about the study but had not attended any of the conferences. Additional frequentist statistics regarding recruitment venues can be found in Table 1. All participants recruited via these methods were also asked to fill out the demographic survey before being chosen, and once again, we selected participants from these recruitment methods by intentionally oversampling for diversity.

Participants

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for the study, participants had to 1) identify as a person with an interest in erotic hypnosis, erotic mind control, and/or erotic brainwashing, either as a hypnotist, a subject, an erotic hypnosis role-player, or any of the above, and (2) be least 18 years of age. Participants who did not affirm both of these criteria were not invited to be interviewed. Participants also needed to be fluent enough to be interviewed in English.

Compensation

All participants, including the disqualified participant (see below), were offered to be compensated with $20 gift cards to an online retailer. However, a little over a dozen participants spontaneously asked not to be paid, most of whom expressed an interest in saving the study money so we could recruit more participants. The participants who spontaneously asked not to be paid were not paid as a result, in accordance with their wishes.

Disqualification

One participant, after seeing my other published work on kink and BDSM, contacted me directly via email about wishing to be interviewed in general about their sexual interests, having not heard about the erotic hypnosis study in particular. As a result, I asked them if they had an interest in erotic hypnosis, and if they met the eligibility criteria for *this* study. They indicated that they did, so were invited to fill out the demographic form, like other participants who volunteered for the study. They met several diversity categories we were looking for and were invited to be interviewed as a result. During the interview, it seemed as though they did not

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actually have an interest in erotic hypnosis and may have primarily been using the interview to gratify themselves sexually, based on the camera placement and movement of their arms during the interview (which I memoed after the interview was over), as well as their expressed motivation during the interview to try to "shock" me with their graphic sexual stories. Given concerns over the sincerity of their eligibility, a team of twelve research assistants and I read through the transcript (see Transcription below) of their interview and, following a lengthy discussion, unanimously decided that they didn't actually fit the eligibility criteria. They were disqualified retroactively, and their interview was removed from the dataset.

Demographics

Not including the disqualification, a total of 83 participants were interviewed for this study. When the reflexive memo writing after each interview, and a discussion with transcribers indicated we had reached saturation, recruitment ceased. Participants came from a wide variety of sexual orientation, gender, age (Range = 18-75, Mean = 37.30, SD = 14.16) and racial groups, with 41.0% of the sample identifying with a non-White racial group, substantially more racially diverse than most kink and BDSM-oriented studies. Demographic statistics are available in Table 1.

Procedure

Interviews

After participants provided their informed consent, semi-structured interviews (Barriball & While, 1994) were conducted. Because the study had a number of

research questions, and the questions varied in topic quite substantially, a semi-structured interview approach was chosen to help ensure that participants had the opportunity to speak on all of the research questions in the study. Using a less structured approach might have resulted in time running out too quickly before some topics could be broached, or an interviewer potentially having forgotten to ask about one of these topics. On the other hand, using a more structured approach might have prevented probing for deeper insights or novel topics. The interview protocol is listed in Appendix D.

Regardless of recruitment method, participants were also given the opportunity to select their interviewer/s: 1) myself, who is a White cisgender gay man and a member of the erotic hypnosis community, 2) a co-researcher, who is a White cisgender straight man and not a member of the erotic hypnosis community, or 3) both interviewers simultaneously. We did this initially in an attempt to put participants at ease who might feel uncomfortable being in a private room of a hotel with a person whose sexual orientation might be attracted to their gender, and also to give them a choice if they only wanted a community insider or outsider to interview them. Initial participants often selected both interviewers (14 participants), while the majority selected only me (20 participants). Only one participant selected only my co-researcher as an interviewer. As the Covid-19 pandemic hit, it became logistically difficult, due to technical difficulties and social distancing, to conduct interviews with both interviewers simultaneously, so the remaining participants were defaulted to interviewing with just myself (48 additional participants). All interviews were audio-

recorded via multiple recording devices to establish redundancy in the event of a

malfunction or poor sound quality (which was necessary in 3 interviews). Interviews

were initially estimated to last 90 minutes on average, but ranged significantly based

on participants responses and desire to share, (Range = 50-185 minutes, Mean =

94.30 Minutes, SD = 19.98)

Transcription

To protect participant confidentiality, audio-recordings of interviews were

transcribed by members of the research team, with identifiers removed from the

transcripts. These identifiers included both obvious, classic identifiers, such as names

and screen names, but also less obvious identifiers, such as the names of cities and

states. This was done, in part, given the precarious legal position of erotic hypnosis in

certain jurisdictions, to ensure that in the event any transcripts were subpoenaed, they

should not be able to identify which jurisdictions a given behavior took place in.

Transcripts were generated by a research assistant, marking down any places in the

transcript the research assistant was uncertain of their interpretation of the audio

recording. They then listened to the recordings a second time, in full, to check for

quality assurance, and then sent the transcripts to me. I then listened to areas they had

identified as being uncertain about and generated my own judgment through repeated

listening. Any areas of ambiguity I was also uncertain about were then brought to the

research team in full to discuss and arrive at a consensus. Transcribers were also

asked to note down any non-verbal behaviors which were commented on by the

researcher in the audio-recording of the interview or tonal behaviors that significantly

changed the meaning of the text (such as sarcasm or the use of "scare quotes" with the fingers) to preserve intended meaning as best as possible.

Ethical Concerns and Anonymity

The in-person interviews initially took place in a private hotel room at one conference, and a private hotel dining room in another. Some participants (and especially those who aren't men) may have felt uncomfortable with the fact that confidential interviews about their sex lives were taking place in hotel rooms specifically. After all, hotel rooms can unintentionally carry connotations of sexual intimacy, particularly at a conference that is oriented around a sexual activity. This may have been especially true for those who may have had past sexual trauma. To mitigate this discomfort, seven steps were taken:

First, the seating of the table and chairs in the hotel room were oriented such that the participant was sitting closest to the hotel room door, and the interviewer was sitting furthest from the hotel room door, across a table. For survivors, and others who may have been concerned about sexual assault, this seating arrangement may have helped to alleviate concerns by preventing the feeling of being physically cornered and trapped.

Second, in the hotel room, the bed that usually occupied the hotel room was removed (at my own expense) each day from the room, so a bed was not present in the room in which interviews were being conducted. This may have helped to further establish for participants a sense of physical safety.

Third, when scheduling their interviews, as mentioned before, participants had a choice of interviewers, and both interviewers made their own sexual orientation available as information when participants were selecting which person to interview with. This also helped participants who are concerned with sexual tension or discomfort during an interview taking place in a hotel room. For example, female participants who might have felt uncomfortable being interviewed by a heterosexual man may have been more likely to select me (a gay man) as their interviewer.

Fourth, when participants were being recruited, and the logistics of where to show up were being discussed, the research team explicitly acknowledged that conducting these interviews in hotel rooms is not ideal, and not our first choice, because hotel rooms have these intimate connotations. This was used to help diffuse discomfort for participants by explicitly acknowledging and normalizing that discomfort.

Fifth, the informed consent document reiterated that the purpose of the study was to hear their stories and be interviewed, and that the interviews would not involve doing any hypnosis or intimate behavior of any kind. These are the same informed consent practices used in other professional contexts (such as massage therapists), which can inadvertently carry a sexual connotation,

Sixth, the informed consent document also reiterated that participation was voluntary, and the participant could discontinue their participation at any time, without giving a reason, and without penalty (still receiving the $20). This also may have helped protect participants who might have felt discomfort by reminding them

that they could end the interview at any time if necessary. In practice, no participants chose to end an interview prematurely.

Seventh, by being given an option to interview remotely instead of in-person at the conference in a hotel room, participants had other opportunities to participate, in the event their discomfort with a hotel room precluded their participation. This may have been a substantial part of why we had so many cisgender White men initially who did the in-person interviews, and they may have felt the most comfortable and most safe being interviewed in-person by other White cisgender men.

One additional ethical consideration in this study was the challenge of maintaining confidentiality. While in typical qualitative studies, it is common to report the full demographics of each individual participant with a pseudonym, doing so in this study would likely have the consequence of making at least some participants identifiable. This is because knowing the age, race, and gender of a person, in conjunction with knowing which conferences recruitment took place at, or other details, may be enough on its own to make someone identifiable, especially if one of their quote excerpts is detailed and specific. To prevent this as best as possible the demographic data of each individual participant but will instead report it in aggregate (See Table 1). However, if a piece of demographic data is necessary to fully contextualize a data excerpt, then I will include only that solitary piece of demographic data, rather than the full demographic data for that participant, to preserve confidentiality. For example, if a participant is discussing their own experience of racism, I will disclose they are Black before the quote begins, but won't

disclose their gender, age, etc., in order to best obfuscate their real identity. This is most important for protecting our participants of color, given how few People of Color are involved in-person in the erotic hypnosis community.

Lastly, to aid in quote readability, while still staying ethically true to the original words spoken by the participants, quotations appearing in the results section of this paper may be very lightly edited to remove filler words like "like", "um", "uh", repeated words when stuttering, and occasionally the removal of the word "and" to break up extremely long run-on sentences.

Data Analytic Strategy

Just as this dissertation adopts a pluralistic approach to epistemology, I have also adopted a pluralistic approach towards the methodology used for data analysis. Analysis took place over four rounds. To begin, In Round 1, research assistants and I conducted a conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), inductively developing a codebook of basic content codes for identification and categorization in each interview. Interviews were divided amongst research assistants and me, with each of us independently coding a variable number of interviews. While coding, the codebook developed iteratively via weekly discussions with the coding team regarding the codes they saw occurring frequently, and those that we collectively perceived as being worthy of identification. During these weekly meetings, the content codebook was filled with codes that were named, defined, and provided with definitions collectively agreed upon by the members of the research team. During a final set of meetings, the entire research team went code-by-code to contribute any

additional nuances, additional examples, re-organization strategies, or definition alterations, ensuring all members of the research team were satisfied with all codes in the codebook.

Once the codebook had been established by the end of Round 1 based on independent inductive coding and discussion, research assistants and I then applied the codebook deductively in Round 2, dividing the interviews amongst the research team. Each research team member was assigned a partner, and each pair of coders simultaneously read through and coded each interview they were assigned paragraph-by-paragraph, coding each paragraph into all relevant codes from the codebook. When disagreements arose, partners would first discuss disagreements with one another, attempting to establish consensus as a pair while coding. Any transcript portions for which disagreements about coding persisted following those discussions were then brought up at our weekly lab meeting and discussed as a whole group, with the goal of establishing consensus as a larger team. This resulted in 238 pages of disagreements, discussed over several months of weekly meetings. Additional examples and definitional clarifications were added to the Round 2 coding scheme in response to these disagreements as they emerged to help settle future disagreements in advance. Coders in Round 2 also had access to the inductive coding from Round 1 to provide them with additional guidance as they coded and help act as a secondary check to avoid missing some codes, functioning as a "third pair of eyes" on each interview transcript to improve coding accuracy.

Following this 2nd round of content coding, I then conducted an inductive and reflexive thematic analysis (adapted from Braun and Clarke, 2019), which centers the concept of themes not merely "emerging" from the data as though they were dinosaur bones to dig up, but instead that themes are generated in conversation between the researcher and data in a reflexive, iterative process. Because many of the research questions in this study focused on topics involving both marginalized identities and the positionality of myself as a researcher, both Round 3 and Round 4 of analysis were conducted in collaboration with a partner (or in two cases more than one partner, see demographic details on these partnerships in the results sections below). Doing so helped ensure that additional viewpoints were represented in discussions of marginalized identities to allow for better reflexivity in code construction.

To begin Round 3, the entire research team collaboratively discussed and arrived at consensus as to all of the content codes from Round 2 that were considered relevant to each research question in the study. For example, when looking at the intersectionality between race and kink, we began by looking at all interview content coded into content categories like "race" and "nationality" (see the full list of content codes used for each thematic analysis in the results section below).

While content codes tend to be short, and descriptive on a surface level, making them easier to code for in a critical realist framework, themes generated by this reflexive thematic analysis tended to be more rich, detailed, and capture a larger phenomenon. For instance, content codes like "race" or "White" are useful for determining what excerpts of the data to analyze to answer questions about race and

Whiteness in erotic hypnosis, but a thematic analysis of these codes gendered more detailed sub-themes, such as "Fallout from the Whiteness of the Erotic Hypnosis Community" and "The Push and Pull of Self-Segregation" to capture socially constructed meanings and phenomena from the data. While some coding traditions, such as Charmazian grounded theory (Apramian et al., 2017), rely on the use of gerunds for coding, the reflexive thematic analysis I conducted did not exclusively rely on gerunds, as themes sometimes referred to tensions that isn't well captured by gerunds which necessitate some kind of process, action, or movement. Instead, themes were generated based on initial open coding, conducted independently by me and a partner). Following Round 3, in which a research assistant and I engaged in open coding, we co-constructed themes in collaboration and discussion with one another, generating a codebook with definitions and examples to construct each theme (and occasionally subthemes). Once we were both satisfied with the codebook, we began Round 4.

In Round 4, a research assistant and I each went back to the subset of the full dataset that had been coded into the categories chosen to be relevant for our thematic analysis. We then each independently coded that subset of data into all of the themes constructed in our Round 3 Codebook. Finally, we got together for several hours meetings to discuss disagreements that emerged between our coding decisions. Importantly, these disagreements did not represent "problems to be solved" or a lack of validity in a post-positivist framework. Instead, these were understood as differences in interpretations, worthy of investigation, and often resulted in both

partners gaining further insights into the data. Eventually, we arrived at a

collaborative consensus regarding each disagreement, determining whether or not to

categorize it within each theme we had constructed.

Results: Origins, Motivations, and Benefits of Erotic Hypnosis Fetishism

In an effort to explore why people engage in erotic hypnosis (the origin stories behind the practices, people's self-avowed motivations for engaging in the fetish, and purported benefits reported by participants), we began by examining all parts of the dataset that were coded into categories related to the origins, motivations, appeal, and benefits of erotic hypnosis. Because so much of the total dataset had been coded into these categories, as participants frequently talked about what they enjoyed about erotic hypnosis, three coders were brought in to analyze the data. The author utilized all of the data in the subset, while two research assistants split the data in the subset equally between them to reduce labor and ensure timely completion of the analysis. All coders then conducted a reflexive thematic analysis as described above in the Methods section on their subset. This subset was selected based on participants who had made any reference to the origins, motivations, appeal, and benefits of erotic hypnosis. To operationalize those references, the three coders analyzed only portions of the dataset which had been content-coded into at least one of the following 21 content categories (For detailed definitions and examples of each content code, see Appendix E):

1) Origins, Motivations, Appeal, and Benefits of Erotic Hypnosis

2) Incomprehension

3) Experiencing Physically Impossible Desires

4) Experiencing Ethically Impossible Desires

5) Power Play, Control

6) Transition from Non-erotic Hypnosis

7) Transition from Interest in Other Kinks

8) Introduced by Partner

9) Pressures of Being Smart

10) Altered States of Consciousness

11) Media-based Origins

12) Dreamed About Hypnosis

13) Healing From Trauma

14) Hypnosis is Thrilling

15) Hypnosis Benefits Sleep

16) Hypnosis Helps Manage Physical Illnesses and Disabilities

17) Hypnosis Helps Manage Mental Illnesses or Mental Disorders

18) Hypnosis Increases Focus

19) Hypnosis Increases Self-confidence

20) Hypnosis Improves Capacity to Trust Others

21) Hypnosis Improves Knowledge and Insight About the Self

Unlike the other thematic analyses reported later in this dissertation, the transformation from these content categories to the themes we ultimately settled on was less dramatic. This is likely because the initial content codes were more sophisticated in this area than many of our other content codes. Ultimately, the results of our thematic analysis yielded four themes and fifteen sub-themes, which will be described in detail below, with several examples of each:

1) Erotic Hypnosis Provides a Playground to Explore the Self

    a. Erotic Hypnosis as a Source of Fun, Relaxation, And Pleasure

    b. Erotic Hypnosis as a Space to Explore Power, Control, Dominance, and Submission

    c. Erotic Hypnosis is a Vehicle to Experience Altered States of Consciousness

    d. Erotic Hypnosis as a Source of Positive Identity Development

    e. Erotic Hypnosis as a Tool to Experiment with The Abilities of The Mind

    f. Erotic Hypnosis as a Crutch to Cope with the Stresses of Being Smart

2) Erotic Hypnosis Functions as a Spice for Enhancing Other Kink Interests

    a. Erotic Hypnosis to Experience Physically Impossible Kink Interests

    b. Erotic Hypnosis to Experience Ethically Impossible Kink Interests

3) Erotic Hypnosis Interests Originate from a Wide Variety of Sources

    a. Erotic Hypnosis Origins in Media Exposure

    b. Introduced To Erotic Hypnosis in An Online Community or Online Space

    c. Erotic Hypnosis Origins in Recreational, Non-Therapeutic, and Stage Hypnosis

    d. Erotic Hypnosis Was First Introduced by a Non-Partner

    e. Erotic Hypnosis Was First Introduced by An Intimate, Romantic or Sexual Partner

4) Erotic Hypnosis Provides Practical Benefits

    a. Erotic Hypnosis Makes Unpleasant Tasks Tolerable

    b. Erotic Hypnosis Benefits Sleep

Erotic Hypnosis Provides a Playground to Explore the Self (100.0% of Participants)

All participants in the study noted that their interest in erotic hypnosis was a form of play and recreation, noting that this play was often used to explore different aspects of themselves. From their ability to experience pleasure, explore power dynamics, experience altered states of consciousness, grow and develop aspects of their personality, experiment with what their mind is capable of, and sometimes to cope with stressful aspects of their everyday self, erotic hypnosis practices function as a space for erotic hypnosis fetishists to play with these aspects of the self, and discover new frontiers of pleasure and play. Below, each of these sub-themes are detailed, with a variety of examples of each.

Erotic Hypnosis as a Source of Fun, Relaxation, And Pleasure (100.0% of Participants)

All participants in the study indicated that part of their motivation to engage in erotic hypnosis is because it feels "good" in some way, shape, or form, such as it being a source of fun, being pleasurable, relaxing, exciting, or enjoyable. For some participants, this was because it was experienced as a source of explicit genital, sexual pleasure. For instance, one participant responded to the question of why they enjoy hypnosis with "Makes my dick hard [laughs]." Others went into much more

detail about the heights of sexual pleasure the erotic hypnosis made possible, with one

participant relating a story of creating a 2-minute orgasm for the person they were

hypnotizing:

> So, it was with that first person that I had done over text and this one was over
> Skype. They convinced me to invest in a webcam and microphone, start doing
> online stuff which was sort of a face-to-face, total change of how things
> worked. We did a session, and so it was a prolonged one and I think it can
> probably be counted as my first scene, honestly. Over the course of the play,
> we did some fractionation. And eventually, they were on their knees, stripped
> down. And they had a propensity to drool and leak out of every conceivable
> orifice when tranced, which I think is hot, so of course I engage that. And so,
> had them, rub it all over with suggestions that as, as more of the body is
> coated, arousal goes up and there have been tons of denial leading up to that.
> And I particularly enjoyed that, and that's one of the places where I think I
> first started to discover that I like reactions, because I continue to push those
> buttons without allowing them to have any kind of climax or release. Until
> they spread their legs and drop their hips down and started grinding into the
> carpet. And I was like, "Oh, you're really pent up". And so, just hair
> disheveled and spit and drool and juices and like pure primal desperation and
> then I let them cum. It's like a two-minute orgasm!...I've never replicated that
> length of one with somebody. And it took them a good 25 minutes to even
> start to be able to talk again….Super hot.

For this participant, they reported that fractionating their partner (taking them

in and out of trance repeatedly to deepen their level of trance) and combining it with

denial (not allowing a partner to have an orgasm) helped to create a powerful and

potentially temporarily debilitating orgasm. However, for other participants erotic

hypnosis was described as pleasurable or "hot" without explicit sexual connotations.

This was especially the case for participants on the asexual-spectrum. For instance,

one participant who identified as asexual, relayed a story in which their experience of

erotic hypnosis was "hot", but not arousing.

> Sometimes you feel like the alien in the room. For example, I had that thing
> that happened at MindQuake, it was… I can't remember- It was like some,

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some class and the presenter talked about trance and said something along the lines of, "I think all of us kind of can agree that trance is arousing" and I was like, "What? How is trance or the seeing somebody that's trancing with a trance, like in the trance or with empty eyes arousing?" I mean, it can be- it can be hot in a kink sense, but arousing? I don't know. That's just me being ace.

Other participants described the pleasure they found in erotic hypnosis as a combination of feeling simultaneously relaxed and aroused, such as one participant remembering a relaxing, low-intensity weekend of erotic hypnosis with their partner:

My wife and I have a son, a 13-year-old son, and then, over the last year and a half, he basically hasn't left the house…my sister-in-law was able to take him for a weekend and we wanted to do something sexual. But we were kind of struggling with it because we were just overwhelmed and touched out. And so, we kind of went into that erotic hypnosis direction. And we used a bunch of sort of relaxing triggers and got her into like a really sort of relaxed and aroused state…. But I was basically able to just sort of gently play with her for several hours. And it was just, it was really nice, like it was calm, and sort of low pressure, but it was one of the first times that I've been able to feel low pressure…because the hypnosis aspect really did a lot of foot work and like, it just, it became this really novel, pleasant, fun experience…just made it all so comfortable as opposed to being like super intense or anything like that.

Some participants even commented on the simple, sensory delight of enjoying looking at objects they perceived as being especially hypnotic. One participant, for instance, talked about enjoying the pleasurable sensation of looking at shiny things:

I think I'm more attracted to the jewels and the crystals more than pocket watches…. It's shiny! [both laugh] It's so basic, it's so silly. But they're pretty! I like how light refracts on it and I can bliss out a little easier.

Some participants talked about erotic hypnosis being helpful in amplifying those pleasurable sensations as well, especially the sense of touch. One participant, for example, narrated:

So it was with a guy that I was talking to on Craigslist. He did a couple of [mp3] files. He sent me some files, just kinda listening and to get me in the

set-up, in that mindset, and he used that same trigger to put me under after inducing me, and showing me around, making me comfortable. It was really fun *(laughs)*. I think I was probably way too easy to trigger or put under, maybe I was just too willing *(laughs)*... But the first time he put me under it was incredible, because it was very busy, it was a very light feeling. He'd very gently like ran his hands down but it felt like every little sensation of touch was amplified by a magnitude of 10, and that wasn't something that I remember him getting me to do, it just felt like that because I was just so deep and so focused on his words and his touch. I mean I can even feel my heart now racing thinking about it.

Overall, while everyone agreed that part of what they enjoyed about erotic hypnosis is that it felt good, participants reported substantial variation on the nature and intensity of those pleasurable, joyful, blissful, and relaxing feelings.

Erotic Hypnosis as a Space to Explore Power, Control, Dominance, and Submission (97.6% of Participants)

Nearly all participants also agreed that a key part of what they got out of erotic hypnosis, and what motivated them to engage in erotic hypnosis was the desire to play with power dynamics.

> My main kink is control. So, I think I saw the possibilities…on both sides of how hypnosis could kind of amplify feelings of helplessness and vulnerability or, you know in the case with like conditioning, doing fun things where we modify people's behavior to things that we want, and that was really intriguing to me.

For some participants, the desire to play with control even reached the level of wanting to experience their consent being impaired, such as one participant who described their attraction to erotic hypnosis by saying,

> For me it's about submission and obedience. Really [sigh] I have issues about consent in general anyway because, people talk about it being ongoing. You've got to be actively, continuously giving consent, and you can't in this situation, cause once I'm under, levels of control are being stripped away. I've actually embraced the fact that I'm no longer in a position to give informed

consent. My ability to give consent has been reduced and the deeper I go down into this- into these states, the less I'm able to actually, give informed consent, and in some ways I bloody well welcome that. That's part of the joy of this…Part of the joy of it is being controlled. It's the lack of the ability to, to think independently and behave independently. Consent is no longer relevant. I somehow gave some level of consent right at the beginning of this. Each layer of hypnosis, as it goes deeper, and I welcome this, and I invite repeated brainwashing and reinforcement. I am continually giving up consent, and I'm no longer able to actually give informed consent. That's why I have a mate keeping an eye on me.

Other participants echoed this sentiment about from the other end of the spectrum, focusing on having so much control over a person that they functionally become a toy, such as one participant who explained,

The ability to control him to that degree was something that was just so strong and so fulfilling, it was just what I really wanted. It was so satisfying… it's just a feeling of power. That would be the best way to put it, in terms of power that this person had given me over him, and being able to exercise that power and use it in a sexual fashion that I could fashion him into a toy for my pleasure, was what made it so intense, so pleasurable for me, so again, control and the domination would be another good term for that, was very good for me, that's what made it so intense, that's what I thoroughly enjoy.

Unsurprisingly, based on the motivations reported by those into other kinks, most of the participants in this dataset reported the desire to play with power and control as a substantial motivating factor in their desire to play with hypnosis. However, participants into erotic hypnosis also talked about achieving a hypnotic trance state in and of itself as a central desire.

Erotic Hypnosis as a Vehicle to Experience Altered States of Consciousness (86.7% of Participants)

The desire to experience mindlessness, trance, or some other altered state of consciousness in and of itself, or to bring about that state in others was also a

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motivation expressed by many participants as part of why they had an interest in

erotic hypnosis. Rather than desiring to engage in erotic hypnosis to achieve some

other goal or experience, many participants saw the trance state itself as seen as a

desirable, motivating goal for engaging in erotic hypnosis. For example, one

participant described experiencing an intense desire to learn about and experience

hypnosis because of wanting to experience their brain getting "fuzzed",

> I essentially just wanted to know everything. I remember begging him for like book recommendations just so I could try to read and ingest as much information as I could and… it was essentially the same thing as a sub frenzy again but just for hypnosis this time because anything that could do anything we're talking like from gifs of spirals or little looping hypnosis poem or anything that could do anything immediately fuzzed up my brain at the time…for me when my brain is being fuzzed out it feels very particular, it feels like a prickling on the skin and I feel it towards the back of my neck and then towards my sinus area and then that tingling feeling just sort of travels throughout my whole body similar to like progressive muscle relaxation I would suppose and then it continues from then and then onto deeper states.

For this participant, the biophysiological state in their body caused by being in

a hypnotic state is a central goal behind their early desire to continue with hypnosis

play. That same participant later talked about other aspects of their state of

consciousness that excited them about hypnosis,

> While I was going pretty deep, I felt as if there was a certain disconnect between my mind and my body doing the actual feelings of trance. So, what made it the best experience was that I could feel sort of that languid feeling of trance covering my entire body and the warmth and the tingling and the heaviness and the lightness and all of that and at a certain point I felt so disconnected from it that I couldn't feel my limbs and I even after having been woken up my muscles still were completely cataleptic. Which is just amazing to me.

Another participant talked about other aspects of their bodily state that excited

them about hypnosis, focusing less on warmth and fuzziness, and more on the feeling

of falling,

> I will never forget the sensation because for years afterwards, this is how I knew I was under. I was sitting on my couch…and my head was resting back against the backrest, and I was feeling myself relaxed and about the time I got to the chest being relaxed, I had the most wonderful, peaceful feeling of falling backwards out of my body. It wasn't an out-of-body experience, but there was a wonderful sensation. You know, like when you're little, as you stand on the side of the swimming pool and then go backwards and you know, do a reverse belly flop, like the beginning of that.

Other participants, rather than fixating on the bodily feeling of the state of hypnosis, instead talked about their desire to experience amnesia in a trance state, such as one participant delighting in finally being able to experience amnesia as a hypnotic subject, who said,

> I've been able to have amnesia in a lot of sessions with my owner, a massive wall in my erotic hypnosis experiences. Because it's a level of trust that I never experienced so how come I don't remember a word that you said just a few seconds ago? [Laughs]. It was the first moment that I was like ok, this amnesia thing is working, it was a very fun session, one of our earliest ones, where my owner would uh, they started using their base of words to figure—figuratively fuck my mind. It was a matter of pace, and I was able to let go to that phase, a lot of pleasure and arousal and I can't remember a word that he said during that.

For this participant, accessing the ability to subjectively impair memory via hypnosis is framed as a kind of intimacy and trust. By using the metaphor of the mind being penetrated in "fuck my mind" they note how they derive a great deal of pleasure from this experience, with the capacity to experience amnesia as central to their feelings of pleasure.

Some participants used the language of "headspace" or "subspace", mirroring the language used in the BDSM community for altered states of consciousness experienced in BDSM contexts, with one participant describing hypnosis as,

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Hypnosis is essentially like, to me like it's basically like a shortcut to altered headspaces, in a way, so it's a lot more potent and powerful than just like having those headspaces arise normally.

For some hypnotists, their enjoyment at helping someone else reach an altered state of consciousness was the result of a feeling of success or skill in being able to reach that goal. One participant remarked at their own delight upon successfully hypnotizing someone else with their voice for the first time,

I realized that the person on the other end of the phone was hypnotized. And it was like probably the first time that I had tranced somebody by voice. And I was just like, like, "holy cow this person is like in an altered state of mind, and I did that!"

While the descriptions of the exact kind of altered state of consciousness desired by participants varied, or what features of that state participants found especially appealing, the vast majority of participants reported the desire to experience or induce such an altered state as a key component of their motivation to engage in erotic hypnosis.

Erotic Hypnosis as a Source of Positive Identity Development (84.3% of Participants)

Some participants talked about what they got out of erotic hypnosis as an ability to improve aspects of themselves, often by identifying personality traits in themselves they saw hypnosis as helping to amplify. Whether it was feeling more confident and empowered, becoming a better communicator, or better able to be open, trusting, and vulnerable, these participants saw erotic hypnosis as a practice that helped to inculcate these traits. For example, one participant commented on how

erotic hypnosis' status as a verbal kink helped them improve their communication

skills in other aspects of their life:

> An interesting thing that erotic hypnosis does which I don't really know where it fits in your interview thing, but it's just that it makes you better at talking and communicating. Whether it's like dirty talk during sex or just talking to your partners about your feelings, and I think that that's because it's a kink about talking [laughs] and words. That might also be why nerds like it 'cause it's a very positive and fulfilling kink for me because of that. Like I feel it go into other parts of my life, and I really like that, 'Cause the communication is more open.

> Others identified that erotic hypnosis featured introspective elements that

helped them grow as a person by facing challenging aspects about themselves. One

participant noted,

> …[E]rotic hypnosis something that is so taboo… it really allows people to dig deep and find themselves, and find how this plays into their own identity, and how this plays into their identity with other people, and hypnosis more than any other kink I've ever seen really forces you from the get-go to kind of go through the nitty-gritty and get to the uncomfortable bits of yourself, and to come to terms with it, 'cause that's the only way you're really going to reap all the rewards, and it forces you to kind of put in the hard work and that's what I love about it the most. It creates a space where everything is possible as far as you're willing to go basically.

> Others talked about feeling empowered or connected with others as a benefit.

One participant, for example, described the importance of the sexual components of

erotic hypnosis as the key to its capacity for transformative personal growth.

> …[S]exual energy has the capacity to transform, and so pairing that with hypnosis, which is the power of suggestion, it's a really potent medicine. If you don't understand it or it feels threatening, I urge you to look into it and explore because it's a really umm powerful method of self-empowerment and connection with self through others.

> For some, it wasn't necessarily hypnosis itself that was perceived as assisting

with their growth as a person, but instead their leadership experience within the erotic

hypnosis community. For example, one community leader explained how it helped

them to develop a better sense of critical consciousness around social identity

categories like race and gender.,

> I feel like I've really become a leader in my time in the erotic hypnosis
> community and as such, it's enriched my growth in a lot of these other areas,
> like, in my racism, and in my understanding of gender, and sexuality, and so I
> don't know how much of the advances are like personal or like the direct
> result of my leadership stuff, the big like, the whole, I feel like I was my - my,
> like, so much growth has happened as a result of my spot in this community in
> the last 3 years….I'm super grateful for it.

> Other participants talked about how the confidence boost involved in hypnosis

was another central benefit, with one participant reflecting,

> I've gotten more confident, but also like you know I feel, I feel sexy, and that
> was not true before I found this stuff. There is so much and, who's to say
> where I'd be had never found it, but it's touched almost every part of who I
> am.

> While participant's evaluations of the impact of erotic hypnosis on their

personal growth are, of course, socially constructed narratives of their own lived

experience, and not meant to be interpreted as evidence of direct causation, these

narratives help to illuminate the wide variety of types of personal positive identity

development that participants attributed to their involvement with erotic hypnosis,

with erotic hypnosis serving as a vehicle to explore and growth these aspects of

themselves.

Erotic Hypnosis as a Tool to Experiment with The Abilities of The Mind (48.2% of Participants)

Some participants talked about their motivations for playing with erotic

hypnosis to be focused on experimenting with the capacities and abilities of what the

mind can do under hypnosis. Like explorers or scientists, carefully investigating and

testing, erotic hypnosis was characterized as a series of quasi-scientific investigations

with live hypnosis subjects. One participant described their partner experimenting

with attempting to control their emotional state while deep in trance:

> Once having realized that I was so deep they were like okay let's try
> something else. And so they tried actually toying with emotions, as in like
> manifesting emotions throughout, and the fact that it was possible to go from
> it more so like an experiment than anything else but we experimenting
> through the emotions of anger, sadness, happiness and so on so forth and it
> was completely possible and amazing magic. I mean it's very intense. Your
> brain kind of short circuits in a sense because it's very confused. Because at
> least with my level of suggestion ability these things happen before my brain
> has a chance to kind of recuperate or think about so it is a constant feeling of
> kind of feeling like you are in the backseat and your brain is going a hundred
> miles a minute and you're struggling to keep up but there is also just the awe
> of it you know. Because it's really nice to banter with somebody for example
> about Ericksonian theories or theories about neuroplasticity or how all of this
> affects us but to actually have it happen to you in real life in a way that is
> undeniable because the test was to see if the person could make me cry…I
> remember it worked, and it felt real, to the point where I can even still recall
> those memories now and recall those emotions that were not mine really they
> were just implanted, so it's great.

Others talked about testing out different induction methods, or experimenting

with incorporating technology into their hypnosis play, such as one participant who

described it as an experiment to see what is possible with hypnosis:

> One time we did a VR type of thing where he put up a spiral in one of those
> headsets you put your phone in and then I talked to him through his
> headphones. That was pretty fun. And you know we'll talk a lot about
> different conditioning things that both I and he want to do? And express like
> interest in meeting each other at some point kind of thing? So definitely the
> most intense connections are with him because there's that weird connection
> that we have for whatever reason, but I've definitely had a lot of weird
> different fun experiences, and I guess kind of experiments with people that
> really show not just what I can do but what hypnosis is capable of.

Others talked about testing and specific hypnotic skills, such as testing

whether they were capable dominating multiple people under hypnosis at once:

> It was over the internet with two people and I was in a-- I was in a chatroom
> and I was providing jerk-off instructions but also hypnotizing one of them to
> fall prey to my voice and follow my every command, and then the other one
> was more of a feminization and sissification. So, I was doing both of those
> side-by-side for maybe an hour…That was pretty intense for me it was like
> stretching the limits of what I was capable of, but I felt it went successfully
> and I was able to manage both threads.

By exploring erotic hypnosis as a skill to evaluate what is possible, this

category of participants characterized erotic hypnosis as a tool and a toy, to test, play

with, and explore, to find the limits of what is possible.

Erotic Hypnosis as a Crutch to Cope with the Stresses of Being Smart (27.7% of Participants)

Some participants, especially those who enjoyed erotic hypnosis in order to

experience a temporary reduction in their intelligence (often called bimbofication,

dumb jock, or himbofication play), reported enjoying that type of play as a way to

escape the perceived stresses of being smart. One participant with a "book smart"

partner, for instance, talked about the joy that experiencing a simulated "dumbness'

through hypnosis could bring their partner,

> When I first had it described to me, I was a submissive. I remember somebody
> said "You know, if you really think about it, bimbofication play doesn't have
> to be about big boobs and blonde hair. It can be all about the IQ play aspect of
> it". And I was like "Okay, go on". I think I'm fairly book smart. I've got a fair
> few degrees, so I can read. I think at the time it was kind of like wow, people
> do this as mental escapism? That's kind of fun. The more I got into that, the
> more I started to kind of explain it to people I played with like "Hey, I do this
> thing that's actually quite fun". My girlfriend is the same. She's real book
> smart. She's super analytical, so watching her go from that to this like
> absolute joyful kind of dumbness is just absolutely amazing. Her and I really

bonded on that kind of front…I get great joy out of it. My girlfriend loves it, so why can't everyone else have fun with it too?

Another participant reported a similar narrative, but instead of focusing on their current stresses, they noted the stresses they experienced as a kid to be intellectual,

I was considered to be a very smart child. I was in the gifted and talented program as a kid, so I think that perhaps some of the expectation and the pressure of always preforming well, always getting good grades has reflected on why I enjoy things like jock and bimbo hypnosis, or becoming an animal, just because it is kind of a release from those expectations or a release from that kind of pressure that comes with being intellectual.

For some, their stresses around being "gifted and talented" as a child also merged mental health diagnoses that made thinking feel stressful, and leading hypnosis to be seen as a release. One participant with ADHD, for example, explained,

I'm one of those former gifted kids, you know, those kids that grew up. I was in the accelerated program and reading at a college reading level, blah, blah, blah, and top that off with ADHD. So, my brain will not stop moving at all. And so, hypnosis where you- a person who normally always has the answer and always it's just right there and you just say it and you move on- not having it is an interesting new experience. Also, it adds that little bit of quiet which you don't normally get.

For these participants, the stressful expectations of being intelligent were perceived as a factor influencing their eventual interest in erotic hypnosis, as an escape from that awareness and pressure. These stories fit squarely within the literature suggesting masochism may be in part motivated by a desire to escape the stresses of self-awareness, and the overburdened conscious mind (Baumeister, 1988).

Erotic Hypnosis Functions as a Spice for Enhancing Other Kink Interests (95.2% of Participants)

It was rare for a participant that erotic hypnosis was their sole kink interest, even for participants who identified erotic hypnosis as their primary kink interests (a Round 2 content code which 31.3% of participants were coded into). For many participants in the dataset, erotic hypnosis was talked about as a kink with the power to enhance other kinks. For some participants this was discussed in more generic terms such as one participant who described it as "kinky bacon",

> Hypnosis is like kinky bacon. It goes great with everything. There was literally nothing bacon doesn't go with so. Hypnosis is the same. Meaning, you can use it to relate to impact play, to bondage, to sensory play, so many-- definitely to enhance your DS [Domination/submission]. It goes great with everything.

Others went into detail about how erotic hypnosis could help to enhance specific kinks, such as one participant who enjoys experiencing pain who described,

> My favorite so far has been a scene where we combined playing with my perception of pain with impact play, so we were able to lower my pain threshold so the top could barely touch me and it was horribly painful, and I'm a masochist, so this was amazing…He could barely have to do anything and I was writhing in pleasure, it was amazing… So, this ended up being an hour-long scene, and then he turned up the masochism button, so it was just with every bit of pain, it was absolute pleasure, it's amazing what you can do with the brain. It really is. You can literally do just about anything. The possibilities are endless. If you can imagine it, you can do it.

Other participants commented about the unique capacity for hypnosis to combine multiple kinks together that otherwise would be disconnected. In one case, a participant talked about their desire to use hypnosis to combine impact play and orgasm control:

> My favorite sensation is floggers, but I really enjoy the challenge of impact and using different toys like canes or dragon tails, spatulas, whatever. I'm most interested in the ramp up and sustaining and then like, up and downs…My fantasy is being put into trance and allowing that to let me go

further than maybe I could if I wasn't, which is edgy, but I really like that fantasy. And playing around with like orgasm control with impact. Like using impact to build up to one would be SO COOL! I don't know if I can, but like, yeah that would be cool.

In this story, the participant is talking about wanting to experience an orgasm as the result of being physically hit, ramping up to that orgasm with increasingly intense strokes from an impact toy. The potential of using hypnosis to tie these two typically disparate experiences (orgasm control and being physically struck) together via a hypnotic suggestion serves as a useful example of how participants described the potential for hypnosis to enhance other kinks. When coding for this category, two specific subcodes were also constructed to capture participants who talked about the unique capacity for erotic hypnosis to be used for kinks and fantasies that were impossible to do, either physically or ethically in real life, but could be experienced as subjectively real within a trance state. These subcodes are detailed below:

Erotic Hypnosis to Experience Physically Impossible Kink Interests (78.3% of Participants)

Participants noted a wide variety of physically impossible experiences that could be made subjectively real under hypnosis. For instance, one participant talked about experiencing time travel while sitting at a picnic table near a Starbucks during an erotic hypnosis convention:

> So, we were at a con, earlier this year. And we went to a Starbucks to take a break. And there was a drive-thru Starbucks, there was no place to go sit inside. But they had a picnic table, and it was very hot. And we sat in this, at this picnic table. And you could hear. It was right next to the drive-thru. They were playing music. There was a car in the parking lot, and the car in the parking lot had a problem with their fan. So, it was 'ding, ding, ding, ding, ding'. It was making a lot of noise, right? But it was just this, this steady beat

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clank, right? And there were large birds, coming and going. And it was right off a highway, right? Okay, so picture all these things going on at the same time. And I go into trance and [sigh]. I don't know how, how it got directed. Like, our trances aren't pre-defined, right? And they're interactive, so 'What do you see? What do you feel?'. The music started going very muffled, and very 40-ish. It sounded like you were listening to a 1940's radio broadcast. The fan started sounding like one of those aluminum, steel-bladed fans sitting in a hot apartment over a city. Picture a small studio apartment in a busy street in New York City, where it's super hot and the noises, and it's 1940 and the music is playing and it, it got all muffled and it was very strange. And the birds are flying by, and the traffic. You can hear the horns, the cars, the bustle. The ordering was very strange going on. So, the scene just evolved. And I just felt like I had gone back in time…It was pretty amazing.

Another participant talked about experiencing time travel not through historical time, but in terms of their personal sense of their own age, using hypnosis to put themselves into the headspace of a younger version of themselves,

…[I]t's total fantasy that you couldn't do here, and so now [with] my current partner I do some of that as well so it's kinda freeing because you can- especially when I'm stressed or struggling with other things, it's a way to be completely free of all of that and be somewhere else. When I say someone else, I'm not talking about a different person I'm just talking about with all the stuff I carry today *(laughs)*, I can go back to a time or place before a lot of the crap happened in my life, when I didn't have some of the stuff I'm carrying now, you know mentally, emotionally, so it's really freeing I guess is the best word.

Some talked about physically impossible experiences by focusing on physically impossible transformations, involving a loss of humanity, such as turning into a dog, robot, demon, or vampire. One participant described this kind of sensation as a releasing of human identity and going to a "primal", animalistic place.

The very first day that I joined the erotic hypnosis community on discord, one of which was [name of discord server]. And I actually just posted an introduction, and I didn't actually think that it would go so fast, but somebody messaged me, and they were interested, and we got to playing an hour later essentially. It was really crazy because it felt like the most right thing I had ever done…It was a play regarding releasing of like your human identity and

going to a primal identity which there is a decent amount of steps in there if you think about it absolving yourself of your humanity and I remember that I was so surprised by the end of that it worked so well and that it took me so long to kind of come back to myself, so it was amazing.

For some, it was the capacity for a hypnotic trance state to help suspend disbelief that allowed it to create physically impossible experiences. One participant described it as a shortcut, stating,

> I struggle with the suspension of disbelief a lot [laughs] so I think a lot of that feeling is that it's just like a shortcut sometimes, [laughs]. I would like science fiction-type stuff, like tentacle monsters and transformation. Yeah, there's a lot of potential.

For some people into erotic hypnosis, the physically impossible desires they held were quite elaborate, such as one participant describing the desires of a partner of theirs to be transformed into a robot:

> He wanted to have his brain rewired to be totally compliant, no thought. And that's one of my things I do with my subjects is like…"when we're done with this first thing, you're not gonna think. I'm gonna say, you're gonna do." It just goes straight through. There's no processing at all…with this guy, he wanted me to physically describe unplugging wires and rerouting wires and moving his pleasure center, and rearranging his brain and some of his physical organs, too. I mean, he wanted his heart to be changed into not the blood-pumping heart…and turning his veins into lubricant. Not blood, but lubricant for the robot-being, the physical being, that he was. I really enjoyed it. It was a *lot* of work.

For others, their interests in transforming their partner into an object took the form of turning them into a statue or doll. One participant whose initial kink interests revolved around men being turned into statues reported the joy he experienced at realizing the possibility for hypnosis to make these fantasies feel real.

> Men, acting as statues and robots, and hypnosis plays really easily into that, as you can see…that is where it comes from, and being able to talk to people who want to be hypnotized and show an interest, being hypnotized and act

like a statue or robot, through online media or directly in person, made it, wow, that's great, I'm finding the people I want to communicate with…I don't feel fully satisfied as I do when I use hypnosis.

Some talked about how much they enjoyed the creative possibilities available because of being able to experience physically impossible experiences, such as one participant who said,

Being able to hypnotize people to believe things that are actually impossible, opens up a lot of creative doors that you don't see other places…they do just some really weird stuff. Body horror kinds of things like your lips are stuck together like in the Matrix or your arm is melting off and you can't do anything about it.

Lastly, several trans and nonbinary participants talked about using erotic hypnosis to experience an instantaneous physical change in their body so they could feel their subjective sense of their biological sex align with their gender identity. For most of these participants, this was a way to cope with gender dysphoria. To see examples of these types of experiences, please see the theme "Erotic Hypnosis Helps Manage and Alleviate Disability and Disorder Symptoms" in the disability section of this dissertation. In general, the capacity for erotic hypnosis to create subjectively real, physically impossible and seemingly magical experiences for participants was a commonly cited motivation for engaging in erotic hypnosis.

Erotic Hypnosis to Experience Ethically Impossible Kink Interests (68.7% of Participants)

In addition to physically impossible interests, some participants described having an interest in erotic hypnosis as a way to explore desires that enacting in real

life would be unethical. Sometimes this took on cartoonish-level themes of villainy,

such as one participant who described fantasies at an early age:

> The idea of complete control has always been something that excited me from a much younger age even before that. I was always that… weird kid who when the evil super villain would kidnap and corrupt or brainwash or charm or enchant a helpless victim, be it a helpless sidekick or, you know, some hapless victim as bait or whatever it may be, it was always the high point for me of the story.

In other cases, participants described the ability to use hypnosis to play with

themes around rape and consensual non-consent, with one participant describing it as

almost an epiphany in their mind:

> We're able to play in the realm of consensual non-consent that other kinks don't get…. You're familiar with rape fantasies, right? Like, one of the most common fantasies in the world. But I went to a thing at that conference where the gist of it was females saying, "we want this play". …And so that was mind-numbing for me. That was like, "Wait. Uh, ethics. Uh, struggles, struggles, struggles". So, four hours later, I was like "You know what? I can do this". You know, and then later on down the road, I was able to do that kind of fantasy for somebody. It's like [excited yell]. You know, it's amazing. Like you've broken leashes in your skull.

For one older gay male participant, the origins of their hypnosis fetish started

as a result of wanting to reconcile their same-sex attraction with their belief that no

man would ever ethically want to be touched by another man in an intimate manner:

> I had a desire to you know, just touch or feel another man's body, and I wanted to be able to do so, and I perceived society to be like a place where gay people really didn't exist. So, I thought, you know I'm going to have to do something that is without his consent…. How can I do this in a way that doesn't necessarily harm this person, but yet at the same time, like I get to do it? And so, I would see movies that had hypnosis in it, there was someone being hypnotized and then made to rob a bank and then they don't remember afterward. And I thought 'oh, if this is possible, then you know I don't want someone to commit crimes, but it would be nice to just have a few stolen moments with another man's body.

The ability to play with amnesia through hypnosis was also cited as an

advantage to using hypnosis to do rape scenes ethically, allowing someone to

experience being "raped by a stranger" with a person who they actually knew and had

extensively negotiated with, by removing their memory of the person. One participant

described hypnosis as an especially useful tool for this by saying,

> I think we're the only kink in existence other than maybe, like weird head trauma kinks where you can give consent and then be surprised about what happens, you know due to temporary amnesia or other certain situations things like that. So yeah, I think that the fantasy can be realized on both sides, not only from being able to get someone to do what they wouldn't otherwise do or would want to do and also being made to do something you wouldn't normally do other than like your standard rape fantasies. The coercion or forcing or just seizing of control of one's own body and mind is a very common fantasy. And I think a lot of the rape fantasy community folk who frequently feel ostracized because what they want is the worst thing that you can do, would really find a home here and explore that in a very healthy way.

One participant described going so far as to help their partner experience a

simulation of being killed in an electric chair via hypnosis using their hat.

> I could say it was the first time that I found someone that was extremely interested in some of the evil I can institute when I'm doing my hypnosis thing. There was somebody at a con I was teaching that was so into bratting the hell out of me, and they wanted my hat. This hat is kind of iconic for me. So, I immediately caught them in a trance trap. They came up. I immediately turned. We already had a pre-negotiated understanding that the whole weekend of the con, I catch you off-guard your brain is mine. So, she came up turn around dropped her immediately, I told her, "Okay, now you're going to be compelled to grab the hat, but every single time you do, you're gonna experience very nasty electrical shock." And then later on in the day I'd walk by her I take my hat off I plop it right onto her head in which case she experienced massive electrical hits right to the brain and then later on in the evening sat her in a rotating chair in the con suite and had her like she was going under the electric chair. Getting it cranked up more and more and hearing those screams, and how everybody was fixated on how intense this could get and that's where I can say OK, I've kind of arrived here. I've kind of set my precedent.

The capacity to play with ostensibly evil, physically unsafe and unethical themes, in a safe, negotiated, and consensual environment seemed to be a unique feature of erotic hypnosis that was especially useful for many participants in getting some of these other kink-oriented fantasies met.

Erotic Hypnosis Interests Originate from a Wide Variety of Sources (91.6% of Participants)

Throughout the interviews, many participants identified specific sources in which they first encountered hypnosis, often as memories of the first "spark" of their fetish interest. These sources ranged widely, though most recalled some form of media exposure as one of their earliest memories of being interested in erotic hypnosis. In this section, the wide variety of sources participants identified for their earliest origins of their interest in erotic hypnosis are categorized and described with examples.

Erotic Hypnosis Origins in Media Exposure (73.5% of Participants)

Within erotic hypnosis communities, telling stories of early childhood cartoons in which hypnosis was present as the "origin" stories behind their kink interests is a relatively common phenomenon. The erotic hypnosis community often jokingly shares memes about Kaa the snake hypnotizing Mogwli in the animated *Jungle Book* movie. Thus, it was not surprising to hear many of these types of stories replicated by participants in their discussion of their own introductions to erotic hypnosis. Most typically, these stories featured non-sexually explicit children's media that featured hypnosis and was experienced as fascinating or exciting by participants

from a young age. For instance, one participant recalled a very specific episode of the

animated show Scooby Doo,

> I mark it down to two instances, and of course back then this would have been watching it on TV. And both of them are well known in our community. First of them is the infamous Scooby Doo episode called "Bedlam in the Big Top," where what got me was as soon as the ghost clown pops out of the cabinet and puts the coin up in front of Daphne's face, then we get this close up of Daphne and as she's going into trance, she smiles. Like it's the most wonderful thing in the world where it's like, "oh wow!". The other one is the movie *The Woman in Green,* which is a Sherlock Holmes film from the mid-40s, one of the last Basil Rathbone movies where a female hypnotist is involved in a blackmail plot that Moriarty is running. And the final scene has Sherlock and the lady hypnotist, and she is doing a very good fixation induction on him. And when I'm watching this there on this big black and white TV set that I had, I'm going like "I want to be where he is" 'cause there she is, sticking out her hand and stroking the back of his neck. And then I realized that I also wanted to be where she was because I wanted to do both. So I'm very much in that both category, you know, I want to be the subject but then I want to be the hypnotist….I was definitely interested in what had been something about that time that would have made it sexual but I can't actually say whether at this point it probably was at some point in this time frame in my personal life, but I can't put it exactly that. I just say it was in that time frame where it could have been.

More prototypically, a handful of participants mentioned the Jungle Book

specifically as an influence,

> …[I]t's weird till I think of it as sexual— 'cause it was like before I was, like, a sexual being, you know. I was like, like, probably five or something. But yeah, I think, I just, I just remember like, you know when you get like butterflies in your stomach? Like I remember having that kind of feeling when I was watching, like, Jungle Book or like… maybe something like [short pause] like the feeling of having to pee but in a pleasant way [chuckles] i-if that makes any sense.

For many, these proto-sexual feelings that were usually not understood and

labeled as sexual at the time were common narratives (and have been in past research

on other kink and fetish interests. However, not all participants who reported a media-

based origin for their interest in erotic hypnosis talked about non-sexually explicit

material. Some participants, for example, discovered erotic hypnosis primarily via

pornography:

> I found stuff like, there was a website called hypnosis fetish, was my earliest kind of dabble in hypnoporn. I remember watching that and going "Wow. He's hypnotizing these people. It's all sexual, but it's also like domineering, and I'm kind of into that, so I wonder where I can explore that more". So that really piqued my interest in it. Then on Warp my Mind, I used to just grab any file I could and just try it. Yeah, so definitely when I was 18, I was like, all guns are blazing, I'm in this shit.

For other participants, it was written texts, such as romance novels, fanfiction, or

erotica that played an important role in their early exploration of their erotic hypnosis

interests. One participant, for example, talked about how the hypnosis present in

vampire romance fiction because a fetish interest for them,

> I think the first time I kinda heard about it was more so in like books and stuff. I do read like a good bit of romance novels and paranormal romance. And sometimes paranormal and like urban romance has like outside elements…I thought it just seemed really cool. [Laughing] It just read very cool. And then I was like 'oh wow' and then I started seeing it like a bit more and romance novels that had like vampires or whatever when they would like compel people and it was semi similar to the other hypnosis types that are actually like actual [light laughter] hypnosis.

The fantasy of the hypnotically compelling seductive vampire, for this

participant, featured as an important early figure in the development of their erotic

hypnosis interest, just as superhero shows, cartoons, and other media figures fill the

stories of other participants. Overall, these stories replicated similar findings from

past literature pointing to early, proto-sexual moments with media as being a common

memory for many kinky adults.

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Introduced To Erotic Hypnosis in An Online Community or Online Space (50.6%
of Participants)

More than half of participants talked about discovering erotic hypnosis (or

discovering that erotic hypnosis was a "thing" in an online space, often in spaces

specifically dedicated towards erotic hypnosis fetishists. A variety of websites, such

as hypnotizing.org (now defunct) hypnosis4guys, hypwatch, discord channels for

erotic hypnosis, McStories (a repository of online erotic hypnosis erotica), and many

others were often cited as a key gateway into both the fetish and larger community.

Similarly to many media-based stories, these online spaces often were experienced

with a sense of fascination by some participants when first encountering them. One

participant recalled,

> Probably late 90s browsing the web.…It think it was maybe the Mind Control
> Stories Collection…. I remember several days of going through a sort of a
> fixation stage of reading a lot. Um, and, yeah, I mean there's so many, so I
> had to, I had to kind of stumble around. But uh yeah you know, it was, it was
> they, obviously they're works of fiction, because [I was] not certain that that
> was how a scene in real life would go [laughs] of course…I got quite um
> deeply into it for a time.

Others discovered online erotic hypnosis communities more accidentally, such

as one participant remembering their experience on YouTube and Tumblr:

> That would've been in college. I think I had just recently gotten onto Tumblr
> and that's kind of where I stumbled across a lot of erotic hypnosis. I had
> previously, back when I was sixteen or so, used hypnosis to help with anxiety
> and stuff like that, so I did some of those videos on YouTube and I remember
> stumbling across an erotic file on YouTube back when I like seventeen and
> just being very confused by it and didn't really proceed with it. I didn't really
> think that there was a community for it.…I just followed some of the blogs,
> enjoyed some of the content, most of it was just hypno-edits onto pictures and
> stuff like that, nothing *actual* hypno in terms of what I discovered and then

eventually found that there were people who enjoyed it and then eventually they said "oh yeah some of us actually do hypnosis"

Given the prevalence of the internet in the majority of participant's stories, it is perhaps not surprising that such a wide variety of websites were mentioned. All-in-all, participants pointed to 58 separate websites and applications related to exploring their erotic hypnosis interests, based on the results of the Round 2 Content analysis (See codebook in Appendix E).

Erotic Hypnosis Origins in Recreational, Non-Therapeutic, and Stage Hypnosis (24.1% of Participants)

For a smaller minority of participants, seeing a stage hypnosis show at a county fair, or trying out non-erotic recreational hypnosis provided an initial inroad into the perceived development pathway of their kink interest. One participant talked about attending an adult-themed hypnosis stage show as an initial source of inspiration,

> We went to a hypnosis show that was advertised as "Adult" and that's when I realized, hey wait a minute…This is fun!...I didn't realize that "Adult" meant it was going to be sex. It was heterosexual but it was there. Started out kind of mild but then got really really raunchy quickly…Making a man feel that he was in love with a mop and fucking it on stage. Another one: in love with a chair and fucking it on stage. Literally stripping down and fucking it. I thought that was a little extreme, but I realized pretty quickly that hey, if they can do that with hypnosis, think of what the possibilities are for erotic. And with my present partner, the first thing I did when I hypnotized him was hypnotic orgasm and he loves it!

Another participant talked about being first introduced the potentials of erotic hypnosis via a stage demonstration at a Burning Man event,

> It was at a burning man regional event, um, where some people were doing demos of it. And I've always been kind of curious about hypnosis and you

know what I thought about it in terms of like, oh, this could connect to kink, interestingly, because I'd had some level of connection to BDSM scenes and whatnot, and someone was doing a demonstration at a burning man event. I was like, oh shit, this is like, cool. Like, this is, this is a thing that one could be involved in.

While the sources varied, this smaller proportion of the sample talked about witnessing and learning about hypnosis in these more recreational contexts (stage hypnosis on TV, demonstrations, and hypnosis comedy shows), as an early inroad into sparking their later interest in erotic hypnosis.

Erotic Hypnosis Was First Introduced by a Non-Partner (14.5% of Participants)

In addition to the more impersonal settings, like stage shows and school assignments, a handful of participants also identified how people they knew who were not intimate, romantic, or sexual partners helped introduce them into hypnosis. Neighbors, roommates, family members, coworkers, and friends all potentially played a role in sparking these interests, according to this smaller group of participants.

Some stories were relatively simple, such as one participant mentioned that at 15 or 16, hearing about a friend of a friend who also had an interest in erotic hypnosis helped introduce him to the wider world of erotic hypnosis,

> …[M]et that friend through another friend and they were heavily interested in hypnosis and erotic hypnosis. So, it was basically it was just a friend through a friend thing that went on when I first found out there were other people who were into this thing.

Other stories were identified even by the person telling it as atypical, such as one participant describing how their husband got into erotic hypnosis:

> My husband's situation is highly unique. He was brought into the community by his younger sister. Like, biological sister. She was showing him something on her computer one day and she had in like a small tab, one of the erotic

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hypnosis community things online and he recognized it, and he said something to her, and she has actually helped like run conventions and all that. So, she's the one who brought him to his first convention, and I've been like- pretty much almost every convention I've been to, since that first one, she's been there too.

Another recounted how a hypnotherapist's recording prompted to be created by their boyfriend's father, was their earliest contact with hypnosis as a concept:

I think well first contact with hypnosis that I can remember right now is a long time ago when my boyfriend's father had asked him to visit a hypnotist and I remember that he came back and he said that it didn't work and he didn't like it but he had kept a recording because it was a paid session and the person had given him a recording to go home and listen to. And I was having a hard [time] so I thought I would try it and I remember falling asleep to it.

In this case, the experience that was related to this participant's early experience with erotic hypnosis was facilitated by the recording of her boyfriend's hypnotherapist. Because this chain of events involved the influence of both a partner and a non-partner, it was coded into both this and the following category. In general, these more serendipitous and less predictable relationships and connections were relatively uncommon in the dataset but were present with enough frequency to justify capturing them as part of the larger story of how people come to find and become interested in erotic hypnosis.

Erotic Hypnosis Was First Introduced by An Intimate, Romantic or Sexual Partner (14.5% of Participants)

For some participants who didn't have a pre-existing interest in erotic hypnosis, being introduced to erotic hypnosis in the context of a relationship with someone who was already into it was the central gateway into developing their own

interest in erotic hypnosis. One participant put it succinctly when describing their partner coming out about their interests,

> She just told me, we were pretty open about everything, and we were a kinky couple so… [she said] "by the way, I'm into hypnosis" and then she shared stories and stuff with me and it fascinated me pretty much from the start.

Others were initially more reluctant when their partner first introduced it to them, but found they enjoyed it only after they had the chance to try erotic hypnosis, such as one participant who explained,

> I remember, "Ok this is weird but yeah I'll go along with this". Basically, the more we did the more I realized this is exactly my shit. At the time I thought of myself as a switch. Like I knew I was kinky. I knew I was into some weird stuff, but like I said I hadn't heard of erotic hypnosis before. I was topping and it's a hell of a power trip… we did it once and I kind of became obsessed.

For other participants, their partner didn't come out about their interest in erotic hypnosis until well into the relationship, such as one participant whose husband brought it up on their first-year anniversary of dating,

> So, I actually got brought into it from my husband. I did not know it existed until he told me that he was a hypnofetishist. So that was my first experience and then it was just full on after that…It made a lot of sense to how he talked, and what he did with me before that. But it was just not something I had ever even thought about. I didn't know it existed, so it was, it was pretty eye-opening and it really kind of opened up my world…First I was just like, "Oh, okay". And then after that I was like, "all right, you know? I'm willing to try anything. If I don't like it then I don't like it, but it was new and different and fun…. I was more excited. I think just because it was a whole new section of fun to explore. And then it's really exploded into way more than I ever even thought would be possible.

One participant even noted that multiple partners had been doing erotic hypnosis on them, without either of them realizing what they were doing was hypnosis.

I'd participated in it, but I didn't honestly know that's what I was dealing with. In 2010 when I'd been with a partner, I started to essentially go into what neither of us realized was actually trance, as a result of his words and his voice, and we didn't know what was. But he saw my demeanor and my behavior and heard my vocal tone, and it scared him. He's just like, "nuh-uh" and I'm like, "I don't what's happening there, but I like that. I want more of that' and he's just like, "yeah well that scares me. I don't know what's happening either, but it scares me." So, I was just like "oh grr." *(laughs)* And then in 2014 I first met my, unfortunately now, late husband who I lost to cancer. He could pretty easily put me into trance with words, touch, voice, and then I had started getting an idea of what it was. I didn't know I was dealing with hypnosis. But he was very much Pentecostal Christian and if I'd put that word on it, it would have scared the crap out of him. So even though I kinda have a feeling we were dealing with hypnosis, I didn't use that word but that was very much what he could and did do.

Erotic Hypnosis Provides Practical Benefits (21.7% of Participants)

In addition to participants talking about erotic hypnosis as an opportunity to explore and grow with aspects of themselves, a smaller number of participants also noted more practical life benefits of engaging in erotic hypnosis, such as being able to be more productive and sleep better. Below I have detailed participant stories of how erotic hypnosis has been reported to be useful and beneficial in a variety of these practical domains.

Erotic Hypnosis Makes Unpleasant Tasks Tolerable (12.0% of Participants)

A small handful of participants talked about some of the practical benefits of erotic hypnosis in improving their capacity to engage in tasks that would otherwise be unpleasant, such as cleaning, chores, working out, and other self-care tasks. For some participants, this took the form of playing with himbo-fication (transformation into an unintelligent, but muscular, athletic masculine person), such as one participant who reported it being an especially common trope among gay men,

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I feel like in terms of spaces for gay men, there's a lot more focus on like people being specifically into like into a very particular kind of hypnosis…, like with gay men a lot of the focus seems to be on things like encouraging exercise, like to have like a more muscular appearance and things like that.

This finding aligns with some of the previous research on gay men's dumb jock erotic hypnosis forums (Chambers, 2020), with men using hypnosis as a way to make exercise pleasurable. Some women also talked about using erotic hypnosis to heighten gender roles in ways that make unpleasant tasks tolerable, such as one woman who explained,

Okay, so I have a like a Stepford wife type kink that I'm into. And so, we added a trigger with, like a bralette that I have, and when I put that on, I go into that headspace. I love that headspace, and it actually is really productive, because I can clean and I get pleasure out of that and it's effective and helpful and I just, it's a great headspace…. Being productive gives me pleasure and turning that pleasure from just doing normal house chores and things like that, into actual physical pleasures like sexual pleasure is the best thing that's ever happened to me[laughter].

Other participants similarly noted being able to enjoy productive activities such as work, household chores, and parenting duties with more energy and enjoyment,

I have definitely noticed that after some good sessions I have higher productivity at work… I have got energy, I will clean up the house, I have play time more, I will take my child out and go do things outside in the sun [laughing], go to the aquarium, go to the beach. Do way more stuff than I would have if I wasn't you know, giving myself those feel-good doses.

One participant who struggled with engaging in self-care tasks even talked about how doing erotic hypnosis helped them substantially to do the self-care work around sleeping and eating properly, even though it was unpleasant to do on their own,

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I love that some things become automatic, and like there's the whole, 'Oh, you don't have a choice to do this'…So it just feels perfect, that it just becomes like an automatic thing that's like, 'I want to do this. I love not thinking about it and just doing it automatically'…I'm owned by someone else taking care of me, and then taking care of me and doing self-care for me is doing self-care for them. So now it's not about doing something for me, cause I love doing things for other people, especially when I care about them. So, it's like my partner is my Dom and he wants me to take care of myself, take care of my body, so I have to eat properly and make sure I go to bed on time, so that I do right by him. Whereas if I'm doing it just for me, it's like, 'Oh, well I don't have to eat', and then like I can have this whole, 'I want to punish myself because my depression is bad….I like being obedient, but sometimes like I overthink stuff and it's like, if I don't have to think, I don't overthink.

For these participants, erotic hypnosis was described as a helpful tool in getting things done, even when those tasks were generally unpleasant without the assistance of hypnosis.

Hypnosis Benefits Sleep (9.6% of Participants)

In keeping with the practical benefits of hypnosis mentioned by participants, some participants talked about their initial interest in erotic hypnosis starting first as a way to assist others in getting to sleep. For example, one participant explained,

When I started out with hypnosis, it actually was to assist somebody who was sick and help them with lessening the side effects of the treatment. You know, so they wouldn't be as nauseated. They could sleep more easily. That kind of thing.

Similarly, another participant described a common practice they engaged in online with their partner, using erotic hypnosis to facilitate her ability to sleep, sometimes unintentionally when they are initially intending to have an erotic scene:

She might feel a little wired and she wants to chat sometimes talk for a while but ultimately the focus is to facilitate her falling asleep. So that's the general direction now. She finds hypnosis to be very arousing. So that even though intellectually the going-in mode is to sleep, the dynamics are such that it may actually result in something more vigorous than sleep for a while…Sleep and

relaxation is just easier. I don't wanna necessarily say aftercare, but I think that kind of characterizes kind of how that comes about other than the times where she's just worn out, she just wants to, you know, her body just wants to sleep.

For one participant, the purported benefits of hypnosis for sleep were part of why they listen to non-erotic hypnosis files each night, despite being an erotic hypnosis fetishist:

I listen to files at night that aren't hot they're just, like, this'll help you sleep, uh, calm down from the day and it's great. It's great practice as well for being able to go deep.

Other participants found the benefits of hypnosis for their sleep quality to be so positive that they have incorporated listening to erotic hypnosis files to sleep as part of their daily routine:

I listen to obedience files, usually in my morning, and then I listen to a trance file just as I'm about to fall asleep. And it's really nice to be able to explore that openly and not have to worry as much…. just using it so frequently now.

In summary, answering the question of why people are interested in and participate in erotic hypnosis requires exploring participant's self-reported origins, motivations, and perceived benefits of erotic hypnosis, so as to better understand what they get out of this kink activity. The results in this category showed a wide diversity of different developmental paths, motivations, and specific appeals of erotic hypnosis, thought with nearly universal agreement that pleasure and power were understood as core aspects of the appeal, along with more practical, personal, and relationship benefits scattered across the dataset across a variety of circumstances.

Results: Consent, Risk, and Safety

To examine how participants talked about issues of consent in the context of erotic hypnosis fetishism, two coders: the author and a research assistant, read conducted a reflexive thematic analysis as described above in the Methods section on a subset of the entire interview dataset. This subset was selected based on participants who had made any reference to issues related to consent, the level of risk involved in erotic hypnosis, and/or safety concerns. To operationalize those references, the two coders analyzed only portions of the dataset which had been content-coded into at least one of the following 29 content categories (For detailed definitions and examples of each content code, see Appendix E):

1) Consent and Safety

2) Answer To Question About Complexity of Consent

3) Consent Is Simple

4) Consent Is Complicated

5) Consent Is Somewhere in Between Simple and Complicated

6) Safewords

7) High-Quality Consent

8) Hypnosis Is Dangerous, Hypnosis Is More Dangerous Than Other Kinks

9) Hypnosis Is Low-Risk, Hypnosis Is Less Dangerous Than Other Kinks

10) Consensual Non-Consent (CNC), Fearplay

11) Deprogramming And Unwanted Triggers

12) Opinion About Renegotiating, Negotiating Up, Pushing Boundaries Mid-Scene, Or Negotiating in The Middle of An Erotic Hypnosis Scene

13) Consent Violations

14) Past Sexual Abuse (Outside of Erotic Hypnosis)

15) Enablers of Consent Violations

16) Barriers to Consent Violations

17) Consent Violation Allegations Are Overpoliced

18) Consent Violation Allegations Are Underpoliced

19) Consent Violations Are Common

20) Consent Violations Are Uncommon

21) Consent Violation Allegations Are Adequately Handled

22) Fears Of Consent Violations

23) Fear Of Getting Own Consent Violated

24) Fear Of Violating Others' Consent

25) Participant's Consent Violation Status Within Erotic Hypnosis Context

26) Participant Never Has Had Consent Violated

27) Participant's Consent Was Violated by Another

28) Participant Violated Others' Consent

29) Participant Has Never Violated Another's Consent

The results of our thematic analysis yielded five themes and seven sub-themes, which will be described in detail below, with several examples of each:

1)   The Risks Around Hypnosis are Difficult to Manage

a. Hypnosis is a Risky Practice

b. The Challenge of Unchallenged Abusive Practices in EH Community

c. The Challenges of Underage Erotic Hypnosis

2) Healthy Erotic Hypnosis Consent Practices are a Team Effort

a. Authentic Communication as a Whole Person as Central to Consent

b. The Importance of Community, Practices, and Education to Self-Police Consent Violations

3) Fetishizing Hypnosis Involves Navigating the Experience of Specifically Fetishizing Non-Consent

4) The Risks Around Hypnosis are Easy to Manage

a. Hypnosis is a Safe Practice

b. Consent Violations are Overblown and Overpoliced

5) Good Consent Practices Aren't a Monolith

The Risks Around Hypnosis are Difficult to Manage (94.0% of participants)

Most participants identified erotic hypnosis as a practice that involves some risk that needs to be managed, and often cited failures on the part of communities to appropriately handle alleged violations of consent that took place while a subject was under hypnosis. The nature of hypnosis as potentially impairing consent, and as a potential risk to unintentionally causing an abreaction (a negative, sudden outpouring of emotion, often based on accidentally triggering a traumatic memory) were often cited as rationales for why erotic hypnosis was especially risky and difficult to appropriately manage. Others focused specifically on the unique threat that underage

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people might become involved in erotic hypnosis communities online, in contexts where their age might not be verifiable. Overall, many participants noted that there were many risks around erotic hypnosis that created difficult-to-manage situations for safety and consent. These stories are detailed below:

Hypnosis is a Risky Practice (89.2% of Participants)

When characterizing hypnosis as a high-risk form of kinky play, many participants identified ways in which erotic hypnosis was potentially risky to a person's mental health or might exacerbate an existing mental condition. These types of stories are detailed in the Results section on mental health and disability (i.e., Erotic Hypnosis can be Risky for Mental Health). While those stories are still included in the frequency statistic reported in this code, the qualitative excerpts present here will focus on the types of risk reported by participants that aren't centered around mental health. For instance, some participants talked about erotic hypnosis as risky in a very general sense, such as one participant who optimistically warned,

> …[T]his is not a children's toy. But that once you have grasped the responsibility of it and once you have gained tools and understanding that you need to navigate it with that responsibility, its fucking hot!!

Many talked about the risks in terms of the belief that erotic hypnosis can impair the ability of a person to give authentic consent, one hypnotic subject explained the effect they perceived hypnosis as having on themselves,

> My agency, ability to consent or whatever, is gonna be impaired much quicker. That's gonna happen from like the very start of the scene, based on how I respond to hypnosis as an altered state/achieving my fetish, are both very impairing things for me, which isn't necessarily true for everybody, at

least for the, for the fetish piece, and similarly you might go non-verbal or lose your ability to move and stuff.

Others cautioned that other practical considerations of risk beyond mental health or consent had to be taken into consideration when negotiating to ensure the subject's safety, such as one participant who asserted,

> You can't just in consent go "yes. No" it doesn't work that way. You have to understand whether or not they're on any medications…To understand what are their responsibilities, do they have anything important that they need to be doing soon? Do they need to be driving soon afterwards? Do they need to go to work afterwards and have their attention focused on certain tasks? Are there people they're going to be responsible for right afterwards? Because hypno-hangovers are real. It's very---the end of the scene is not necessarily the end of the effect on the person's mind…It also means, you know, a phrase that you've programmed to have a specific reflection to go back into trance, to start dancing, to start stripping, uncontrollably horny, whatever it may be. And you have to understand both to the finest, finest detail. It's incredibly complex, there's nothing simple about it.

For this participant, the risk of erotic hypnosis can come in the form of not being able to drive safely after a hypnosis scene or having difficulty attending to responsibilities. Towards the end, they even seem to express concern over the accidental use of a trigger in an everyday setting if careful details haven't been programmed in (sometimes called needing to "close your triggers" in the erotic hypnosis community).

Others also noted the tendency for some hypnotic subjects to go non-verbal, impairing the ability to safeword if a verbal safety is being relied upon.

> We agreed to do something fun and fractionating and it all seemed very, very nice and friendly. I was lucky. He did not undress me in any way but, at some point, I was so out of it, I was so gone that I was unable to speak. I was unable to make my wishes known. I was endlessly struggling to just wake up and

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failing. Because he had fractionated me so many times that I just wanted to wake up and, during what he felt, was the aftercare, he actually hypnotized me more and again and again. I just wanted to wake up and I couldn't communicate that anymore.

For some, the risk was not only to the hypnotic subject, but also to the hypnotist, as creating a scene (especially a nightmarish one) can potentially lead to internalizing guilt in the Dom over having created that nightmarish experience, One Dominant cautioned,

> If in my mind what they're asking for could legitimately fuck somebody up in the head if they experienced it in real life as opposed to through hypnosis, I'm most likely not going to do it to somebody that I just met. And even then, if it's somebody I've known for a while I might not want to do it because as a Hypno top doing that to somebody, putting somebody to let you feel guilt, you feel like shit for really making somebody suffer through that. They said they wanted it, they liked it, and enjoyed it, but guess what? You're also thinking that okay, "I made somebody think, that they murdered their own family. I'm not exactly happy that I did that. They may have wanted it and they may have said thank you but, I made somebody do that." That could fuck you up. Bad.

In short, nearly the entire sample agreed that erotic hypnosis came with risks from a variety of sources, in terms of consent, mental health, and physical safety, but most also identified important strategies for mitigating that risk, such as being careful about partner selection or negotiating extensively beforehand.

The Challenge of Unchallenged Abusive Practices in EH Community (78.3% of Participants)

There was a pervasive concern among a large majority of participants that some individuals who engaged in abusive and non-consensual erotic hypnosis practices were going unchallenged in the community. In some cases, this focused on bad actors in positions of power that were difficult to confront or remove because of

their leadership role. For example, several participants noted one specific (and somewhat infamous) former erotic hypnosis community leader who was often labeled as a serial abuser and consent violator but was able to operate for years with minimal repercussions. One participant went into great detail about some of the non-consensual experiences they had had with this alleged abuser, and the difficulties in challenging this person's abusive practices because of the power they held within the community, despite witnesses to the abuse,

> So I wanted [alleged abuser] to step down and let us run [erotic hypnosis conference] and change the name, and they were like, "well let's just do it like this, because his ego wouldn't allow it, and he was also spending forty thousand dollars to make out the entire hotel and get the thing going, so it was his money that everything was floated on." So I said, "well", to my partner, I said, "let me do this this year, let me get all the contact information so I know who does programs, how to run things you know figure out how to do a con and next year we can kinda start our own and see if they'll come with us. Do it differently." And then I was at, I started my meet up, I broke off with their meet up and said I'm going to start a new one…the first one, this person was there, we weren't supposed to be doing any hypnosis because it was in a restaurant and they were pressuring the person next to me…he turned to me and said "Do you want to do a rapport-building hypnosis?" and I said yes because I expected it to be a rapport building hypnosis. And something that wasn't what he did, which was immediately grab my collar, yanked me, pull a knife out, a big knife and hold it to my throat, in a restaurant. I fainted … my current partner who was sitting next to me was furious, he bent my collar and you know not to touch someone's collar….He had said at the time too when people were all flustered, he like looked around and said "Oh I can do worse than that to her right now and like and she consents to me, a blanket consent" and I was like "what?" So, I told him, "don't ever hypnotize me again, you think our relationship has progressed to something not, that's not something that we actually agreed to"….So we stayed away from their meet up for a month and then went to it again and at the meetup, like as soon as I walked in, he just looked at me like I was some sort of piece of meat…he came over and hugged my partner and tried to hug me but I said, "No I told you we're not, we're not going to touch," like I was like really clear and not only that but everyone else knew too…[Later]he was doing a thing where he was walking around and hypnotizing people, he came over…and started doing butterfly inductions in my face and I said "What do you think you're doing?" And I

could see the looks on people's faces around me cause that was like not a thing to do, like his other partners and, and anyways so he was trying to hypnotize me for a second and then he goes, you know he's like going, "never mind, [snapping] wake up wake up, back to normal" and walks away and like my partner and I got up and left because that was like, that was too much. We wrote to them that night and said "What the hell was that, like that's a major consent violation, you don't try to hypnotize people without negotiations, without permission, it's nuts"…like you go to a poker game they rigged, and you know it's rigged and you know that if you get to the top you're not going to win, they take money from people but it's fun, you enjoy yourself, but it's just you have to avoid certain people it's, at a certain point like it's gets old cause it's the only thing in town so that's what you gotta go do if you want to do this poker game. But if someone else starts another poker game and they're legit, eventually everyone will jump ship and go over there. So, since I had my meetup and I was starting a conference, I just got everyone together here in [western city]. The only reason a person has authority is because we give it to them. Regardless of how experienced they are and how much they know, we'd given him the authority and he turned it into a dumpster fire.

Others noted how some individuals engaged in non-consensual practices but were not challenged because they created erotic hypnosis content that the community valued. For instance, one participant noted,

I think also as quite a problem that there is, and that is handled to a varying degree is with people in the community who are popular or have sort of a following because they are, for example, content creators that are also abusive. Like that thing that happened with [name of male erotic hypnosis file creator] …somebody came out and they were engaging with them while they were underage and then a whole lot of people out of his fanbase [were] attacking that person…. I mean that particular case I noticed that happened. I know it also happened with some of the other cases like I mentioned before.…That content creator and hypnotist, was, in a relationship with a friend of mine who abused her. He is also one of the organizers of a MUNCH and is known by a large group of people. So, people are then basically looking away, as if it's a more important part of the people in the community or more people who have bigger following when things like that happen or accusations happen. And that's I think that's a big challenge in the community that you have to hold every- everybody up to the same standards.

One participant pointed out that because FetLife's terms of service ban the naming and accusing of specific people, online spaces on FetLife also had little ability to handle consent violation allegations, noting:

> You can't have a press conference about insert-bad-actor-who-owns-a-website-and-puts-out-files [laughs] because that just doesn't work, and you can't do that on regular social media either. So FetLife is important because those posts can be made, although FetLife's rules about calling out people in particular are also problematic, which is why the convention and having our own community is so incredibly important in dealing with those actors.

For others, the frustration with unchallenged people who violate the consent of and abuse others in erotic hypnosis was brought about not by that person being somehow "immune to consequences" due to being in a leadership position, but instead because of a more general perceived ineffectiveness in the community's ability to self-police consent violations in general, with one participant describing going to conventions as,

> There's, you know, people are say- "This is the safe con. This is the unsafe con." There is not a single convention that I feel I could go to and feel like I could really trust the con com or really trust the consent team, because it's a bunch of imperfect people. No one is professional at this. Some of these people barely have their lives together and so that's why they [laughing] spend all of their time planning these events and I, I'm grateful for them for that, but they're not people that I trust. So, the way I've articulated it to my partners and my chosen family is like, we go to these events really on a trapeze without a net, and that we're fundamentally only gonna trust each other and we just keep our heads down, and when people say, "Is this safe? Or is this safe? Or is this safe?" and like, we just, we just say we're just gonna go and we're just gonna be our best selves.

Despite many participants bemoaning the difficulty of challenging unchallenged non-consensual and abusive practices in the community, many

participants also highlighted the importance of a variety of community factors they

saw as especially protective in the next theme.

The Challenges of Underage Erotic Hypnosis (13.3% of Participants)

Lastly, a handful of participants noted that underage people would

occasionally become involved in erotic hypnosis, and the potential dangers their

presence can create for everyone involved. One participant noted that these concerns

often emerged in the context of online erotic hypnosis chatrooms,

> …[T]here can definitely be a lot of negative stigma. I know early on many of
> the chat rooms were often shut down by rumors or possible true situations
> where, you know, people will talk about, under age people pretending to be
> older and then be hypnotized and then is that sex? And is that illegal?, and
> then sort of like what the ramifications of all that are.

Other participants noted their own involvement in some online erotic hypnosis

spaces as a minor as well, with one participant recalling,

> Before I was 18, I was mostly finding the stories and the files and just doing it
> by myself. I tried to connect one-on-one with a few people, but I wasn't smart
> enough to lie, or dumb enough to lie, I guess. But I was very up-front. I was
> like "I'm underage" and that would be like the end of it. And I was like, "I'm
> not gonna start lying to people…. I'm gonna chill out. I'm gonna be 18 in a
> few months."

Some discord servers adopted mechanisms requiring people to provide age

verification to get access to the server, a system detailed by one participant,

> …[T]hey have certain things set up where it's like oh you need to prove that
> you're eighteen to a mod, a moderator of this server through like an ID or
> something, yeah you probably need to show them an ID like yeah this person
> is eighteen plus and um they give you access to it. So yeah, they have a whole
> system in place where you need to contact the moderator and say, "hey I'm
> eighteen, here's the evidence proving so" and have like a driver's license or
> something else like that.

Unfortunately, on servers without these kinds of mechanisms, one participant reported being targeted as a minor by a handful of predators after disclosing they were a minor, recalling it as,

> …retrospectively reckless. At the time I just thought, "Oh yeah. I can get away with messaging random people online." and talking about intimate things, with strangers, but I couldn't. A couple people told me to send them pictures. And I just did it, 'cause I was stupid. And I just thought I would get, like, a trance out of it or something. Like eventually they would "pay" me with that. Which was incredibly stupid, and I regret doing that…I was about 15… [After participant discloses their age] a few of them would keep going. Those were the ones I really regret. They just asked for pictures. I don't think I ever sent pictures of genitalia. That just kind of freaked me out. But still sending pictures of my face and stuff like that. Most of them, like probably 95 percent, just didn't even respond to me after I said anything. They were just gone. Maybe blocked me. Or just no response. Um, which was good. And there was a few, like five percent, that just kept speaking to me. And they were like, "Oh yeah that's fine." And it's not.

Healthy Erotic Hypnosis Consent Practices are a Team Effort (92.8% of Participants)

Participants in this category overwhelmingly talked about good erotic hypnosis consent practices as requiring the active coordination of multiple parties, both in terms of active, honest communication among partners, but also in terms of the role of the larger community in facilitating education and healthy consent norms, as well as appropriate preventative measures towards and responses to consent violations. Consent was rarely talked about only in individualistic terms, but instead was constructed as a team effort for everyone involved. Below are a variety of participant narratives expressing these sentiments around consent.

Authentic Communication as a Whole Person as Central to Consent (90.4% of Participants)

Nearly all participants emphasized the importance of consent as central to what makes erotic hypnosis both ethical and enjoyable. However, many participants also went beyond merely talking about the importance of consent, to unpacking the features that are necessary for good consent practices. Participants in this category were those who emphasized these important features. These features included being honest, authentic, and open about one's desires, goals, and boundaries, communicating effectively, treating others as whole people deserving of rights and respect, and engaging in aftercare practices (practices that take place after a scene of kink activity, often as part of helping the participants to ground, connect, and emotionally reflect). One participant, when emphasizing the importance of communicating honestly, explained,

> And communication also means, understanding and honesty. If you're not into it, say so. If you're just screwing around, get the fuck out of here. I would like to have a higher level of complete, straight-from-the-shoulder, "this is what I'm interested in, this is what I'm not interested in."

Others noted how engaging in kink allowed them to feel more confident advocating openly for their own boundaries, despite the social norms they had been raised under. One participant in particular described this experience as,

> I would say that ironically enough finding kink as an active part of my lifestyle has made me become a more well-rounded person and also much more comfortable with my own consent and my own boundaries. Kink has allowed me to realize that I am allowed to say no, that I am allowed to understand what my boundaries are, and that I'm allowed to expect people to respect my boundaries. Being a woman from a Caribbean island some of it is very outdated back there, so you kind of just get through this thing where like "boys will be boys" and women just have to kind of go along with it, and kink has given me a safe space where I can come to terms with what it is that I want and how it is that I am expected by my own rules to behave.

Some went to great lengths to ensure that the consent given by their partners what authentic, and free from coercion or impairment. For instance, one participant explained their process when a partner suggests, while in a trance state, wanting to do something more intense than they had previously agreed to,

> I think if you discuss consent while there is no trance going on, I think it's fairly straightforward. One of the biggest problems of course is that we've gotten better about doing hypnosis. As a lot more people study Ericksonian and other conversational hypnosis techniques, the idea that you can give consent is just as problematic as if you're doing it while stoned or drunk. But I think generally if the trust is there already, then the consent can be freely given. One of the big rules that I have for any sort of consent negotiation is that it has to be done dressed, in public, and with a table between us. That way you - you can pull or rescind consent, but you can't expand existing parameters unless you renegotiate. It actually kind of gets kind of sexy when you're in a scene and you're sort of rubbing up against the edges of things that have been accepted to and one person goes "alright I know I said I wanted to keep my shirt on that was going to be the thing that I consented to, but this thing is coming off" and I went, "Okay well you can do that but first we have to go to Denny's, do you want to have me continue what I'm doing now or do you want to go to Denny's? [laughing] And usually of course that - that establishes the trust that I'm not going to take advantage of the situation and also make sure the consent is active, you know knowledgeably and freely given.

Others emphasized the importance of authentic consent in the way they viewed the person in their full humanity, rather than reducing them to a mere dispenser of kink experiences, such as one participant who explained,

> I do think it's important, and maybe just for me, but I think it's good to just be able to talk to the person about things other than hypnosis as well. Like I found the people that I could just a conversation about hypnosis at an intellectual level, not just "oh we're going to play?" I found I have the best experiences with people I could have a discussion or chat with about other stuff. And then we could go into play. Like the people who just say "hi" like, or, "wanna play?" like [laughs uncomfortably] it's good to know what you want. Like what appeals to you about the other person rather than just seeing them as like a dispenser of the play.

The Importance of Community, Practices, and Education to Self-Police Consent

Violations (77.1% of Participants)

Participants noted a variety of factors that already existed within erotic

hypnosis communities that helped to reduce and self-police consent violations. One

participant noted the importance of education, for instance,

> Education. I think if people maybe saw demos and saw the kind of things you
> could do with it and realized that with everything else that has risks, like,
> there's some kind of hypnotic play that wouldn't be a great idea to be done
> with, like, a play partner you just met or something, but I think that's true for,
> many other kinds of play as well…probably just if there was some more
> education and like a local group or something that would be cool.

Others noted a variety of "best practices" and getting more experience to

avoid violations of consent, mostly in terms of risky types of erotic hypnosis play to

avoid. One participant, for example, noted,

> I think inexperience makes it easier to get something wrong or hurt someone.
> There's not really a way around that besides doing stuff. There are best
> practices that I feel are pretty obvious. Don't renegotiate boundaries during a
> scene, don't renegotiate immediately after a scene, waiting until everyone is
> clear headed and sober. There's so much completely vanilla interpersonal
> power dynamics that are buried in every conversation we have every day that
> impair our ability to give consent… really fucking complicated. We can
> absolutely do better, and I think there are some clear ways we can do better.

A few also noted particular safety features present at some erotic hypnosis

conferences that also were endorsed as assisting with safety, such as consent teams

(people whose job is to investigate, mediate, and make decisions about alleged

consent violations)

> There's been a rise of consent teams that's been good…we tried to push
> conference information out ahead of time on consent….Some conferences
> have consent quizzes to take, but get people ahead of time. We make spaces-
> public spaces available…they can go into this space where people can come

and can do hypnosis where there's other people around. If it's not your regular partner of yours or your trusted partner here, use this space but there's other people who can see what's happening- try to mitigate. Like I said, you can't mitigate everything unfortunately.

While many of these practices were generally endorsed, there was still a common refrain from participants that these practices weren't a panacea.

Navigating the Experience of Specifically Fetishizing Non-Consent (90.4% of Participants)

Because the tropes involved in hypnosis often feature mind control, brainwashing, and evil corruption, it isn't surprising that some participants had fantasies involving non-consensual experiences. Because a question was asked about participant's attitudes towards consensual non-consent, the vast majority of participants discussed both the challenges and opportunities that hypnosis help for exploring these desires. Specifically, many emphasized the importance of highly detailed negotiations and safety measures, such as one participant who suggested,

> I think it depends a lot on how you plan out that consensual non-consent scene, like what it involves. I think it's definitely something where you would have a more in-depth negotiation. Because like, for example, you could have a [regular] hypnosis scene. And during that scene, somebody is saying no or something, but really means stop because it's not a part of the thing that has been set up before. Or any kind of resistance would be a sign to stop. If it's a consensual non-consent scene, resistance or verbal resistance would be not a thing that would stop this scene. So, you of course have to lay out in before everything in a more detailed way. It's also something I would never do with somebody I don't know very well because, um, all the landmines you can basically trigger upon entering such an intense scene. Yeah, like a whole lot of landmines you can step on if something like that you want to know about before. So, it definitely is a more extensive negotiation.

Similarly, some participants talked about the difficulty of engaging in consensual non-consent play with people whom they were engaged in a romantic

relationship. One participant explained some of his discomfort in navigating his

partner's fantasies of having their consent violated by saying,

> Initially of course it involves a heck of a lot of discussion and conversation. I mean… we're both similar in terms of, you know, we like spreadsheets, we like to put things on paper. There's a need sometimes for, you know, the validation of seen and written material. So yes… we discuss it to death because we're exploring all kinds of iterations. I mean I can come close to some of those fantasies but say, "Alright, let me take a half step back." One of the hangups is that neither one of us wants to cause harm to the relationship. It's always kind of hard when you get into those kinds of areas of you know feeling violated and stuff it's always hard to separate your feelings from that person and then doing something that's clearly out of character or something that is inconsistent I guess with the relationship. Now there are ways around it in terms of okay you can imagine that I'm somebody else, that I'm this masked attacker, but again those are the kinds of things that I would not do without talking about it specifically.

For some participants, they delighted in playing with non-consensual themes

involving lengthy, elaborate scenes to create a sense of complete helplessness. One

participant discussed how they navigated their experience of fetishizing non-consent

by describing a scene they deeply enjoyed,

> Ok so this particular scene was during my 5-to-6-year relationship. [Pause] It had been a 24/7 D/S dynamic for some time. They're a pretty sadistic top. It was long-distance, so a lot of the sadism was emotional. Things got intense enough that they were worried about lasting trauma from this. So basically, they did this thing where they would walk me through creating a personality that they could just use as a disposable torture doll. Then when the scene was over, I would wake up and have these really fucked up memories that weren't mine. That I could just kind of enjoy as something that happened to someone else. For this particular scene, the scenario we constructed had the 2 of us not in a relationship. We were roommates and I fucking hated them. All of the hooks they had in my head, the instinctive, conditioned obedience, was still there. We just kind of played out them, revealing that to me and me getting increasingly fucking terrified as they explained what happened and what they were going to do to me. I begged and I begged to be let go. At one point, this fictional person had a boyfriend. I offered to bring them my boyfriend if they just let me go because he's more useful than I am. He'll be more fun so you can just let me go. The cops won't believe me. That sort of thing. Of course,

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they just strung me along and dashed my hopes repeatedly. This was shortly after they finally got me to trigger an orgasm on command. So, the bigger end of the scene was them just breaking me using that. It was also the moment I realized that orgasm trigger is extremely effective torture if used like 40 times in 5 minutes. I was extremely sore and cramped. It was intense. I ended up begging for death before the scene was over. It's great, horrible at the time, but in hindsight, wonderful.

Some participants also talked about fetishizing non-consent as a way to feel empowered following actual real-life consent violations. One participant described her internal psychological dynamic by characterizing it as:

It turns me on [laughs]… sometimes I think that it makes actual bad stuff that happened in my life, like it gives a little bit of a distance to it, or I can think of it like, "Oh it was horrible!" I mean... something bad happens to me that being able to be like "Okay, but it could also be sexy." Sometimes it almost feels like revenge, like "You did this to me, and I felt really helpless, but I'm gonna get off on it." …Say like when you're scared of something, and you make fun of it like that helps a little bit. It feels a little bit that way.

In this category, people related to non-consensual fantasies in a variety of ways, and many of the participants reiterated the importance of detailed consent practices, especially for a scene involving non-consensual themes, but despite detailed consent practices, many continued to note the high risk involved in erotic hypnosis.

The Risks Around Hypnosis are Easy to Manage (50.6% of Participants)

About half of the participants in the sample contended that hypnosis was a relatively low-risk practice, or that allegations of hypnosis being used to violate people's consent were overblown or overpoliced. Notably, many of the participants in this category also fell into the category of the "Risks Around Hypnosis are Difficult to Manage", indicating that often, there were some aspects of hypnosis perceived as

risky, and other aspects perceived as safe. People often expressed conflicting and complex views regarding consent, and the stories in this category attempt to represent these other, often more conflicted viewpoints.

Hypnosis is a Safe Practice (30.1% of Participants)

Unlike discussions of erotic hypnosis that focused on risk and risk mitigation, some participants also noted that erotic hypnosis is an especially safe kink practice. For some, it was identified as safe because of a belief in the ability of a person who is in trance to wake up in the event their consent is violated. One participant remarked,

> I would advise them to the wive's tale that I like the most. There's no actual study really that proves this really like the wive's tale that called "all hypnosis is self-hypnosis". At the very least, I like it because of the rhyme and because of the fact that it can be very easily used as a mantra but it's great because what it does is it strengthens your agency. It stands as a reminder that nobody can actually take away your free will. Ultimately at the end of the day you are in complete control of yourself, of your mind, of your agency and what you want to do or not. And just kind of having that as a truth within you cemented within you is honestly enough to wake me up every time that I feel that there's something I'm uncomfortable with. It happens as a reflex because I've kind of repeated it so many times to myself so I think that's the advice that I would give to people.

Others emphasized the safety of hypnosis compared to the physical danger posed by other kink activities. One participant noted the relative safety of a simulated gangbang in hypnosis over an in-person gangbang in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

> Once you find somebody that you have faith in and that you can trust that that is a great way to start to experience some of the riskier things that you may be curious about, while also keeping you relatively safe, because I like some edgy stuff…. In a post Covid-19 world, there will be no gang bangs, but I can call up my friend and have one with permission any time I want to.

One participant put it succinctly when asked what one message they would

want the world to know about erotic hypnosis: "It is harmless and possibly very hot."

Consent Violations are Overblown and Overpoliced (28.9% of Participants)

While most of the participants noted the risks and difficulty with policing consent

seen in the community, a smaller proportion of participants expressed frustration with

the overpolicing of consent, or the extent of what they perceived as false consent

violation allegations. One participant used a metaphor of crime to describe their

frustration with the consent policing system in the community:

> You're going to find that you have two extremes. And we still haven't gotten
> through that, right? So, you have a traffic violation of consent, and you have a
> manslaughter of consent, right?..There's these major, major extremes. And
> right now, if you had the traffic violation, you could get banned in this
> community. You could get a really bad rep. Just because you did something
> stupid by accident. Versus rape, right? So, the community still needs to work
> that out. And we're trying to address that as we can. It's a very eggshell topic.
> It's hard to maneuver that without causing friction, right? Because there are
> the people out there that are like, 'this is bad'. Well, yeah, but, you know,
> maybe you touched somebody the wrong way, or you kissed somebody, and
> you really shouldn't have. Right? Versus things you really shouldn't have
> done at all. Right? You could go to jail for what you just did. Right? So.

For this participant, they feel there is a lack of granularity to the way in which

consent violation allegations are policed, with minor accidental consent violations

being treated similarly to extreme, deliberate consent violations. Others expressed a

belief that the lack of granularity applied to community beliefs about the extent to

which people's consent can be impaired by hypnosis,

> A lot of people say, "Well, if you are intoxicated whether that's drugs or
> alcohol or fractionation [repeatedly going in and out of hypnotic trance] you
> can't consent." Right?! And then where do people draw the line? Like you've
> had one drink and you still can? You've been fractionated but it's been an
> hour, can you consent? whereas personal like knowing yourself and being

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like, well actually me having a glass of wine, doesn't mean that I'm unable, I'm impaired.

A small number of participants also expressed dismay at outright false consent violation allegations existing in the community, with one participant emphasizing that an accusation was lobbed against them about violating a person's consent at a conference they didn't event attend,

> And then you get the idea of "it's hearsay, we're gonna side with the victim as opposed to the other one". And then you're like, "well, I've got no leg to stand on here because I don't have anything showing yeah they agreed to this."…Most of the time when there's a false accusation its false accusation with someone saying this happened at this and this date when in fact this person was in, A DIFFERENT STATE AT THE TIME [*emphasis in original*], and this person just happens to be best friends with your ex…! So, you get a little bit of stuff there. And the circumstances are really few and far between. The only way to cover yourself is, documentation. Documentation. Documentation. Documentation. I can't say it enough. Documentation. Writing stuff down, having things dated, having everyone agree 100% to the terms.

Good Consent Practices Aren't a Monolith (34.9% of Participants)

In contrast with participants who endorsed the "best practices" for consent, some participants noted that good consent practices might look different for different types of play, lengths of relationship, experience level of players, and situations. For instance, one participant expressed skepticism at the potential for a single good standard of consent that won't result in potential harm,

> I think consent in general is pretty complicated. People talk about enthusiastic consent being the standard for things but a lot of the best kinky experiences I had, I consented not because I'm enthusiastic, but because I'm curious. I think people put too much emphasis on the "yes" before things happen and not enough on ways of ensuring that consent is still there as the scene goes on. There are safe words but those aren't great risk mitigation because a lot of the time, when someone is having an abreaction or something is going poorly, it takes time for them to realize that something is wrong. That's definitely the

case for me. At that point, if things are going bad enough, it might be hard to verbalize that things are going wrong. I don't know if there's a good, single, standard for this that won't result in some people getting hurt. I don't say that to let people who have hurt people off the hook.

Others drew on the different acronym-based standards of consent used in mainstream BDSM to draw an analogy to more and less risky practices in erotic hypnosis, noting that different standards might work better for more and less experienced people.

> I think that when I'm in a community seeing that they are aware of the nuance of ethics and seeing that they are aware of the nuance of consent. Especially when we get to more dubious forms of consent because a lot of hypno play is dubious consent. As long as they are aware of that, and they understand it's more like Risk-Aware Consensual than really Safe Sane and Consensual all the time, I can feel relatively safe, because for me if I go into a community and they immediately advocate something as a 100% a certain way, that is a red flag to me…There is really no way especially with something like hypnosis, obviously there are lighter ways of practicing it which can be completely safe, sane and consensual, but once you get into people especially people who have more years of experience who are doing deeper things, you always have to be risk-aware. So as long as I see that a community is willing to admit that there might be risk but that they are taking as many resources as possible to try to mitigate those risks I feel safe.

Others talked about how consent practices have to look differently in longer-term relationships than when negotiating for a single scene of erotic hypnosis activity.

> I think it does become a lot more complicated when it is like a long-term relationship and you're really--you're wanting, like, um long-term, like, changes. Things that will be ongoing from session to session. Um, like if you're negotiating with someone for a one-off session you can sort of say-- you can negotiate in the sense that, "we will only do this" like I have--nothing will be ongoing after this session. And provided they stick to that and everything it's a lot more straightforward, but I think in terms of longer term play, you really do have to communicate a lot more frequently and just in a lot more depth about, um, like are you okay with everything that is happening. And I think because like of the concepts and things that can come up and the usual like you not remembering what's happening like--you know, you have

to be still okay, you know the person has to be okay with not remembering, they have to be okay that the thing they don't remember has happened.

Overall, participant viewpoints about consent and safety, though united in the importance of community and healthy communication, often differed based on the perceived level of risk and approaches towards managing consent in the community. These conflicts were sometimes predicated upon the challenge of having a single appropriate standard of consent, and power dynamics within the community. These conflicts may be especially challenging given that perception among many participants that erotic hypnosis often inherently involves fetishizing non-consent.

Results: Disability, Neurodivergence, Health, and Therapy

To explore and construct themes around experiences related to disability, health, and therapy, two coders, composed of myself (who has a past history of diagnosis with adjustment disorder (not otherwise specified), and depression) and a research assistant (who has a physical disability) conducted a reflexive thematic analysis as described above in the Method section on a subset of the entire interview dataset. The subset was selected based on participants who had made any reference to disability, neurodivergence, medical treatment, therapy, trauma, and the management of physical and mental disorder symptoms. To operationalize those references, the two coders analyzed only portions of the dataset which had been content-coded into at least one of the following 25 categories (For detailed definitions and examples of each content code, see Appendix E):

1) Disability

2) Mental Health/Mental Disability/Neurodivergence

3) Anxiety and Stress

4) Gender Dysphoria

5) ADHD

6) Insomnia

7) ADD

8) Bipolar Disorder

9) Borderline Personality Disorder

10) PTSD, Trauma

11) Sexual Dysfunction

12) Dissociative Identity Disorder

13) Autism-Spectrum Identities and Disorders

14) Therapy, Mental Health Treatment and Care

15) Physical Health, Physical Disability

16) Blindness or Visual Impairment

17) Cancer

18) Deafness or Hard of Hearing

19) Traumatic Brain Injury

20) Chronic Pain, Chronic Pain Disorders, Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue
    Syndrome, Migraines

21) Obesity, Overweight

22) Mobility concerns

23) Healing from Trauma

24) Hypnosis Helps Manage Mental Illnesses, Mental Disorders, and Stress

25) Hypnosis Helps Manage Physical Illnesses and Disabilities

While most of these content codes simply identified a wide variety of disorders, disabilities, and health concerns, importantly, the final two categories, though developed originally as content codes, seemed to also act as coherent sub-themes in and of themselves, so ended up being merged into a single sub-theme (i.e., 1.a, see list of themes below) by both coders independently during the first round of thematic analysis. The results of our thematic analysis yielded four themes, with six

sub-themes, all of which will be described in detail below, with several examples of each:

1) The Overlap between Erotic Hypnosis and Therapy

    a. Erotic Hypnosis Helps Manage and Alleviate Disability Symptoms

    b. Eroticizing Disability and Therapeutic Intervention

2) Disabilities and Ableism Interfere with Participation in Erotic Hypnosis

3) Erotic Hypnosis as a Mental Health Challenge

    a. Erotic Hypnosis can be Risky for Mental Health

    b. Minority Stressors Around Erotic Hypnosis Result in Negative Mental Health Outcomes

4) Erotic Hypnosis as a Welcoming Space for People with Disabilities

    a. Neurodivergent People are Both Common Among and Especially Apt for Erotic Hypnosis Practices and Community

    b. The Erotic Hypnosis Community is Inclusive and Accessible for People with Disabilities

The Overlap between Erotic Hypnosis and Therapy (89.2% of Participants)

Nearly all of the participants acknowledged that there was some relationship between erotic hypnosis and therapy, either by identifying erotic hypnosis as being therapeutic, being introduced to hypnosis via hypnotherapy, talking about the relationship between being certified as a hypnotherapist and erotic hypnosis, or developing erotic fantasies about therapy itself. To keep these examples organized, in this first section, I will focus on participant discussions of this overlap between

therapy and erotic hypnosis that did not fall into the two sub-themes in this category

(see the subsections below for discussion of sub-themes).

Some participants talked about their interest in erotic hypnosis originating in

an interest in hypnotherapy and the use of hypnosis for non-erotic, personal

development purposes. In this way, their interest in hypnotherapy acted as a stepping

stone to their later interest in erotic hypnosis. For instance, one participant detailed

how a high-school health class sparked their interest,

> …[R]eally the point where I got interested in it was I had to do a research
> paper for health class, and one of the selected topics that we could choose
> from was hypnosis. And I was like woah that's a super interesting topic and I
> was really hoping that no one would take it and then I was super happy that I
> got it! And then when I was talking to friends afterwards, they were like "I
> didn't really care for that" and I was like "what why not? It's such an
> interesting topic!" and just learning more about it, learning how it is used and,
> how studies have been done using it, it just piqued my interest and then as I
> kind of mentioned before I eventually started looking into using it for anxiety
> and self-motivation.

For other participants, it was an experiential interest in non-erotic, therapeutic

hypnosis rather than an academic one that first stirred their curiosity. One participant

details their experience with a hypnotherapeutic YouTube video,

> The first experience I had was via a YouTube channel that another friend of
> mine had set up for this thing because they have a discord server where they
> do these sort of live hypnotic things…I remember in particular it was a video
> related to stress relief…at the time I was very stressed about something or
> other, so I was like, "Oh they have a video about stress relief so I'll just go
> ahead and listen to this and try to destress… [T]hat was not erotic. That was
> just me trying to de-stress, trying to be calm and just enjoy.

Some participants described the overlap between erotic hypnosis and therapy

by talking about how hypnotherapeutic skills and frameworks help to serve as a basis

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for erotic hypnosis play in recreational settings. One participant, for example,

explained,

> …[Y]ou say frameworks for kink, but they're barely kinky frameworks. They're largely like, hypnotic therapy frameworks. I understand that we're a really young community and as for our resources, up until ten years ago, we have the two genders: therapy, and stage performance. And that's where we're getting everything from.

In this quote, the participant uses the phrase "the two genders" to satirically

analogize thinking about hypnosis only in therapy and stage performance terms while

ignoring its other applications and contexts to conceptualizing gender as only men

and women. In doing so, they note both the ways in which resources for the

community are heavily oriented around these contexts, while also drawing attention

to a lack of resources from outside these contexts, similarly to how many non-binary

people initially experience a lack of resources and cultural scripts for what it means to

be non-binary (McDonald, 2021).

One participant discussed working as a volunteer, recreational hypnotherapist,

with an interest in hypnosis surrounding helping people with a variety of health

problems. The described practicing for three years without realizing there were

potentially erotic applications to hypnosis,

> Well I was doing it more with the intent of helping people and so I was telling people to lose weight, stop smoking it was kinda stuff that I was kinda doing for free like on the side and then I got exposed to how many people were actually doing [erotic hypnosis] and I was like wow that's a lot of people out there….I guess I had no idea how many different applications there were for hypnosis on the erotic side. I mean just a ton of stuff you can do and to this day I have yet to find a lifestyle interest that I can't do with hypnosis because it just doesn't exist. It was very eye opening.

Several other participants identified as hypnotherapists and emphasized both the challenge and importance of keeping their hypnotherapeutic work and erotic hypnosis work separate from one another, with varying degrees of success. One participant who had an erotic hypnosis interest prior to becoming a hypnotherapist reflected on this potentially challenge,

> I got certified as a hypnotherapist, and that was one of the big things I had been thinking. "Can I do that without relating to some kind of erotic sensation?" Because that would be bad. Like you shouldn't do that at all. But when you start doing hypnosis in a different context, I feel like it's really easy to disassociate from the idea. Especially in a more like therapeutic environment, because then you're dealing with people that are coming to you with real struggles and things. And then like, if you're still having some kind of erotic connection with that, you're doing it wrong…So yeah, I feel it's really easy.

A few participants talked about choosing to avoid playing with people with more severe mental disorders specifically because they lacked hypnotherapy or other clinical training, and were concerned about potentially causing harm from their lack of experience,

> I usually watch for people like, if they have any kind of signs of mental health disorders. Some people, they develop a hypnosis fetish and notice because they have multiple personality disorder [sic]. And while bringing him to trance, I'll discover if someone has multiple personalities, and sexual abuse. So, I'll usually, if I find that, I'll bring someone back out of trance. Initially I would tell people that, and then I discovered that it really shattered some people, telling them what I found, cause they didn't like it. They didn't know they had multiple personalities. And it really put them into mental health crisis. So, I stopped doing that…And then I usually suggest like they, they might want to see, seek counseling. I'll get them to talk about other things in their life that might've caused that, and then suggest that they might want to seek counseling, because I'm not at all prepared to give that type of therapy to a person. That's happened about three or four times now, where I've found that.

One participant talked about the potentially significant professional

consequences faced by some hypnotherapists who are discovered to also do erotic

hypnosis recreationally, detailing an early prominent member of the community who

was banned from the National Guild of Hypnotists for organizing an erotic hypnosis

conference,

> Back in the day we had pretty much professional organizations doing
> conventions. [Organizer name redacted] had been doing a Yahoo group called
> "Society for Experiential Trance" and they wanted a hypnosis convention
> which went above and beyond the very staid professional. Pretty much
> anything involved with hypnosis was accepted. There was a panel with I
> believe at least three or four hypno doms known there. And there was myself,
> a few other people who were pretty much two-thirds of the names of the
> community….In the aftermath of that, because I mentioned the professional
> organizations, [Organizer name redacted] got booted from the NGH and they
> said, "well screw that I don't belong at all."…So there were repercussions.
> Just the people who met there and of course [Organizer name redacted] going
> "oh we can do this too, why hasn't anyone thought of this before?" This really
> started our community…. There are a number of people in our community
> who are professionals and some of them have gone to great lengths to be a
> part of a professional organization which will turn on them for having uh
> unorthodox practices…And this would be one of them. Also, there is a very
> strong public misinterpretation or misperception of hypnosis…I take very
> great pains to try to make sure that, you know, understand that there are
> certain circumstances where we don't want to get the law involved because it
> just opens up the bigger can of worms.

The stigma around doing erotic hypnosis even led some participants to

selectively disclose their involvement with family members, freely sharing their

interest and certification in hypnotherapy with others, while keeping their erotic

hypnosis interests secret. One described disclosing to their mother when they quit

their job to do hypnosis full-time,

> I ended up getting certified through the NGH (National Guild of Hypnotists)
> and the NCBH (National Council for Behavioral Health). After I did those
> certifications, she was like "Oh, it's serious." I was like "Yes, it's serious".

When it comes to erotic stuff, we don't discuss that. I tell her about the vanilla stuff that I do. I tell her about the conferences I teach at. I tell her about all of the fun stuff I get to do, but we don't go into details about anything erotic. And I think that's kind of the middle ground that we've settled on. My nan doesn't hold back. My nan knows all about BDSM [laughing] and all kinds of erotic hypnosis. Even stuff she doesn't want to know, I'm like "You know what Nan, you're open to it, so I'm gonna tell you".

That same participant went on to talk about how they differentiated their paid

erotic hypnosis work from their paid hypno-therapeutic work and being relatively

open in their hypnotherapeutic professional organization about it. Critically, in

contrast with the stories of being banned from the National Guild of Hypnotists, this

participant talked about how their hypnosis board in New Zealand was substantially

more accepting, allowing them to find a helpful balance between their erotic and

therapeutic work,

I have a Patreon where I do erotic hypnosis and I have my YouTube channel where I dabble in certain erotic flavors, but it's not explicitly erotic. I also do self-help audio and therapy sessions when people want them. It's kind of been the thing of like "Okay, I do this, and I do this, but I don't do them together ". [one hand up, then the other hand up, then intermingling the fingers] … My YouTube channel is a melting pot of self-help hypnosis and also more fun, almost stagey, with a little bit of a BDSM edge to it. I think for people, if they find my work, they know I do both. I'm not shy about saying, "Look, I came from the erotic hypnosis community. This is what I know. This is what I love. But I also do this. I'm qualified to do this." It's funny, because when I did my first face-to-face session with somebody, I thought "Ah, they're going to ask me to dominate them. This is going to be a BDSM thing." It wasn't. It turned out to be some basic, "Hey, can you help me trance?" kind of almost hypno-therapy style stuff. So, I felt super-duper prepared for that, even though I wasn't expecting it. For me, it's been no problem. Actually, recently, I got in contact with the local membership for the local hypno-therapy board for this country. They were putting together a list of files for Covid-19 relief. They said "Hey, we're looking for people who make audio" and I was like "I make audio, I could throw something in there". So, I threw in a couple files and said "Hey, this is who I am. This is what I do. Here are some files. I'm qualified to do this. I have qualifications in it. Have a look." They messaged me back and said "We love this. We just saw your YouTube channel and we love this".

And I was like "Holy shit". I know that in other countries they're not as open as that, but to see that they're open here was super refreshing.

The overlap between erotic and therapeutic hypnosis was so strong for some people, that it played a central role in life decisions around careers, with many participants getting certified in hypnosis as a way to build their erotic hypnosis skills. One participant described how their life would have likely panned out entirely differently if they had developed their interest in erotic hypnosis earlier in life,

Had I started at eighteen, truthfully, I probably would have had a totally different life and career path, cause I probably would have gone into hypnotherapy as a career. I would have gone beyond the erotic and sought it out as a career and you'd be talking to me as a practicing hypnotherapist, versus what I actually do for a living.

Despite the substantial overlap between therapy and erotic hypnosis, many participants took the time to argue that while erotic hypnosis had therapeutic benefits, it should still not be used as a substitute for therapy or considered therapy in and of itself. One participant, for instance, noted,

…[K]ink is not therapy. Hypnosis is not therapy…[A]nyone responsible will keep saying it till they're dead, but the fact is playing with hypnosis kink is definitely going to cross over with mental health. And it's not even in full, it happens pretty fast. Very soon, when you start playing with it and start navigating and reaching into it. So I would say that has someone with— obviously it's going to matter a lot more for the bottoms and the subjects, but also as a top and as a dominant, there's still a lot to learn from, and there's also certain neuro-divergencies that I have that I can use to relate to certain problems and subjects and submissives. And I would say that has been powerful and beneficial both to myself and to those who I have played with.

Along similar lines, another participant who was a hypnotist noted the perils of trying to assist people with hypnosis without having any mental health training, regretting the fact they did not refer them to a mental health professional. When asked

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whether their erotic hypnosis interests had caused any problems or challenges for the

participant, they responded,

> A fair number actually. Mostly due to working with other people and fighting
> off abreactions and in a lot of the deprogramming that I've done - I've taken
> on a lot of emotional burdens of other people in doing deprogramming and in
> listening to other people's experiences and in struggling sometimes vainly to
> help them when I really should have sent them to a mental health professional.

While many of these stories varied, all focused on the complicated interplay

between erotic hypnosis and therapy. While this section focused heavily on formal,

professional hypnotherapy, the vast majority of the content in this category focused

on the ways in which erotic hypnosis specifically served therapeutic purposes,

detailed in the subtheme below.

Erotic Hypnosis Helps Manage and Alleviate Disability and Disorder Symptoms

(84.3% of Participants)

Participants identified an incredible variety of conditions that they found

erotic hypnosis to be helpful in managing and alleviating. These included both

physical and psychological conditions. Importantly, while many of the claims made

in this section by participants are causal, it is important to remember that these claims

detail only the lived experiences and perceptions of causality held by participants.

Evidence to justify many of these claims as evidence of actual causation would need

considerably more careful controls, and ideally, experimental manipulation, in order

to verify their efficacy beyond a placebo effect. While substantial evidence of that

type exists for clinical hypnotherapeutic interventions for some conditions and

symptoms (Flammer & Bongartz, 2003b), many of the conditions identified have not

been examined experimentally, and none have been formally tested in the erotic

hypnosis context. Stress and anxiety-related conditions were by far the most

commonly identified conditions in which participants talked about the benefits of

erotic hypnosis, but some participants talked about erotic uses of hypnosis for pain

management, sometimes related to chronic pain, such as fibromyalgia, and other

times related to direct physically traumatic injury. One participant, for instance,

described how both BDSM practices, eroticism, and hypnosis became intertwined as

a way to overcome and transcend physical pain. (Note: this story was told over two

separate parts of the interview, so the order of quotations has been intermixed to help

assist with clarifying the timeline),

> I had been in three major auto accidents… I was rear-ended 3 times. And,
> long story short, it led to a series of back surgeries, I had 4 back surgeries.
> And I experience chronic pain, this goes back to 1995… I still had pain then
> and I hadn't started the hypnotist part yet, so I got involved with BDSM
> community… I think I tried almost every possible thing you could do in a
> dungeon short of kneel - I never did want to do that part. But rope tying,
> getting tied up, spankings, role play, just everything. I was like a sponge; it
> was so much fun. But I figured out, well, this stuff also involves pain…[S]o
> after four surgeries and procedures and injections and medication and
> narcotics and every other thing that they can do to you, I thought hypnosis, I -
> I knew nothing about it so I sought out a professional, a licensed professional
> that does you know he's a clinical hypnotist… about 2 years I worked with
> him. So that's how I got into the hypnosis and the main reason I did it was to
> try to deal with pain in an alternative format and it largely worked. It was
> really successful. So, I did that until I stumbled—until I put 2 and 2 together
> and went off into the EH [erotic hypnosis] world… I'm getting hypnotism for
> pain, to get out of pain, yet I go to this dungeon and get into situations where
> it's painful. And I thought well, if I could take the pain part away and do it all
> in my mind, there won't be any physical pain and I could applaud the same
> effort. So that's how that transcended, and it was pretty cool…It was - it was
> really cool. It was more like you know I was sitting in this clinical office
> basically and you know your thoughts are very private so I was thinking wow
> this could be used sexually somehow - there's some kind of sexual
> connotation here that - that - how would that work? I didn't dare ask the

clinician, it was, you know, it would be like an embarrassing question. But I - I thought ahh I bet you - this might work somehow, might just work. It does.

Several participants also noted that hypnosis was a helpful mechanism for dealing with gender dysphoria. One participant, for instance, talked about it as a useful coping mechanism early in their life.

> I was in probably 7th or 8th grade and I found the news groups, the alt-sex stories news groups, and many of the subgroups there. I don't know when I first found those, I wasn't looking for anything in particular, I was just exploring. But I discovered an interest in gender erotica, gender play, cross-dressing, and that sort of thing. Hypnosis would crop up as "hypnotize someone into being the other gender". I didn't realize then that that was dysphoria or me being trans that made that connection resonate, but in retrospect, I wasn't looking for that when I found it, but that's why I kept reading it…It wasn't something I was conscious of. It was "I enjoy this" and it was only after coming out and accepting that I was trans was I like "Oh, that was probably me managing dysphoria" because it's hypnosis sort of in the direction of being trans, or transition, specifically. So that way, I suspect I was scratching that "itch", even though I wasn't conscious that "itch" was gender dysphoria.

For others, erotic hypnosis was constructed as a "safer" experience for helping to recover from traumatic experience, notably because it was primarily psychological rather than physical. One participant, for instance, detailed how erotic hypnosis helped him to feel sexually safe following a traumatizing former Domination/submission relationship:

> …[M]y last master had mental health issues, and went into a spiral of methamphetamine addiction, and the end was messy. And it wasn't just messy for me. It was messy for a whole lot of other people I know that I care about, and he's not a bad guy. He just went down a bad rabbit hole, and he's still unfortunately in that rabbit hole. I'm reluctant to put myself in that physical danger position again, and that was emotionally, that emotionally really fucked me up and, I had some time to recover from that emotional damage. I can go to some of those spaces safely with erotic hypnosis when, I've been damaged by going to those places physically.

Others noted that the assistance erotic hypnosis played with coping with trauma and abuse was helpful not only for processing the trauma afterwards, but also as a healthy way to engage in distraction as a defense mechanism while the trauma was still happening. One participant, for instance, recounted her use of erotic hypnosis mp3 files, downloaded from the internet, when trying to cope with her abusive parents.

> …[I]t's really funny because I've dealt with a lot of, a lot more trauma in a very positive setting through erotic hypnosis than I have in a formal hypnotherapy setting… I think that trance helped me get through the biggest hurdles in my abuse. Mainly because, for the longest time, my parents would try to take away any form of control from me. One of the things that they did was they took away any form of sanctuary that I could find. Like, going outside, being with friends. They isolated me. Or if I went online, they would shut off my Internet. And the thing that I could do was I could download files and I could suddenly be in a safe place no matter where I was. [pause] It was a very, very positive way to get me through very, very dark times.

Similarly, another participant talked about using hypnosis to manage trauma related to abusive intimate relationships, with one participant detailing their experience with finding a forced feminization hypnosis (sometimes called sissy hypnosis or sissification hypnosis) community on a subreddit.

> Yeah, I was poking through one of the hentai sites that I used, and I found the sissy keyword that kind of worked for me and then I started googling around for that. Then I found the sissy hypno subreddit and was like oh this is a thing [laughs]. It's really well organized too; they have awards annually. It's a really well put together community as far as creating content for each other. So, it's a really easy community to lurk in. I've kind of just stuck with it if I was feeling horny and needed to have some self-play, especially when I was in the relationship, the abusive relationship where I did not want sex with that partner. It was helpful going within myself and I think hypnosis kind of helped take me out of my overthinking it.

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For this participant, the capacity for hypnosis to help them stop ruminating was a key component of what made it helpful as a distracting coping mechanism. This aligns with findings in clinical psychology on the value of distraction as beneficial when it isn't merely avoidance of the stressor (Waugh et al., 2020). In an especially extreme example, one participant even went to far as to claim that engaging in erotic hypnosis may have even saved their life when they were chronically depressed and suicidal:

> I've been depressed basically as long as I can remember, and it's been pretty severe. I'm not actively suicidal. I was a lot in my early twenties especially. Experiencing something like ego-death through hypnosis can be, it's not therapy, but therapeutic. When you're suicidal, you're not wanting to die exactly, you're wanting the pain to stop. Having just a taste of oblivion, that you can come back from afterwards, is so so nice. It's methadone for suicide, to put it flippantly.

The purported applications of erotic hypnosis for managing symptoms also extended into the realm of physical injury. One participant, who experienced a severe concussion, talked about how erotic hypnosis was helpful as part of integrating with her treatment plan.

> I had a severe concussion. I'm still recovering. But it turned out that I had cognitive issues still, but it's the support from the community afterwards that was just amazing. And hypnosis actually became a part of my rehabilitation…even the erotic side of it became a part of my rehabilitation because hypnosis is actually found to help regenerate some of the pathways in the brain. It helps reconnect and force the brain to think in ways it normally doesn't. So, all of my rehab team is like, "Whatever works to get your brain thinking, do it!"

Participants in this category detailed a wide variety of conditions that erotic hypnosis was helpful in alleviating. While, importantly, this only represents their subjective lived experience, and not strong clinical evidence of the efficacy of erotic

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hypnosis as a treatment, these types of stories may be quite relevant to existing

research on the potential benefits of altered states of consciousness and mindfulness.

Eroticizing Disability and Therapeutic Intervention **(9.6% of Participants)**

While many participants, when discussing the overlap between erotic

hypnosis and therapy, focused on the benefits of erotic hypnosis, or the complicated

relationship between formal hypnotherapeutic intervention and erotic hypnosis, a

smaller percentage talked about using concepts related to disability and therapy as

explicit sources of erotic pleasure. For many, these involved fantasies of therapists

taking advantage of patients in non-consensual ways. For instance,

> I had also read a book called "False Memory" by Dean Koontz, a really
> messed-up book, but basically a psychiatrist hypnotizes his clients using a
> cocktail and programs them to be susceptible to his wiles, and then he
> sexually assaults them at night and I was like "Holy shit, like wow." So that
> was really my first like exposure to the idea of hypnosis and sex together and
> then I realized there's probably kink around this…

For some, these fantasies involving mental health professionals "gone wrong",

were played out in extensive and elaborate ways such as one participant detailing a 3-

day BDSM scene featuring these eroticized mental health themes:

> We went to a camp with a group of people. They rented a 4H camp in the
> summer. And so, it was about thirty people, and it was clothing optional, and
> it was middle of nowhere…, the weekend theme, we called it the white ward.
> And I was a patient in a mental institution, or a hospital that had a wing that
> was where secret experiments were going on. And no one knew about it, and I
> was trapped in this hospital, and things got kind of kinky. Tied down and
> being tortured. Uh, yeah that was pretty erotic and crazy, and it was the whole
> weekend. And we did it outside, and we did it out by the lake. We did it in the
> dungeon, and in the bunk house. This was a three-day trance of sorts.

One deaf participant with a cochlear implant (a therapeutic intervention for

some deaf people that helps improve hearing function) indicated he used fantasies

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regarding his implant as a source of sexual fantasy and pleasure, around the idea of

being brainwashed surreptitiously into a robot:

> Well, having an implant is unique, you don't have any sound going into your ear and in doing so, people can be made aware of what is being said or heard. With an implant, the sound feeds directly into your inner ear and into your brain. No one would ever know if you were being controlled or being hypnotized or being trained. It is also, essentially a computer. Computers can be hacked especially when they are connected to the internet through Bluetooth.

The vulnerability of his mind to being "hacked" via the implant seemed to be

the core of this fantasy, with his implant acting as a unique vehicle for "forced"

hypnotic submission. Other participants who did not have sensory disabilities

sometimes talked about using hypnosis to make someone temporarily blind or deaf as

a source of erotic power exchange.

> Several of these times up here, we'd rent a hotel room…He generally would be here for a night, he'd fly up early in the morning and leave late in the early evening the next day and stay one night. And so, we'd spend most of the day into the evening…He was so good that I developed a whole bunch of fun things with him. Like all I have to do is say "Condition 0" and he goes into deep trance, eyes shut, everything else. "Condition 3" is continuing in trance but opening his eyes… And then there was in the middle of all that, with Condition Seven or Condition Nine, I also could pinch his earlobe and then he would not be able to hear anything either. And then when I pinched it again, then sound would return.

For this participant, the removal of the senses didn't seem to relate to deafness

as a broader identity, but instead as merely another vehicle for control. This type of

sensory play seems, in many ways, like a hypnotic approach to using a blindfold or

earplugs in a more typical BDSM scene. For other participants, they eroticized

neurodivergence not in terms of the lack of a sensory capacity, but instead by

heightening sensory capacities. For instance, one participant with synesthesia (a

condition in which sensory inputs are often mixed, such as experiencing colors with particular sounds, or sounds with particular textures), described how their synesthesia heightened their experience with a sadomasochistic erotic hypnosis scene, being struck by their partner with an implement:

> And I was tied to a table and topped by [name redacted] and I was given a suggestion that with these strikes, I would go deeper into trance. And I was so deep that I couldn't even orgasm. I've never been like that destroyed in a public space like that before and it was really, really amazing. And coming back up out of it, she was like, "watching your body become unconscious was incredible". And it was just this moment, I was just hearing those words whispered in my ear, I just came so hard. I was like, finally back up enough to orgasm and it was truly incredible…it was the first time I had a hypnotic orgasm. My orgasms: I have pretty stark synesthesia with color and texture. And I've never had had a moment where I had a yellow or an orange orgasm. Those are hypnotic orgasms for me, as it turns out, and I got that. It was like a missing puzzle piece for me. It's like that part of the color sector and I had just not been there before. And then it was there. And that was really, that was really a profound moment.

Disabilities and Ableism Interfere with Participation in Erotic Hypnosis (66.3% of Participants)

So far, many of the stories I have detailed have focused on relatively complementary and positive relationships between erotic hypnosis, therapy, and disability, but not all stories featured such harmony. For some participants, they described erotic hypnosis as being especially challenging to engage in because of disabilities they or their partners had, while others talked about ableism within the erotic hypnosis community as a key factor in their difficulty finding partners or feeling welcome in erotic hypnosis community spaces. As coders, we initially tried to differentiate between when the conflict was rooted in ableist social structures and when it was rooted in the actual mechanics of hypnosis conflicting with disability.

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These were sometimes quite difficult to differentiate, especially given existing

theoretical conflicts between the social model of disability (Oliver, 2013), in which

the challenges experienced by people with disabilities are thought of as deeply

embedded in structural barriers to thriving, rather than capacities diminished by the

disability itself (the medical model of disability) (Hughes & Paterson, 1997). Because

of the difficulty of making this judgment call, we decided to merge the two

categories, so as not to impose one model or the other on our interpretation of

participants' stories. For example, consider one participant who talked about having

both physical and mental health challenges that made it difficult to attend an erotic

hypnosis munch (a meeting of kinky people in a public place to socialize, typically a

restaurant):

> As far as like hidden disabilities, I have some mental health issues that can be
> quite challenging. And some physical health issues. The physical health issues
> have been less of an issue now because things are being online. So, I'm not
> struggling with, "Can I make it? Do I have the energy?", if have the spoons to
> make it to the munch. And the same thing with cons, like, 'am I going to have
> the spoons to make it through this con?'

On the one hand, one reading of this quotation could be that these physical

and mental health issues constitute an impairment in and of themselves, with

"spoons" referring to the limited amount of energy people with some chronic

disabilities have to allocate towards tasks in a given day (Miserandino, 2013).

Alternatively, another interpretation might be that munches and convention spaces

have been erected in such a way as they exclude people with a variety of physical and

mental health issues, because they require travel, extensive socializing, and time

(especially when they aren't conducted online). It is possible the participant could

mean either, or both interpretations. Thus, both of these interpretations have been combined together into the same category, to allow for agnosticism on our part regarding the medical vs. social model of disability. That same participant later went on to describe additional ways in which people with disabilities had been stigmatized within the erotic hypnosis community in an erotic hypnosis book:

> There are lots of people in the community that have mental health challenges, especially. I also feel there's a lot of stigma…there was some book that was kind of an introductory book for erotic hypnosis, where it said something like, "If people have mental health challenges, you shouldn't be playing with them."…I remember reading that and just feeling like, "Oh, so I guess I can never do anything ever because I have some challenges," even though I have medication and I see a therapist and all of these things, you know?

> For this participant, the blanket advice to avoid playing with people who experience mental health challenges in an erotic hypnosis introductory book felt demoralizing and stigmatizing, implying that because their mental health challenges are being addressed through formalized therapy, their access to erotic hypnosis practices should not be foreclosed by what they see as an unreasonable level of stigma. Other participants talked about hearing similar sentiments from erotic hypnosis presenters, such as one participant attending a workshop:

> As far as what we touched on the neruo-divergency thing, one other problem that I've noticed: there's some ableism among those who are neuro-typical. I recall specifically that there was a play partner of mine who was excited about doing more with it and went to one of the conventions with me. And they had their own trauma that they were going through and their own anxiety. They were worried that their anxiety would make it harder, going into deeper states. And so, I said, "That's a good question. That's a very valid question. I'm not sure. I don't have all the answers myself; why don't you come to the munch and bring that up? And other people can respond too." and they did… [Someone] spoke up and said you know, "Well, if someone is having that kind of problem, why would you even play with a person like that?" and I just watched my play partner, you could see the whole body get sad, their head

goes down. Like what the fuck!? That was not okay! That's exclusionist and if someone actually knows themself and wants to overcome one of their issues to be able to have fun like this, why would you just come out and shame them for having this thing that they're already seeking help and wanting to understand how to get past so they can have fun like everyone else? It just it was such a know-it-all and snobbish answer that it just rubbed me the wrong way. And in this society today, they're combating mental health [problems] better than ever before, but at the same time there are still those that hold onto the traditional mindset and mental health is still a stigma. And especially when playing with a kink that is literally about the mind! [sighs] That was just one example I've seen plenty of other examples. It needs to be understood that I firmly believe that there is no thing as "neuro-typical". There are those who have somewhat less divergencies than others, but no one--no two people are the same. We need to understand that everyone is going to have certain things that they struggle with, and some are going to find it much easier. And that does not mean that certain people cannot be played with or should be excluded or should be treated any differently than simply, other than you know, from your negotiation to understand what to avoid, what your do's are, what your don'ts are.

These "do's" and "don'ts" were mentioned by other participants as well, whose mental or physical health needs required adaptations for how to do hypnosis safely. For those with past experiences of psychological harm, such as trauma stemming from abuse, they often talked about having to be careful and take precautions to avoid and handle potential abreactions (Bob, 2007) when working with erotic hypnosis, especially as a hypnotic subject. One participant, for example, described the consequences of their traumatic background as:

> It requires real awareness in terms of falling into hypnotic states. [It] certainly makes me more wary of who I would do such a thing with. It needs to be someone who knows me well enough that if some kind of memory gets triggered or anything like that, that they understand how to bring me out… That is why I sort of limit the scope of engagement to smaller numbers of people, because I would not, you know, I know friends who've gone to conventions and just gone up on a stage and been hypnotized by somebody. And that's not a thing that I could do just because of the trauma background.

For this participant, the need for precautions made it difficult to engage in community practices that are more impromptu and casual, out of concern for triggering their past trauma, making it psychologically unsafe. Others talked about needing to modify the specific hypnotic techniques used to accommodate their disabilities not out a concern for safety, but instead to get the hypnotic techniques to work, such as one participant with a traumatic brain injury. That participant talked about needing to teach hypnotists how to do hypnosis on them in light of how their brain processes trance, as well as experiencing interpersonal rejection as a result of their disability:

> I kind of explain that you have to be very specific with suggestions, you can't ramble on and on for a while because my brain will get overloaded. With inductions, you can use multiple inductions, but you can't use multiple inductions at the same time. Overload inductions are very bad [laughs] my brain will go kaput. I know what works. I know what doesn't work. There are people that have said "no" to playing with me, and I take that in stride. That's their right. That's something that they're not comfortable with, and that is ok. I'd rather them say "no", that they're not comfortable, than say "yes" and do something that they're uncomfortable with.

> Others talked about explicitly experiencing initial rejection and skepticism

from erotic hypnosis partners as a result of their disability status. One blind participant, for instance, explained:

> There are some people that take a bit of a step back when they find out that I am actually blind, but I usually say to them, I say, "Look, it's your choice to step back if you want to. I won't hold it against you. I'm talking to your voice. What does it really matter that I can't see?" and most of them will tend to stop and say, "Uhh, good point actually," and some of them have said, "Actually, it might be an advantage," and I'm like, "Well, you'll have to find out [**Sam** chuckles]. That's the joy."

Similarly, one deaf participant talked about experiencing initial rejection because they don't do voice-based erotic hypnosis, and instead relied on text-based erotic hypnosis.

> I must admit it's challenging because I know many tists and subjects prefer voice hypnosis. Many had turned me down. So, my opportunities are limited. But I learned to appreciate what I get. Lately I see some tists are willing to make it work. I see small improvements. Some subjects who turned me down, came back and wanted to try with text.

Even for participants for whom erotic hypnosis was helpful in managing their disability symptoms, their disabilities still sometimes functioned as a barrier to participation in erotic hypnosis. For instance, one participant talked about their fear and pre-emptive guilt around their perception that managing their ADHD would be a burden on potential erotic hypnosis-oriented partners, despite erotic hypnosis being helpful to them.

> Yeah. I have extremely severe ADHD, the inattentive variety… That makes it hard to reach out and engage with people proactively. That makes it hard to form connections, especially online. Time and scheduling are very difficult for me, which makes dates hard. I don't know if there are any challenges specific to hypnosis as a result of this. Honestly, it's like the only thing I've experienced that can really quiet my brain down. So, it's pretty useful for coping with that. But then, that's a lot of responsibility to put on top: "I need you to manage my disability for me," you know? I don't want to rope someone into being my full-time caretaker. That's not fair. So as much as I want that and the benefits are really useful for me, it's also something I can't directly pursue without hurting anyone.

Erotic Hypnosis as a Mental Health Challenge (62.7% of Participants)

The majority of participants interviewed noted that their interest and/or participation in erotic hypnosis came as a potential challenge to their mental health. For most of these participants, they noted the challenges *internal* to erotic hypnosis,

such as the potential for negative after-effects on their mental health, or the risk of an abreaction (see below). However, about 1/3 of the participants in this category noted that the challenges to their mental health came from sources *external* to erotic hypnosis, such as societal stigma around their erotic hypnosis, and the stresses of concealing their interest from others. These stressors, in alignment with minority stress theory, seemed to be another prevalent concern.

Erotic Hypnosis can be Risky for Mental Health (57.8% of Participants)

Unlike the previous category, in which participants focused on how existing disabilities could create barriers for engaging with the erotic hypnosis community, many participants talked about the potential mental health risks of erotic hypnosis even if it didn't make them less likely to engage in erotic hypnosis. Many of these stories focused on negative experiences with erotic hypnosis in which they experienced an abreaction or feared creating an abreaction. For instance, one participant talked about developing a phobia as a result of erotic hypnosis:

> I did have an abreaction once, and it's stupid… Because I was frenzying, we were trying to put that frenzy in a box in my mind and close it so that I can open it when it's appropriate. But when I went to open that box, it opened a fear of dinosaurs… I have dreams over and over, nightmares about dinosaurs…It was a relatively bad abreaction.

In this case, by "frenzying", the participant refers to "sub-frenzy", an experience common to submissives who are new to kink involving the experience of an intense and frantic desire to try out a wide variety of kink activities in quick succession (Walker & Kuperberg, 2022). Sometimes considered to be the kinky version of the "kid-in-a-candy-store" feeling, frenzy can be risky for people who

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aren't taking sufficient precautions and time to recover and can lead to burnout.

However, in this instance, the participant described their partner's attempt to manage

their frenzy with erotic hypnosis which led to negative mental health consequences

(although comparatively mild). On the more severe end, some participants talked

about the intensity of 24/7 Domination/submission-based erotic hypnosis-oriented

relationships being so extreme that processing through their breakup and the removal

of hypnotic suggestions caused severe psychological distress, with one participant

recounting:

> …[A]fter the breakup. It was a 24/7 D/S dynamic. There was a lot of long-standing conditioning that I was attached to. I was not letting go. It was very, very hard for me. [Pause] My ex and I broke up on good terms, but they offered to do as many sessions of deprogramming as I needed. [Pause] There was only one and it was excruciating. [Pause] I had sort of come to see them as the center of my life and we played a lot with emotional dependency. There was a lot to overcome there. I've never been religious but the only thing I can really compare it to is like having a close, personal relationship with God and just watching God die. It really fucked me up. It was necessary, I had an easier time coping after that, but by the end of that session, we were both kind of suicidal. [Pause] A couple months later, I ended up dropping acid and processing a lot of the grief from that in, what can only be described as, a terrible trip. Just kind of feeling the maximum amount of emotion a human can experience. Specifically, that session of deprogramming was the worst I have ever felt in my experience with hypnosis.

In talking about the ways in which erotic hypnosis suggestions can go wrong,

some focused on the potential for triggering an abreaction as a result of being careless

with the wording of hypnosis language. For instance, one participant provided a few

examples of how an initial induction might go wrong:

> Say for example you're doing an induction, one of the popular go-to's for a progressive relaxation induction is you know, "you're floating in the ocean or the lake, or somewhere where it's warm". What if this person has a fear of drowning!? You don't know that! You gotta understand what exactly is going

to relax this person. What is going to help this person feel safe going under? What if you tell someone to freeze and all of a sudden, instead of umm-- instead of ceasing into it, they begin shivering because you're now suddenly cold? You have to understand exactly what words you're using because every new sentence out of your mouth is several potential ways for this to go great, and several potential ways for this to go terribly.

While many participants, especially those with experience in the community, used the term "abreaction" for describing these experiences, some participants lacked language for describing these potential mental health risks, but still talked about fear of psychological damage more generally. For instance, one participant explained:

> It's scary because hypnosis seems, hypnosis seems very risky…mental bondage sounds scarier to me than physical bondage because I have a good understanding of the ways people can get hurt from physical bondage and also the ways in which they would heal from different things. I've gotten hurt, hurt from vanilla things and like also in my wrist or whatever, and I heal from that, and it feels familiar, and it also feels like there is a more obvious path forward. Mental distress feels like a very personal thing to risk.

For others, the risks were less focused on what happens while they are hypnotized, and instead focused on the psychological risks of being suddenly snapped out of trance. One participant, for instance, narrated their experience of panic attacks caused by this jarring transition, particularly because it reminded them of other stressors in their life:

> I've had several serious coming out of a panic attack kind-of-a-thing where my mind wanders far enough away, and then something hits in the right way, and I kind of come to. Or like a noise that kind of breaks through like a sound…It can cause some acute anxiety attacks and I've experienced that, but because I kind of am doing it in a very safe space that I create for myself, I don't have a lot of overly negative experiences…it's mostly kind of jarring coming back if I'm going deep…Like when I was with my emotionally abusive girlfriend and I knew she wasn't there, but also she had a key, and also I had a roommate, so there were a few times where I'd hear a noise and I'd be like, "ah fuck!" So, I feel like it was always that the negative effects were side effects of the negative situations that I was in at the time and kind of

that snap from like nice hypnotic lists to panicked reality is a hard dropping. So, dropping that hard and being like, "Great, I'm still in an emotionally abusive relationship" is negative, that's definitely a negative experience.

Some participants noted that occasionally the psychological risks of erotic hypnosis were not only caused by the potential for accidental harm but were sometimes intentional forms of hypnotic abuse. One participant recounted the "wild west" environment of the early internet as a place where some people were engaging in hypnotic suggestion intentionally designed to encourage self-harm and suicidality:

> So, in the early days of Yahoo chats, there were a number of hypnosis chat groups…I did a lot more deprogramming than programming in those days; it was a lawless wild west-esque frontier out there. There were no real concepts of consent, no real ideas of what that even looked like. Half the time people still believed that everybody was role playing, that hypnosis was bullshit. And because of that a lot of people got hurt. And so there were a lot of subjects running around with these horrible ideas and suggestions in their mind. They should have gone to see a clinical psychologist or something. Behaviors tied to a single individual, you know, addiction to contact to a particular person, really harmful suggestions like if you don't contact this person at least once every other day you start to feel seriously ill. There were suicidal suggestions or self-harm items that were just, it was bad, it was really bad time because there was no real community at that point.

In summary, the majority of participants identified potential and/or actually experienced risks to mental health in a wide variety of forms, often characterized as caused by carelessness or intentional abuse. Like other kink activities, the importance of training in how to conduct erotic hypnosis safely may be critical to managing this risk appropriately.

Minority Stressors Around Erotic Hypnosis Result in Negative Mental Health Outcomes (21.7% of Participants)

A little over 1/5 of participants noted that their erotic hypnosis interests had led to negative mental health outcomes not because of the riskiness of hypnosis, but instead as a result of minority stressors experienced in the broader societal context. These stressors included internalizing stigma against erotic hypnosis, experiencing rejection as a result of their erotic hypnosis interests, and the stress of having to conceal their interests from others. One example of this dynamic was found in a participant who was married in a vanilla relationship with a woman for 18 years and experiencing depressive symptoms as a result of hiding and suppressing their kink interests (including but not limited to erotic hypnosis):

> Like, there's 18 years of my life that I dedicated towards being this, you know, this vanilla character. And it was good, but it was always. There was always something missing, right? I wasn't really happy. She was like, "why are you sad all the time?". It's like, "well, we're not having a whole lot of fun, right?". So, there's a bit of regret there but, you know. I can't change it. I can't go back. So now I'm just trying to make up for lost time, right?

Another talked at length about how their own intense discomfort with their erotic hypnosis interests as a teenager leading them to engage in self-harm and require therapeutic intervention:

> But when I was a teenager, I was self-harming out of guilt of sexual feelings, predominantly erotic hypnosis-based because that was the source of most of my sexual feelings. So, for ages four to fourteen, it was the sort of like, "I watch cartoons and I feel funny," sort of thing, and when I was fourteen I for some reason, the need, that sort of attraction had changed in a way I couldn't place, and so I sat down and I said, "For some reason I'm gonna really seek this out," and I googled like, "hypnosis stories," and I found MCstories [an erotic hypnosis erotica website] right away, and I remember looking at and thinking like, "Oh! Oh my God! This isn't what I was looking for," and a minute goes by, and I go, "Oh my God. This *was* what I was looking for,"…I don't even know how I knew the word fetish, but just, I remember the word clearly popping up in my mind that's like, "Oh, this is what fetish means and this is your thing," and then it was, so, so [laughing] from the fourteen to

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eighteen period it was this very like, carefully like, "How do I manage this in a way?" 'cause there was no question in my mind that it was never gonna go away. I couldn't see it going away. It was just too strong. Those were the years that…there'd be months at a time where I'd swear off, you know, LimeWire porn torrenting, or MC stories, and swear I wasn't going back, and I would cave and I would go back, and it was this, just this back and forth pattern that just was, so fundamentally exhausting, on top of all sorts of other, you know, normal teenage shit. I'm queer and I wasn't struggling with same-sex desire at the time. What I was struggling with was confusion about my sexual identity because I couldn't bring myself to be attracted to any gender. Right now like I'm, like that's something years later now I'm sort of capable of be- of having attraction independent of fetish, but I would look at boys and be like, "I don't feel anything cause all I wanna think, the *only* thing that's gonna turn me on is hypnosis, and does that mean I'm gay?" So anyway, so there was all that stuff compounding, and eventually just hit the point where I thought of self-harming. It wasn't the sort of traditional narratives of self-harm as like release. It was like a very sort of rigorous, sort of structural punishment kind of thing, and I had very strict rules and rituals around it. It didn't even last long. It was maybe six months. Someone found me out. I wouldn't tell them. I wouldn't say why. The most I would tell people, including my family, was that it had to do with sexual desires, but I wouldn't say what. [laughs] My parents, bless them, they're great parents, but they said they would get me into therapy and then I think they were just kind of like, too uncomfortable and didn't know what to do with it. But I had promised to stop and I sort of gave up and stopped and then, yeah, and so at that point I was just kind of like, not exactly defeated because I wasn't sort of like, "I'm not self-harming and therefore I'm, I feel better about this stuff or I'm ready to take on this stuff." I was just sort of back to square one of, "Look I wish I could ignore this stuff, but I can only do- ignore it for so little chunks of time."

Others focused on the stress and anxiety associated with hiding their identity.

One participant, for instance, described preferring online erotic hypnosis conventions

because they don't have to take active elaborate steps to pretend to be on vacation as

they do when going to an in-person erotic hypnosis convention. They discuss the

stress and intensification of their anxiety disorder as a result of having to concealing

their interest from others and needing to have plausible deniability for why they are

traveling:

I was attending one of the [erotic hypnosis] cons and the con was happening in a city where my close friend from graduate school was living…So I needed an alibi because I'm not really out. So, I needed the alibi for why I was on the other side of the country for no apparent reason. (laughs) And so this is where my friend lived, in the same city. I was like, "I need you to help me take some photos for Facebook". This is so elaborate. So, we had to go all over the city and take photos and try to look like, "Hey, I'm just here having great fun with my friend, who I've visited. That's why I'm here on the other side of the country" … I mean, for me, the real-life cons have been a nightmare because I have anxiety. So. It's just, I fall apart at every single con because I'm stressed out. So [an online convention] is good for people like me or people with other challenges or, you know, don't have money cause it's expensive to go to cons. So, you know. You don't have to come up with some secret. You're not taking photos. You're not running around with a friend trying to get photos for Facebook to justify "what were you doing last weekend" So I think that's been a good thing, that I feel like that it's lowered some of the barriers.

Sometimes the anxiety associated with hiding one's identity was amplified by a fear of having been secretly video-recorded during an online erotic hypnosis session. One participant, for example, talked about their first time being hypnotized involving feeling pressured to comply with suggestions they didn't enjoy because they believed it might be their only chance to get hypnotized, and the experiencing fallout from their anxiety over having been recorded. They characterized their first session as:

[I]t wasn't a very good one. It was me being very naïve, was kind of just going with the flow. It was more like I couldn't see my hand in front of my face. It was more like I was only seeing what was right in front of me, I didn't think a step ahead. So, when he told me to do X, I just did X. I didn't think where X was going, I didn't know where X was going. And I just kinda did it, and ended up doing some things that I wasn't particularly interested in or didn't really want to get into. However, I did them because this was the first time. It was exciting. It was all those videos that I watched and MP3s that I listened to. This was actually it! This was actually happening! This might be my only time! And I kind of just did the motions of it and wasn't actually enjoying it…There was a time where he was like "Hey, go grab a very big container of water and drink it all. And now we're going to sit here for a very extensive period of time." And then he said to "urinate in your pants" … and

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it still kinda haunts me today. Is that video out there? That video, does it exist? I don't know…but it's something that would definitely be scary and even to potential employers, that might be scary. Even if it is something I enjoyed, still potential employers can look at it and be like 'oh, well..." But, because it's something I didn't, it's like an added layer… I do have anxiety of some of the things I might have done being out there on the internet. So, although it hasn't impacted me, you know, like me and my family, or financially, or stuff like that, mentally I'd say yes it has. More specifically, it's affected me because of my anxiety.

Unlike those who experienced distress from hiding their interests, others reported psychological distress after disclosing their interests to others because of the stigmatizing response they received. For example, while participants who disclosed their erotic hypnosis kink to their therapists generally reported neutral-to-positive responses from those mental health professionals, one participant talked about the challenge of feeling shamed by their therapist for the erotic hypnosis interest resulting in them suppressing their kink interests:

> I used to go to a psychoanalyst who led the analysis process and made me feel guilty about my kink. Like, if I compared the way he treated other issues, other sexual issues, and when we approached my hypno kink it led into very bad conclusions and I was disgusted and I left it in the corner.

In alignment with minority stress theory, participants in this category explicitly identified minority stressors as an initial cause or amplification of mental health challenges they already had. Stigma and the fear of negative repercussions (often around employment) was central to experiences of self-harm, depression and anxiety, demonstrating the potential applicability of a minority stress model to the hypno-kink population as well.

Erotic Hypnosis is Appropriate for People with Disabilities (50.6% of Participants)

About half of the participants noted that erotic hypnosis was an appropriate

activity and space for people with disabilities, with these comments falling into one of

two categories: The first category focused on people who are neurodivergent

(especially in terms of ADD, ADHD, and Autism) being common among people who

fetishize hypnosis, arguing that the practice may be especially appropriate for people

who are neurodivergent for a variety of reasons. The second category focused on both

individual and community efforts to make erotic hypnosis a safe, accessible, inviting,

and welcoming community for people with a variety of disabilities. These stories are

detailed below.

Neurodivergent People are Both Common Among and Especially Apt for Erotic Hypnosis Practices and Community (33.7% of Participants)

About a third of participants, when asked about disability status or their own

disabilities, mentioned that neurodivergence was commonplace in the erotic hypnosis

community, with a variety of speculative explanations as to why. Many of these

explanations featured ideas about why people with neurodivergent brains may be

especially good at entering into trance states. In this way, neurodivergence acted as a

particular draw for the commonplace status of neurodiverse people in the community.

Some of these claims talked about neurodivergence in general. For instance, one

participant noted:

> Neuro-divergencies are ripe in hypno kink in my experience. And they do
> tend to be given more of a voice, because we are used to an entire lifetime of
> digging through our own minds and figuring out how they work and
> understanding the positive and negative pressure points and trip wires
> even…we understand ourselves because we have to, a lot better than some

neuro-typicals might. And as such, we also pay a lot of attention to how to navigate those neuro-divergencies while playing with the mind.

For this participant, neurodivergence has led to them understanding the workings of their own mind in detail, which they linked to being more effective when engaging in erotic hypnosis play. Other participants simply noted that commonality of mental health diagnoses within the community without a specific explanation, such as one participant lamenting hypnosis certification programs that discouraged people with mental health diagnoses from applying:

> Even if you look at like clinical hypnosis websites or certification now, you'll see that they don't want people to be doing these certifications, if they've ever had any sort of mental health diagnosis, and like, that's the whole goddamn community. You couldn't just throw a rock and not hit somebody who's got an anxiety disorder or something - something even more intense than that on the mental health end of things like, and I understand where it was coming from, I understand that it's a powerful tool. And - and I think it's a residual of that, personally.

Other participants, rather than focusing on mental health diagnoses in general, were more specific, noting how types of neurodiversity might make someone a more effective hypnotic subject. One participant with ADHD, for instance, explained the relationship between hyperfocus (a common symptom of ADHD) and hypnosis:

> So, a lot of what I do, especially with new people, is I relate a lot to those experiences of being in trance in a mundane way. Especially since with ADHD sometimes you hyperfocus on something? I used to be a big reader and I kind of use this as an analogy a lot cause I've experienced it a lot, and you know, people who also enjoy reading in that way can you know you can draw your attention to how that felt and go that's how it feels to go into hypnosis just at a deeper level.

Another participant later focused on how their ADHD made them a more effective hypnotist, amplifying their ability to multitask:

I mean I think it has a lot to do with like thinking about your thoughts and thinking about the effects of your thoughts and thinking about yourself thinking about your thoughts [laughs]. And the kind of ability to do all of that at once. And then I would also say that when I'm topping it often feels like I'm driving a train and laying down the track at the same time and it is very much a state that I could get into and I think that that is because of ADHD that it's easier for me to have all of the images ahead that I'm making up while also laying down the track for what we're doing.

Similar sentiments about neurodivergence improving capacity as a hypnotist were echoed by a participant with ADD:

I think [ADD] keeps me quick. You know…this interests me, so this will hold my attention. But it's also really easy to switch gears and change direction and pull things out of nowhere. So, I think it helps.

Rather than focusing on the specific cognitive skills that led to an overrepresentation of neurodiverse people in erotic hypnosis, others focused on the social conditions experienced by people with autism and ADHD that might make erotic hypnosis especially appealing, such as one participant who explained:

I think the erotic hypno scene is really full of autistic and ADHD people, and I think that there's a lot overlap there. I would say that 1 out of 3 in the erotic hypno scene are ADHD.I mean, I think there's so much overlap that I almost see them as interchangeable in my head… On average I think autistic people are very good about negotiating boundaries and sticking to them because that's a thing that - autistic people get burned on that a lot because there's a - there's a presumption that they won't enforce their own boundaries…I kind of theorized that ADHD people spend a lot of time getting told you're not good, you're not doing it right. Like ADHD means failing to meet a lot of people's expectations, and I think a big part of hypno is, for one thing, turning off the internal monologue that's often very negative. And the other time is it involves following commands that are simple and that you're immediately praised for following. So, it's like something like dog training or something. I think that is actually very easy to be present for, even if you're ADHD.

For this participant, both the social praise, and emphasis on explicitly stated boundaries present in the erotic hypnosis community, and within erotic hypnosis

practices were used as potential explanations of the overrepresentation of people with autism and ADHD in the erotic hypnosis community. While most participants talked about autism, ADD, and ADHD, one participant noted that their experience with Borderline Personality Disorder (of which stress-induced dissociative symptoms are common in 80% of people with BPD, see Krause-Utz, 2022) also made them feel especially apt for engaging in the dissociative elements of erotic hypnosis:

> I can tell for myself I'm really good with dissociative plays and because I'm really good with dissociative plays, because my body and my mind kind of already know how to disassociate [laughs], it means that I'm also good at memory play. So that has impacted that in a weird but fun way, I suppose.

Another participant speculated as to why social anxiety issues in the erotic hypnosis community were so common, and found people with social anxiety found the community so appealing, pointing to the features of hypnosis as a practice:

> There's a couple things, I think one, it's so intimate, in that it gives people permission to let down their guard, so it attracts some people who may be more socially anxious, but it seems to be far more than any of other community I've been in, that people are very openly socially anxious. But I don't think that it's because of the hypnosis, I think it's just attracts a certain kind of person who wants permission to talk to people's subconscious. You can give them permission to do things. So, they're anxious because they have all of that worry and inward dialogue and then someone else can kind of take that away.

Lastly, a few participants noted the commonality of neurodivergence in the form of transgender and gender dysphoric identities and experiences, speaking of these as though they were one-and-the-same category. While not all transgender people conceptualize their gender journeys as involving neurodivergence, for participants who explicitly did so in their interviews, their comments were included in this category. For instance, one participant, speculated:

I just thought that it's- there's a high proportion of neurodivergence, I would
believe, in the hypnokink community. Especially I would say the number of
friends I've had that I started out with going by their cis-gender who have
transitioned over time as they've gotten more used to the community and more
used to being who they are and accepting it, and all that, is disproportionate to
the general populace. People who grew up with like a hypnosis kink and
knowing that they have a specific kink would be, I would say,
disproportionate from what I've seen in the community. It- it happens to be a
really good group of people, really smart people, people who like to play with
brains, and who likes to play with brains more than people who don't have
typical brains?

Given the importance of psychology and playing with the mind in erotic

hypnosis, it is unsurprising that so many people noted the high proportion of

neurodivergent people within the community, though the substantial diversity of

different categories referenced was surprising, and interesting to consider.

The Erotic Hypnosis Community is Inclusive and Accessible for People with

Disabilities (26.5% of Participants)

Unlike the nearly 2/3 of participants who focused on disability and ableism as

an impediment to erotic hypnosis participation, more than a quarter of participants

noted the efforts taken towards greater inclusivity and accessibility for people with a

variety of disabilities in the community. In some cases, this took the form of

individual action, such as one participant who explained:

Like, you'll see a lot of ADHD people have differences in social skills. I tend
to be really aggressive about trying to include people like that. Like, I invited
a lot of people who have not-normal social skills to participate in hypno
spaces, and I think that on average that actually goes pretty well, because they
do okay, and I think that oftentimes these not normal social skills are actually
a perfectly fine way of socializing.

Others focused on being inclusive in terms of who they chose to play with,

and even celebrating their conditions with excitement, such as one hypnotist who

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explained their excitement at trying out different hypnotic induction methods on

partners with ADHD:

> There's certain inductions that I already know work a lot better than others
> and all of those sort of signposts that I can give them will help them out. And
> also, that it like makes me more excited to play with people who identify as
> ADHD also 'cause then I'm like "Oh good, I have things I want to try on
> you!" an exciting identity for me.

One erotic hypnosis sex worker talked about the positive experience and

comfort they had taking an erotic hypnosis client with a speech impediment under

hypnosis because they had discussed his disability beforehand:

> I met him on FetLife, and he told me ahead of time that he had a speech
> impediment and a couple of other challenges. And I was really glad when we
> got together, because I always do my, my hypnosis on Zoom and I was really
> glad that he had told me that ahead of time… I was glad that I was prepared.
> So, when we did the session and it was successful, I felt really, really good
> about it. One, because I was successful in doing the induction. Two, because I
> was able to meet him where he was. I could let him know when I couldn't
> understand him, and I could let him know that I needed him to, to be clearer
> so that I could see. So that for me was really, really good. [Pause] And the
> success of this, of the suggestions was just icing on the cake for me. I was just
> happy to have kept him from harm.

Beyond interactions with individual partners, one community leader also

talked about accessibility considerations when planning erotic hypnosis events at the

more structural level. They contrasted these considerations with the online events

they were holding during the height of the Covid-19 Pandemic:

> When we do return to in-person events, really trying to make sure that spaces
> are wheelchair accessible or have some kind of easy way to exit that doesn't
> involve weaving through people and stuff…If somebody needs to just leave if
> they're overstimulated or something like that. That's important to me, trying
> to find things like that.

This participant narrated considerations both for people with physical and mental disabilities, and the way in which constructing spaces in accessible ways can benefit both groups simultaneously. This community-orientation towards disability may have also been present to some extent in the early days of the online erotic hypnosis community, with one participant recounting an incident in which the community came together to support and mourn a suicidal content erotic hypnosis content creator with a painful physical condition.

> There was a couple of photomanipulators, or image manipulators, at the time one of them was named Maddy Wrose. She posted some very early photomanipulations to Usenet, and you can see them in the old gallery of hypno pics. They're the old gallery, not the current one, so these were people who were making their name known…It was also one of the first indications of a community forming when they posted that they were going to take their own life because she was suffering from an intensely painful, debilitating illness for which there was no cure, and she wanted to just avoid the pain, and I figure that was probably a good reason for them to make that step…And people were mourning 'cause this was somebody who made contribution to this, which became a community and doing a community action of communal mourning.

One participant with social anxiety challenges talked about the openness of the erotic hypnosis community as helping them to feel more comfortable and safer. They also mentioned turning their initial experiences with social anxiety into being deliberately welcoming towards other people with anxiety:

> Everyone's so welcoming in erotic hypnosis because it's so many kinks and people just generally tend to be more open to things. So it was just that, it was just in other communities it's kind of like closed off and very "I'm better than you" and I didn't really get that feeling in hypnosis, everyone is just trying to suck people in constantly because the more the merrier…everyone is pretty poly and, or at least open to doing things all over the place if they're not completely, they're just open and welcoming like that, non-judgmental. I was very anxious when I started. The first meetups I went to on my own, I was so scared I wouldn't go to the bathroom saying I didn't want people to think that

I went to the bathroom, I mean I just had like a social anxiety thing. And I remember just thinking, I think now how stupid that is but then when I see new people, I try to be overly welcoming since we're such an anxious bunch. And I remember how it was for me, so I try to be especially helpful, and I think that it was that same way.

For some participants with disabilities, it was the accessibility of online erotic hypnosis communities in particular that was part of the initial draw of erotic hypnosis as a practice. For instance, one deaf participant recounted initially becoming interested in hypnosis for therapeutic purposes and gravitating towards the erotic hypnosis community because of a lack of deaf accessibility in conventional hypnotherapy.

I started experiencing hypnosis from the Xmas party at the company doing a stage show…I was very lucky to experience it because they had ASL interpreters at that time…I was shocked. Because I have a very strong mind. Thinking I will never go under, and the tist was curious as well. He never did it to a deaf person before. And during the show, I did the suggestions very well. I still remember vividly when I was sleeping, I could feel the surroundings, but with my curiosity, I couldn't open my eyes, and my body continued to slide away, as if I was in deep sleep but in my head, I was wide awake, aware. That experience made me seek hypnosis…. I remember the interpreter quickly having a conversation with the tist to figure out a way to communicate with me. I am surprised it went well, including interpreter and tist…. From the stage, the tist told all the participants that their life will improve, feeling positive and all the stuff. I was in depression at that time, and somehow, I think it helped me get out and stop taking antidepressants. I did a search for hypnosis, but the biggest problem is the interpreter cost. There is no deaf hypnotist or any hypnotist who know ASL (American Sign Language). So that led me to go online, and I have strong sex drive and always go on porn or sex sites and discovered hypnosis as the fetish. So that led me to explore more…. because of the platforms that allow text to communicate.

For one blind participant, with substantial experience in online erotic hypnosis spaces, they reported the shift to mostly online activities during the Covid-19

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pandemic as an especially welcome one, given the accessibility of online spaces for

their disability:

> I'm visually impaired, so I do everything online, so for me it was like, "Oh
> look! Everybody else is coming online, great! [laughs] Welcome, welcome
> guys, welcome to my world. I've been here for a long time." So, they came
> online and there were a lot more people online, so I noticed the servers were
> filling up.

While many participants with disabilities did face barriers within the erotic

hypnosis community, for the participants in this section, they reported the community

as being an especially accessible place to explore their sexuality through this

particular kink. Both erotic hypnosis' easy adaptation to online spaces as well as

active steps taken by community members to improve inclusivity and accessibility

seemed to play a role in these more positive stories.

Results: Religion, Faith, and Hypnosis-Adjacent Spirituality

To explore and construct themes around religion and faith, two coders, the author (who identifies as a Unitarian Universalist), and a research assistant (who identifies as not religious) conducted a reflexive thematic analysis as described above in the Methods section on a subset of the entire interview dataset. The subset was selected based on participants who had made any reference to religion, spirituality, and hypnosis-adjacent spiritual activities like meditation. To operationalize those references, the two coders analyzed only portions of the dataset which had been content-coded into at least one of the following 21 categories (For detailed definitions and examples of each content code, see Appendix E):

1) Religion and Spirituality

2) Christianity

3) Catholicism

4) Protestantism

5) Mormonism

6) Christian Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism

7) Hinduism

8) Paganism/Neopaganism

9) Atheism, Agnosticism, and Non-Religiosity

10) Spiritualism

11) Judaism

12) Buddhism

13) Cults

14) Sikhism

15) Hypnosis as Spiritually or Religiously Evil, Religious Stigma, Conflict with Religion

16) Hypnosis-Adjacent Activities

17) Yoga

18) ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response)

19) Meditation, Buddhist Chanting, Mindfulness

20) Tantric Sex

21) Energy Play, "Woo", Occult, Ritual Magic, Mediums, New Age

By drawing on a large number of varied content categories, we hoped to capture religious and spiritual experiences, broadly construed. For example, ASMR, an intense tingly sensation reportedly experienced by some people in response to a variety of auditory, visual, and contextual stimuli, has been characterized as a spiritual experience by some who produce ASMR content (Hudelson, 2020). Similarly, yoga, while sometimes conceptualized and practiced only as a form of physical exercise, both originates in, and is often practiced as a form of spirituality (Varambally & Gangadhar, 2012). To avoid excluding these activities that are only sometimes spiritual, they were included in the analysis. The results of our thematic analysis yielded four themes and six subthemes, which will be described in detail below, with several examples of each:

1) Erotic Hypnosis and Spirituality Have a Harmonious Relationship

     a. Hypnosis-Adjacent Activities as a Stepping Stone to Erotic Hypnosis

     b. Erotic Hypnosis as a Spiritual or Spiritually Approved Practice

     c. Hypnosis-Adjacent Activities are Complementary to Erotic Hypnosis

     d. Using Spiritual and Religious Themes to Fuel Eroticism in Hypnosis

2) Erotic Hypnosis and Religion Have an Antagonistic Relationship

     a. Erotic Hypnosis Conflicts with Religious Identity and Community

     b. Religious Stigma within the Erotic Hypnosis Community

3) Hypnosis-Adjacent Activities Contrast with Erotic Hypnosis

4) Religious Upbringing or Background as a Source of Erotic Hypnosis Interest

Erotic Hypnosis and Spirituality Have a Harmonious Relationship (80.7% of Participants)

Many participants talked about a variety of spiritual and faith practices as integral to the story of their erotic hypnosis interest, either as a stepping stone to eventually developing an interest in erotic hypnosis, erotic hypnosis as a spiritual practice in and of itself, integrating faith practices into erotic hypnosis in an effort to enhance one or both, and, more rarely, utilizing the tropes of spirituality in elaborate roleplay contexts to enhance the erotic thrill of hypnosis. While the way in which religion and hypnosis were integrated differed substantially, all these stories described a generally harmonious relationship between erotic hypnosis and spirituality, detailed below:

Hypnosis-Adjacent Activities as a Stepping Stone to Erotic Hypnosis (60.2% of Participants)

When discussing faith and spiritual practices such as meditation, yoga, and energy play (a form of BDSM activity in which participants experiencing an exchange or manipulation of metaphysical "energy", often as part of a magic or spiritual tradition), the majority of participants described having experience with these practices prior to their interest in erotic hypnosis, characterizing these practices as a step on their journey towards developing an erotic hypnosis fetish. Though the exact character of these journeys varied, as detailed below, all conceptualized their experience with these hypnosis-adjacent activities as a step in a larger path of erotic hypnosis self-discovery. For example, one participant explained,

> Meditation was a huge one for me. I probably - I'd like to - when I joined the [erotic hypnosis] community, people were kind of jealous that have been in the scene for a while how quickly I took to being a subject and it's really just I've done my, like 10,000 hours on the meditation end. So, I was really, really quick to hypnosis, and to amnesia play and some of these more complex types of suggestions and things like that.

For this participant, their extensive experience with formal meditation practice was framed as a source of their effectiveness as a hypnotic subject. Referencing the supposed "10,000 hours" benchmark for mastering a skill, popularized by in the pop-psychology book "Outliers" (Gladwell, 2008), this participant's experience of meditation as a stepping stone was largely constructed as a journey of developing hypnotic skills. However, unlike intensive, formal meditation training, other participants described these hypnosis-adjacent practices as more informal, fleeting moments. For example, one participant described an early set of experiences as

> When I was in elementary school, on the bus either to or from school, I forget, there was this kid who did this guided meditation storytelling thing. It was

entirely non-sexual. We were young kids. Looking back, it's basically a hypnotic narrative.

Rather than a focus on activities explicitly identified as guided meditation at the time, this participant identifies it loosely as a practice only seen as quasi-hypnotic in retrospect. Other participants similarly echoed the idea of concentrated, non-sexual storytelling during childhood as a form of proto-hypnosis guided meditation experience,

> …I have always been really interested in talking to people and having them listen to me, like as a thing. When we were little, like at sleepovers, we would play the game where all the girls sit in a circle, and they put one in the middle, and somebody rubs the temples of the other one and someone tells a story. And like thinking about that now, I was one hundred percent dropping those girls. Like I was always the story-teller, everyone was always like "Oh you should do the story!" and I was like "Excellent, I love doing it" and they would like have all the traits of hypnosis and I didn't realize what we were doing because it was just a game you played at sleepovers. But it was definitely one of the ones I liked a lot. Lots of that and then read-a-loud story things, I love it when people fall asleep on me also. All of those were very hypno-adjacent stuff.

Another form of non-sexually explicit hypnosis-adjacent practice identified by participants as a stepping stone was autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) (Barratt & Davis, 2015), an experience sometimes described as a non-genital "brain orgasm" triggered by specific soft and intimate stimuli, such as whispering, crunching sounds, the feeling of having one's hair brushed, receiving close, personal attention, or objects appearing to visually approach the viewer. Classified as a quasi-spiritual, New Age practice by some (Hudelson, 2020) ASMR has been popularized primarily via online video platforms like YouTube (Zappavigna, 2023). For one participant,

their experience with ASMR became a stepping stone to erotic hypnosis as a result of

the YouTube video suggestion algorithm:

> …I came across a video on erotic hypnosis on YouTube. And I had no idea
> that that existed before that point, because I was watching ASMR and then I
> saw it in the suggestions. And that so many people watched it. And that there
> were whole communities. Um, yeah, pretty much I realized that through
> YouTube…I like all kinds of ASMR. And I watch it every day. Like, there's
> never a day that I don't watch or listen to an ASMR video [laughs].

Other spiritual practices identified as stepping stones were explicitly erotic

and conducted with a partner. For example, one participant described experiencing

tantric sex with a female partner as a stepping stone:

> … She herself had been you know delving into a little bit of guided meditation
> she was very I guess you'd call a crunchy individual you know and, we- sorta
> like guided each other through individual tantric stuff…the guided meditation,
> the tantric meditation the whole nine. Definitely good stepping stones.
> Sometimes even just immersing yourself in a book. That is self-hypnosis. It's
> a beautiful form of self-hypnosis. Cause it's worldbuilding.

Within an explicitly erotic context, some people's exposure to hypnosis-

adjacent activities was facilitated by the more mainstream kink community, such as

one participant describing their first experience with energy play:

> I did a sort of energy play scene once with a friend…. [T]his was within the
> first state that I lived in with the first kink group. We had a visitor. We had
> somebody come and give a lesson or two or three different lessons in different
> things. There was an energy-play...It was really just two of us sitting there and
> holding our hands up and stuff like that. And I could feel the sensations. It
> was interesting, but I hadn't thought about it as hypnotic or trance-like.

This participant recognized only in retrospect the ways in which their energy

play scene was an early experience with playing with hypnotic states in an erotic

context but didn't explicitly recognize it as a hypnotic or trance-like state at the time.

In other contexts, participants described experiencing eroticism towards a hypnosis-

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adjacent activity that was only experienced as erotic by themselves, with one

participant narrating an experience with their piano teacher as:

> One or two years later at school. I was like, I was part of like a piano thing
> that was going on and one of the teachers that was giving the piano thing had
> this kind of-- kind of new type energy to him and was doing some stuff that
> wasn't super okay. Um, like he was like curing people's headache by putting
> his hand on their forehead or like that. There were really hypno-adjacent and
> in my mind, I was like-- I was--it was like really strong for me the feelings
> towards this teacher. Like I was super sexual attracted to him but also thought
> that it was like dangerous and all of this.

This spiritual practice described by the participant likely refers to Reiki

(vanderVaart et al., 2009), or some equivalent practice of laying on hands as a form

of curative. For this participant, the intermixing of their burgeoning sexual feelings

with their sense of fear and danger over the ostensibly magical practices of their piano

teacher is remembered as a stepping stone to their erotic hypnosis interests by the

time of the interview. Other participants' early fascination with hypnosis was driven

by a primarily intellectual curiosity in spiritual and psychic phenomena. For instance,

one participant explained:

> I got into hypnosis when I was 12. And it was completely non-sexual at that
> point, but fascinating. I was in elementary school, and towards the end of
> elementary- sixth grade, I had found a book on hypnosis when I was doing
> research into paranormal mental states like ESP and the like. And I read
> about, I found this in my elementary school library which is crazy like what
> was it doing there [chuckles]? But I found it and I did some research on it, and
> I tried experimenting with it and this was before I really started puberty
> madness. Much less, you know, came into my own…When I was first getting
> into hypnosis just as a concept I was looking at other mental-adjacent things
> like ESP which I had, I was really into I was like "hey I might have telepathy"
> and like trying to build telepathy and I read a book on how you can
> explore…similar trust games and exercises and other things like that basically
> formed the basis of the rest of my kink experience.

That same participant then described exploring being a hypnotist in the context of a guided meditation they led in a clinical setting, based on instructions from the book in their elementary school library:

> I had tried hypnotizing people a couple times using that book and it hadn't really worked out. The next major memory that I have of this is uh, I was in group therapy, because uh, my sister had been diagnosed paranoid delusional schizophrenic with homicidal/suicidal ideations who didn't take her medicine because she's "just fine." And so, to make sure that I wasn't also suffering from, you know, similar issues, I got put into group therapy, and I learned how to listen in those sessions. There was a lot of guided meditation, and I instantly picked up that this is basically the same thing as what we're doing…And so I learned to listen, and I learned, I paid attention to the, the guided meditation, learned and picked up new language that I could use with that and eventually I was asked to lead one of the sessions and that was really was like, "I get it now". I feel what this is supposed to feel like and that-That's my first real memory of actually doing anything remotely close to actually doing hypnosis and having it being successful.

While the specific practices articulated by interviewees varied widely across the spiritual spectrum, all focused on the use of these practices as proto-hypnotic experiences, as part of their larger journey towards discovering and naming their erotic hypnosis fetishes, even when they weren't fully constructed as sexual or hypnotic at the time they were being experienced.

Erotic Hypnosis as a Spiritual or Spiritually Approved Practice (51.8% of Participants)

Unlike the previous subtheme, which focused on spiritual practices as part of a larger life journey, this subtheme, also expressed by the majority of interviewees, identified integrating erotic hypnosis intentionally into their spirituality, or alignment with their own spiritual tradition. In some cases, this took the form of communing

directly with a deity, to query whether or not hypnosis was appropriate to the precepts

of their faith. For instance, one Christian participant recalled:

> I was with a couple friends that haven't been comfortable with it but all they
> told me was 'Okay just make sure you pray about it make sure you really are
> at peace with this.' Which I did do, and I personally am… I was basically just
> kinda praying- my prayer was basically you know, "if this is something that's
> okay to do give me the peace about it. If it isn't, then kind of warn me of that
> you know intuition wise". Because there are things like well like my ex who
> was the person that was abusive, my intuition was screaming *(laughs)* 'Don't
> get involved in this!' And I went against it and well that was a very bad idea.
> So, I was basically just praying for that intuition that either peace or lack
> thereof and knew that I needed to listen to it if I didn't have peace over it. I
> prayed about it, and I did feel peaceful about it so that's why I went ahead and
> went with it.

While this participant integrated their spirituality into their erotic hypnosis

practice by seeking to get a "stamp of approval" from God, relying on their intuition

as a barometer of God's will, other participants constructed erotic hypnosis as an

explicitly spiritual, and often magical practice in and of itself. Many of the

participants who integrated their spirituality into their erotic hypnosis practices

identified with some form of Pagan or Neopagan faith tradition. For instance, one

participant who was a self-identified witch explained:

> I do real magic and I like to kind of bridge the gap between kink and fantasy
> and real magic. And I actually try to use the power of my voice for positive
> transformation, and for enhancing induction, and to let people know I'm a
> witch and I have powers and I'm able to actually create new realities. If you
> want to be transported, get ready for some weird shit. And so, my voice has
> magical qualities and you're susceptible to it. My identity is a witch, and a
> practitioner who makes solutions. My identity as a witch very much ties into
> my erotic hypnosis play.

Others described hypnosis as "magical" by drawing contrasts with the

mundane aspects of everyday life, such as one participant who seemed to come to that

conclusion as they were describing how they wanted erotic hypnosis to feel for their

hypnotic subjects:

> I feel like it's related to what I said about like, the everyday, we experience at our like conscious level, being menial. I think in people's everyday spaces, it doesn't feel magical, which is what hypnosis is. It's like, you know, I would just go ahead and call it magic.

Similarly, a self-identified participant focused on hypnosis as a spiritual

practice by describing it as a ritual, and constructing the term "hypno-mancy" to

identify this explicitly spiritual and magical connection:

> Yeah, I would say, as someone who identifies as pagan, I think that there's a lot of hypno ritual stuff. I think that it's sort of like elevated my - my interest in both of them that there is some overlap there. I think I've it's definitely got me more back into - like this weekend [Friend's name redacted] and I are actually planning on doing some - some hypno-mancy and doing some Tarot hypnosis related things. And, and I feel like it's really it's, like, upped my like pagan ritual stuff quite a bit.

For a smaller handful of participants, most of their erotic hypnosis experience

took place in sacred spaces outside of the erotic hypnosis community. One Sikh-

identifying participant who was heavily involved in sacred sexuality communities, for

instance, actively conducted erotic hypnosis demonstrations at sacred sexuality

retreats, integrating his Sikh tradition with erotic hypnosis in an explicitly spiritual

social context.

> …started presenting workshops at sacred sexuality retreats. And that's when I got to play the entire spectrum, as I said before on the sensuality, tantra, gentle side.… I met this girl…And I just looked at her and we-we probably spent barely 10 minutes figuring out what she likes. You know, what's her, what's her thing, and how she behaves, and what she really is into…So [pause] it was very natural with her, and we-we just went, and we got onstage. What happened is that she went through this for what, 40 minutes of the session. And she had a lot of sexual, erotic, sensual feelings. I know that she had a few orgasms along the way. But then she started crying. She just opened up some

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trauma in her. And she just started balling and she couldn't control herself. And as a hypnotist I know that these things can happen and do happen because, as I said before, mind and body are connected. So, it's interesting how you start opening those channels and what would come out of people then, right? So [pause] she obviously had a lot of trauma related to it. I didn't know her history. So, I just had to guide her to deal with, uh, what she was experiencing in the moment. And we spent another probably 40 minutes, uh, to go through that and help her release the pain, help her release the-the stress, the — and-and let go and-and actually cry out fully. And then I'll call that pain to recede away from her.

In this quotation, the participant integrated spiritual healing practices and erotic hypnosis in an explicitly tantric faith tradition. In contrast, some participants connected their erotic hypnosis practice with spiritual experiences that weren't part of a specific faith tradition, but instead common to many faiths, such as an emphasis on past lives and near-death experiences. For instance, one participant recounted his view of hypnosis as connected with his near-death experience and belief in reincarnation as follows:

I've already had a death experience where I've died, and then come back from that. And I've had a number of experiences where I've left my body and come back and gone to like another place. So, I inherently don't see myself as [Participant's name], as my- you know, who-who I'm born to be. I inherently see myself as like a visitor from somewhere else. So, to me identity is more like clothing that you might put on. And I see, the erotic hypnosis as putting on different change of clothing…I-I feel that when you die, you're no longer the person, you're-you know, you're no longer your given name is not who you really are. You're not really that race, gender, color, or any other thing. You are a consciousness and I feel that, when done well, playing with erotic hypnosis can take a person in a direction towards enlightenment, where you're not fixated on one construct of who you are, but your identity becomes more fluid. So, you have choices and that is, more psychologically healthy to prepare a person for death. Because you're not so grounded in, "This is who I am. This is my life, and this is what I am, and if I lose it, that's the end of me." You begin to realize that I am a consciousness, and I am experiencing- I can experience, a variety of different things, and if I lose one piece of this, I haven't lost myself', and in fact you gain more of who you really are, by letting go…

While most participants who conceptualized erotic hypnosis as a spiritual practice emphasized positive elements of that spirituality, a few participants narrated that the spiritual nature of erotic hypnosis made it spiritually dangerous, pointing to possession and the involvement of malevolent spirits as a key concern. For instance, one participant who identified as a "spiritualist" explained,

> So, there can be a fear with the hypnosis, of bringing, even demonic, and uh spirits into a session. And that's really, yeah, it should be addressed, if there, because I believe that. Yeah, that is a very big concern that the person doing the hypnosis is actually working with that person and their unconscious, and not them just being so open that they've allowed another spirit in there… There's the whole satanic, demonic, 666 stuff, that does happen.

For this participant, the ways in which some practitioners of erotic hypnosis incorporate demonic imagery into their sexual play was seen as inviting in spiritually dangerous forces into the mind, because erotic hypnosis was seen as inherently spiritual.

Hypnosis-Adjacent Activities are Complementary to Erotic Hypnosis (25.3% of Participants)

Rather than drawing distinctions between erotic hypnosis and spiritual practices, or characterizing erotic hypnosis as an intrinsically spiritual practice, other participants described incorporating spiritual practices and traditions into their erotic hypnosis play to compliment or enhance the erotic hypnosis experience. Participants in this category drew on a wide variety of faith traditions. One participant, for instance, described the sensations of using energy manipulation (a component of

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some neopagan systems of magic) and remote viewing (a practice often categorized

as part of psychic phenomena) to enhance the connection felt with a person in trance.

> So, I find that when someone has gone into trance with me fairly deep, if we're both somewhat psychic, we're able to exchange an energy. Of the number of people out of the hundreds of people I've done this with, maybe only three people have been able to reciprocate this in a way that I like I can feel it tangibly like 'wow, we're like we're connecting'….We would do a thing where we would sort of connect in trance, and then we would sort of remote view each other, so we could see each other in our minds. Wherever we were, we'd describe it to each other. And as we're doing that, I would start feeling a, a really warm, fuzzy, happy energy. The only way I could describe it-the closest thing I could describe it to was this the happy sensation, like an orange vanilla ice cream. Like a really happy, yummy uplifting sort of feeling. I'd say like Creamsicle™ energy, you know? So, I've experienced that, and from me, he would get something that he felt was a very warm and electric feeling. That's usually what people get from me. Or sometimes like, volcanic. So, I've got a somewhat like volcanic or somewhat like oceanic energy, like I have like a big energy just sort of like well, just pour into a person who can, receive it...definitely a spiritual exchange happening.

In this quotation, the participant relies on similes around forces in the natural

world (commonly used in neopagan practice, such as the invoking of the four

classical Greek elements), to describe the intensity that these spiritual energy

exchange practices can bring to enhancing an erotic hypnosis scene. Some hypnotists

also described integrating their spiritual practices, like the burning of sage, into their

erotic hypnosis activities as a way to enhance intensify their hypnosis experiences.

For instance, one in-person hypnosis sex-worker explained how integrating these

spiritual practices enhanced the hypnosis experience for clients:

> One big thing is like, I- I call the space that I see clients in a temple space… it is like a sacred space, like I do a lot to make it feel sacred, you know? It's designed very consciously and I sage it and I have this particular way about setting up the room.

Others talked about erotic hypnosis as a way to complement and enhance other spiritual practices they sought to experience, such as one participant who expressed the possibility of to using erotic hypnosis to help open his third eye with his spiritually oriented erotic hypnosis partner.

> My partner talked a lot about spirituality. When he was six years old, he started developing psychic abilities and stuff and he referred to himself as like a psychic spiritual healer for people? And never as a profession but just somehow when he was six years old, he started following thoughts in his head and stuff…I picked up on some stuff of the spirituality through him…I remember once he was trying to teach me about opening my third eye. He was trying to teach me how to see things with my third eye, but then I ended up asking too many questions and my mind, my mind wasn't focused enough to fully see that, you know? I don't know if that's something he meant for me to learn in the future with the hypno…Hypno is one stage to find ourselves in our mind.

While some participants, like the previous one, merely speculated about the possibilities of hypnosis-adjacent spiritual practices, others advised the use of these practices as a curative for hypnosis-induced problems. For instance, one participant mentioned the possibility of using meditation to help free oneself of unwanted hypnotic suggestions, describing their online interaction in an erotic hypnosis chatroom with a woman who was seeking to eliminate the effects of those unwanted suggestions:

> I remember one instance where someone came in and said that a hypnotist had given her suggestions, post-hypnotic, that she did not like and wanted to be rid of. And a whole bunch of people chimed in, "Well for $150 I'll deprogram you," or "for $200 I'll do a session with you that will deprogram you," and I went out and said, "Lady, you're always in control. Remember that. Even in hypnosis you're in control. If you want to be rid of the suggestion, just tell yourself you're rid of the suggestion and it'll be gone," and she didn't. She said she didn't believe me, and I told her, "Try this: do a meditation. I'm not telling you to go into trance or anything. Just do a meditation and during the meditation, imagine yourself being totally free of those suggestions and let me

know what happens," and she said, "I don't know how you did it, but they're gone," I told her, "I didn't do anything! You did!".

Others talked about using erotic hypnosis to help intensify and bring pleasure to spiritual practices. One participant with extensive experience receiving acupuncture, for instance, explained how erotic hypnosis helped him when receiving acupuncture for issues with urination:

> I have an acupuncturist I go 1 to 2 times a week…because of my back injury I have problems with urinating, so one way to deal with that is you stick a needle through your butt and your wiener and it stimulates that area… it helps me with peeing but it's also kind of an erotic thing, so when I'm doing the acupuncture I've got this needle sitting there and then I've got an hour by myself and I put myself into [pause] I hypnotize myself. I go into a deep hypnosis and here I am, I got this needle, it's stimulating. I never get an erection or anything but it's still fun… Doing that I can still use the erotic hypnotism - I can apply it all over the place.

For this participant, erotic self-hypnosis was a critical ingredient in being able to enhance what would otherwise be a potentially uncomfortable, hour-long spiritual practice in the form of the traditional Chinese medical procedure of acupuncture. In this way, Hypnosis was a complement to this practice by introducing a component of eroticism and pleasure to the body for an extended period of time. While the exact nature of how spiritual practices and erotic hypnosis practices were being used varied substantially, all participant in this category described the two as working hand-in-hand for a larger goal, or to enhance the experience of one or the other practice.

Using Spiritual and Religious Themes to Fuel Eroticism in Hypnosis (22.9% of Participants)

Unlike participant's other stories that talked about religious and spiritual practices as genuine, real, and sincerely engaged in, other participants talked about

taking advantage of spiritual and religious themes, symbols, and language in erotic

hypnosis as a sexual fetish in and of itself. Often performed in a more theatrical way,

these participants often talked about using spiritual and religious themes to "set a

scene". For instance, one participant talked about taking advantage of pre-existing

religious fetishes in an erotic hypnosis session:

> I'm pretty good at illusion and creating illusions; doing what they call
> "mindfucks". I can create an atmosphere that can be absolutely terrifying for
> them and at the same time arousing [pauses] without using hypnosis, just with
> setting props around the room and setting the atmosphere for it, the proper
> background music. Somebody's into a religious scene? Okay, so I have
> Gregorian chant going on in the background. My furniture in the room has
> been changed to Ecclesiastical-style, church-style. The lighting is subdued,
> and you know, it's more of a religious sense than a dungeon/pain sense… just
> that atmosphere will get them in the mood and give me control of their mind.
> That I consider a mindfuck. It's the whole twist of their reality.

For this participant, the religious setting helps to prime their partner for a

scene focused on hypnosis and mind control by relying on these physical props.

Others incorporated religious and spiritual props featuring more symbolically "evil"

religious symbols, such as demons. For example, another participant talked about

using the themes of vampire, blood-drinking, and demons to enhance a scene with a

partner, using erotic hypnosis to make the supernatural themes in the scene feel real

to the participant's partner. In this quote, the participant describes the scene as one of

his favorite erotic hypnosis experiences:

> One of my favorites remains the time when I surprised my partner when she
> was coming home. We'd done role plays with a demon character that could
> have his way with her. He was vampiric and he drank blood, etc.… I surprised
> her as she came home by arranging a set in our room. I replaced all the
> lightbulbs with red ones, and I had candles in like a--I scored about a dozen
> silver goblets from an estate sale, and I put candles in them and lit them
> around the room. And had a black mat with a red symbol painted on it on the

floor with some things at the corners. And I let her pass by me and she didn't know I was there and she opened the door to the room and stopped in looking at it and I came up behind her and used her trigger phrase to bring her into trance and allowed her to see me as the demon that we had played with. And I took my time chaining her down and having my way with her physically without even having sex yet and just speaking to her because hypnosis is like poetry. As long as you can continue speaking and thinking of new things to say that relate to the scene, you're already tantalizing them. You're already doing something that is, as long as you know what you're doing as long as you know your partner, it's--you're pretty much going to be doing something that is mental sex to them. And it eventually got to the point where we did blood play…there was a small incision that I made on each of our arms sterilized first and the instrument was also sterilized in between, and while I drank. First, I fed her a drop of my blood and described to her what that would feel like, that it was like liquid electric beyond her lips and on her tongue. How she could feel the essence of some unholy creature infecting her and as I drank the rest of—drank a drop of her blood, I described to her that she felt the rest of it being sucked away and described the cold, blackness of her vision, and then described as everything went to a quiet, cold, nothingness, and then I described this spark of color that grew and feeling of a new life so to speak quote on quote. And this whole vampire turning process that ended with us having ravenous intercourse on the mat for a good while. And followed by a lot of cuddling and aftercare and giggling and that remains one of my favorite scenes to this day.

Others talked about eroticizing religious themes as an early-entry point into their erotic hypnosis interests, such as one participant who described their contact with manga that sexualized figures in Christianity as an early influence:

I think it was mostly drawn porn like manga that featured corruption or something. Like a heroic angel kidnapped by demons and just repeatedly fucked until she realizes, "oh I like demons now!". That sort of thing. There's a lot of hypno-adjacent stuff in manga.

Others talked about religious themes in media that weren't intended to be explicitly sexual, such as one participant who experienced an erotic reaction to a Scooby-Doo movie that heavily featured practices associated with Vodoun.

Yes [laughing]. There was one that I'll, I'll never forget that was very strong for me and it was, uh, like *Scooby Doo* and there was like a zombie island or

something. And there were these witches that had voodoo dolls and the witch takes the voodoo doll and slams Velma against a wall and she's pinned against the wall and completely helpless and, like, there's nothing holding her except for the voodoo doll. And I found that very, very exciting at the time [laughing]…just the fact that she couldn't control herself. I thought that it was very intense and that there was another girl that sort of had that control.

Others even identified religious themes in erotic hypnosis as an entire genre of play, in which the themes are appropriated for pleasure, rather than engaged in sincerely as a form of religious practice. One participant, for instance, pointed to the proliferation of Satanic themes in some gay erotic hypnosis pornography and play as a response to homophobic religious doctrines:

> …I know that there's a lot of that whole Satan worship stuff focused on gay hypnosis, and I feel like it's just part of the play because being gay is so sacrilegious, "it's so dangerous" and "you shouldn't do that". People that are like getting into gay hypnosis are like, "yeah I'm gay, yeah I'm into having sex, yeah I'm down to worship Satan!" [laughs]. It's a little bit tongue in cheek. I don't think that a lot of it— I've never interacted with someone who does that whole Satan worship play and actually worshipped Satan. I really think it's more part of a jest. I feel like in an outside perspective it would be threatening but on the inside and actually knowing what it is, I don't see it as threatening.

As evidenced by these quotes, treating religious themes as "sexy" in erotic hypnosis typically revolved around employing religious symbols of evil, corruption, and supernatural mind control, and seemed to be an especially commonly fetishized theme among the participants interviewed. Part of this fetishization may be related to the relative frequency of participants pointing to their own religious upbringing as a source of their erotic hypnosis interests, detailed next. Participants expressing the theme of eroticizing religious themes were moderately more likely to express the view that their religious upbringing or background was a source of their or others

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erotic hypnosis interests, though with a wide confidence interval, $\varphi(82) = .292$, p < .05, CI [.035, .542].

Erotic Hypnosis and Religion Have an Antagonistic Relationship (39.8% of Participants)

Some participants noted a substantial tension between religious faith (either their own or others) and their interest in erotic hypnosis. This relationship mostly focused on the ways in which religious communities and religious tenets disapproved of engaging in hypnosis in general, and sometimes erotic hypnosis specifically, but notably, the relationship was not only unidirectional. Some religious participants also noted the ways in which the erotic hypnosis community was sometimes hostile to religious belief and practice. Details of these narratives can be found in the two subthemes below:

Erotic Hypnosis Conflicts with Religious Identity and Community (38.6% of Participants)

Many participants recounted experiencing a past or present conflict between their own religious identity (or the religious identities of their communities) and their interest in erotic hypnosis. These conflicts ranged in their severity but were overwhelmingly framed as conflict with Judeo-Christian faith traditions. For example, an ex-Jehovah's Witness participant described relying on a religious library to try to discover information about hypnosis, and experiencing a condemnation of hypnosis through that religious literature:

> …when I was a kid, I was fascinated by [hypnosis]. I would see it in like movies, you know cartoons or whatever, and then I remember that there

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would be times when I'd actually go try and find literature on it. I would read the encyclopedia; I would read the dictionary. But our religion also had a lot of like literature, and I remember that our church had like a room where we had all the old literature for decades and decades and decades. And I went into like an index and looked up "hypnosis", just to kind of see about this. And you go back and there's like stuff from like the 30s and the 40s and the 60s and just reading about it. And of course, as a kid this was *intensely* exciting even though I didn't understand what being sexually excited really meant. I remember seeing this in there, and of course they vilified it a lot. It's all about how it's mind control and it's evil and it's so Satan- it definitely was never in a good way.

Some participants disclosed their interests because they saw it as an important aspect of their identity, experiencing unanticipated conflict with the faith of loved ones, such as one participant who reported:

> …I ended up having to tell my family, my friends, all of those people about it. I think it was such a growing moment because this is something that I had kept quite personal for a really long time and I thought, since I'm going to be more public about it, I should be *really* public about it. Watching their reactions has been interesting. Hoo boy! My mum immediately was concerned. When I first told her, it was because I was a submissive in a relationship with a guy who was a hypnotist. Things were not going so well, and I wanted to kind of share about the relationship, and she was like "Oh my god I can't believe you're doing this! You're letting somebody control your mind, what the hell?! I thought I taught you better than that!". She equated it to devil worship and demon summoning.

At other times, rather than experiencing conflict directly, participants talked about the conflict they *imagined* would occur in the event their religious loved ones were to find out about the participant's interest in erotic hypnosis. One participant, when asked to imagine how their parent's might react, reported,

> … I think my parents would definitely be in the "It's the source of all evil" part. My parents are pretty religious so I think that that would definitely be a hard conversation if they found out 'cause when you look at things like religion the concept of mind control is not too far off, and this is something that some people in those communities happen to believe.

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Other conflicts with religious beliefs were experienced within romantic relationships, resulting in the eventual dissolution of the relationship because of partner's disapproval. In this context, the participant's partner's disapproval was targeted more directly at hypnosis in general, rather than erotic hypnosis in particular, which was a common pattern among much of the knee-jerk religious disapproval.:

> I broke up with a woman from a long-term relationship who was Catholic, and she knew - she didn't know about the erotic part, but she knew about the hypnosis part and she thought it was wrong to basically - to let your mind go where you can be influenced by another person. Almost satanic, allowing the devil to - to play and so that created problems in this - in my relationship with [her]. This woman - She definitely thought it was an evil thing to allow your mind to - to be penetrated by other people.

The participant then continued to report additional conflict with religious stigma outside of the context of a romantic relationship, in more everyday interactions with their religious neighbors.

> …[T]here were people that are across the way who are Mormon and have, you know, their mission is to convert people…So I let them come talk to me and I told them about hypnotism and it basically the same thing: this "you don't do that and submit." - somehow Satan gets involved in this and Hell and that stuff, which I don't believe in.

Other participants emphasized that it was specifically the erotic component of the hypnosis that led to religious objections. One participant even described this kind of knee-jerk reaction to erotic hypnosis as being presumed to be in a kind of predatory cult context, leading to many hypnotists who engage in erotic hypnosis to selectively disclose their participant out of rear of religious objections:

> You'll find a lot of hypnotists *do* work in erotic hypnosis, they're just very quiet about it. It's only the Discord people that tend to come out and about and talk about the fact that they do erotic work, because it is frowned on by a lot of people for a number of reasons, but I'm sure you know all this.

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Religious objections, "What can hypnosis do?" "What can't it do?" "Is this mind control?" "Am I a cult leader?" The answers to those two questions are "no" and "no", but it scares people.

Religious Stigma within the Erotic Hypnosis Community (7.2% of Participants)

A small minority of participants viewed the erotic hypnosis community as one that stigmatizes religion. In contrast to the participants who expressed the subtheme of "Erotic Hypnosis Conflicts with Religious Identity and Community", these participants focused on their perceptions of the erotic hypnosis community's hostility towards religious practices, often focused on erotic hypnosis practitioners who also identified with more traditionally organized religions. One participant who identified as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, for example, speculated as to why they had difficulty finding other Christians in the erotic hypnosis community:

> Every time the subject of Church is brought up on anybody within the community it's usually with some sort of derision. You know, especially because some people have had bad experiences in Church, any Church and that's what led 'em here. And maybe it's because when I joined the Church, it was in my hometown, where there's not a lot of like, the whole LDS culture, which seems to like poison the well a little bit. I love the Church. I love my faith. But I really don't like the culture that's in the, in the, where there's the larger groups, like there's a culture going around.

For this participant, they identify the presence of an anti-Christian stigma within the erotic hypnosis community, but immediately explain it via the experience of harmful experiences with past churches, and the culture of places with a strong church presence. Other participants who experienced religious stigma within the erotic hypnosis community were more likely to focus on their frustration with that stigma, such as one religious Jewish participant who explained:

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In terms of being Jewish, it's complicated because there's a lot of Jews running around the scene and I'm always like "oh God, I don't want to examine this too closely", but it's also been really difficult for me because I tend to be the only religious Jew around. And people, Jews and non-Jews alike, tend to, I've had some bad experiences with people pushing back or being rude about that…Friday night and Saturday night, 25 hours every week, I have a very different set of standards for how I live my life. I try to go to conventions then, and just abide within those rules at the convention space and people don't understand. People, I've expressed, I had a conversation on Twitter once where I said I feel like people get uncomfortable with I talk about my religion. And a couple people said, "We are uncomfortable when you talk about religion, and we don't want to hear about it." … I've gotten weird like microaggressions and like uncomfortable comments that I don't appreciate, that I don't get in other spaces…. I was doing a class. The whole thing, it ends with me doing Q and A of the class in doll-space. As sort of like a whole experiential thing and something that's really important to me. So, I'm in this very vulnerable space where basically I'm just in a wait-state until I get a question, and then I answer the question, … "So do you need a rabbi's permission before you do erotic hypnosis?" And that was like a shitty question that was directed at me when I was like in trance.

For this participant, being in an erotic hypnosis trance state, in which she had

been psychologically transformed into a doll headspace, who couldn't speak until

asked a question, made the sting of being stereotyped for her religious practices

especially painful and disempowering. Some participants expressed ambivalence

about being fetishized for their religious faith, such as one participant who identified

as a witch explaining the reactions she experienced from others in the erotic hypnosis

community:

Identifying as a Witch sometimes makes people feel different kinda ways, because I feel like the general view of witchcraft and being a Witch is, people are like, "Are you a bad Witch or a good Witch?" …You know and then sometimes, people will fetishize that, specifically? Like they'll ask me to do a spell on them or something? Sometimes I do play into that idea of putting a spell on someone, like in a hypnotic way. But I'm not genuinely gonna put a spell on you because that's my practice and I'm not gonna do that on other people… So, it's interesting how people will fetishize any category that you're in, anything that you identify as, they'll take that one thing and fetishize it and

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be confused by the stereotypes and stuff, and sometimes they are able to come around and sometimes they stick to it.

For this participant, she seemed open to eroticizing religious and spiritual themes around her religious practices but drew the line at engaging in those practices in real life with her erotic hypnosis partners, because of the ways in which the fetishization and stereotyping of her religious faith within the erotic hypnosis community was experienced. To conclude, though fairly rare, the small number of participants in this study who experienced stigma around their religious faith, whether through stereotyping, derision, or ambivalent reactions to fetishization, described a feeling of unwelcomeness around their religious beliefs and practices within the erotic hypnosis community.

Hypnosis-Adjacent Activities Contrast with Erotic Hypnosis (31.3% of Participants)

Unlike those who talked about practices adjacent to hypnosis (often identified as spiritual practices such as guided meditation, yoga, and energy play) as a stepping stone to erotic hypnosis interests, or described erotic hypnosis as fundamentally spiritual itself, some participants took the time to describe explicit contrasts between the experience of erotic hypnosis and these other practices. These contrasts were typically descriptive and nonjudgmental, identifying how the practices differed without evaluating one practice as better or worse than another. They also were typically expressed in response to explicitly being prompted to contrast these experiences, rather than coming from participants independently during the interviews. Additionally, these contrasts were usually expressed by people who had

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lived experience with both practices, rather than based on pure speculation. Some of

these contrasts focused on more physical, bodily experiences. For instance, one

participant talked about their sense of size feeling different between meditation and

hypnosis:

> Very different… [W]henever I do hypnosis for some reason I feel like my
> mind is expanding or like my head is expanding. That sounds very odd.
> Whereas whenever I do meditations, I feel like, even when I'm like you know,
> picturing whatever is in the guided meditations, I'm seeing myself more like
> shrinking and there's things around me, and whenever I'm doing hypnosis it's
> more like inflating.

Others contrasted the experience of erotic hypnosis with meditation by

emphasizing other physical sensations, like the feeling of gravity. One participant

with extensive experience with Buddhist practices described this difference to

narrating:

> …[S]tarting in my late teens, I got into meditation, and so I spent lots and lots
> of years with meditation. Um, for a while. I mean, I actually got to the point
> where I thought I was going to get ordained, become pretty serious in
> Buddhism. Um, so a lot of experience with meditation and yoga and just lots
> of things that are very mind-centered…I feel like when I'm in, and this is just
> my own personal experience, but I feel like when I'm meditating, I get can get
> to a very calm place, but it's not really a place. It just feels like I'm just feeling
> very calm and where I'm focusing on whatever I'm focusing on for meditation.
> But in hypnosis I've noticed that I actually have a space, an actual space that I
> feel when I'm in hypnosis, in a trance, that feels like a physical space. Like I
> actually will drop, like the drop is actually a drop for me, which doesn't
> happen when I'm meditating. I never have this feeling of 'Whoa. I'm
> dropping' where I do have that in hypnosis.

Other participants focused more on contrasting the purposes of hypnosis with

other spiritual practices, rather than the physical experience, often emphasizing the

erotic or pleasure-focused components of erotic hypnosis in particular.

I definitely think the big thing is with meditation is definitely like, it's not really erotic…I think, with meditation, it could also be just sort of, like, you know, I feel like it's more of a way of like cognitive and like, psychological development, as well as just, you know, wanting to chill yourself out. But I think, you know, erotic hypnosis, it's about, you know, pleasure, I would say. …I don't think meditation is strictly a pleasure thing.

Others would emphasize differences in the psychological experience of hypnosis and other religious practices, especially around awareness and focus. Some participants would emphasize that they felt hyper-aware when under hypnosis, while meditation would lead them to lose some awareness. One participant, for example, explained:

I used to be a practicing Buddhist, so I would chant for multiple hours at a time… When I would chant, I can say that I wasn't as aware. It's been my experience, being induced [in hypnosis] is that I'm always aware. I'm one of those people that remembers every aspect of a session. None of it is left on me. The person who normally puts me under would tell you that I have a very interactive subconscious and I can distinctly feel like I'm just sitting there watching the conversation. Chanting was not that. It would get very laser focused, and I would feel almost out of body, as opposed to where I've been under [hypnosis], I very much feel a part of the process.

On the other hand, some participants would describe the difference in awareness between hypnosis and other practices the other way around, emphasizing hypnosis as a state of reduced awareness. One participant, for instance, contrasted their experience of yoga as one of high awareness, while hypnosis involved forgetting what is occurring in the present moment:

I did a lot of meditation via yoga...for a full year actually…I'd say a good 40% of yoga, at least the yoga we were doing, was meditation and relaxing and calming…yoga is focusing on calming and finding your inner self, and your center, and the center of your body, and making sure your right shoulder isn't further up than your left shoulder… And then hypno, especially the erotic hypno, is very focused on, at least from what I've experienced, either,

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like, quote-unquote "brainwashing" or kinda just forgetting about what's going on.

Others talked about the difference in psychological experience between erotic hypnosis and spiritual practices like meditation in terms of the degree of psychological effort that they felt was necessary to maintain the altered state, with one experienced meditator describing the difference as:

> …I find that when I'm meditating, it's more about being aware of my surroundings and my body and like what state my mind is in, and that kind of lends itself to a much lighter experience. Like I find myself kind of drifting in and out of a meditative state like consistently and often I have to really put effort in to stay in that space, because it's really about focusing in a way that's broadening your attention almost, as much as you can, like being aware of your entire body, and entire state of mind at the same time. Whereas with hypnosis, um, I tend to feel like I don't really have to put effort into maintaining the state, like I'm not trying to do it for hours or something, and…I'm more likely to lose time or like be less aware of my surroundings or be even less aware of what I'm thinking… Hypnosis feels more like that feeling when you're about to fall asleep, where you like can't remember exactly what you were thinking about, or you can't tell how your thoughts are behaving, whereas with meditation, I'm like very hyper-aware of all of that. Yeah, so that's what I would say the primary difference is for me.

Rather than focusing on more traditionally spiritual activities, other participants focused on describing the contrast between the state of erotic hypnosis and subspace, a state of consciousness experienced by those on the submissive or receiving end of traditional BDSM scenes. When asked about experience with hypnosis-adjacent activities, one participant said, for example:

> I think the closest I have is during intense BDSM scenes with impact or even the act of sex and like power control within sex. The letting go and being taken over by someone is inherently trance like for me and it's easy to bliss out. So that's the closest I have…It's probably subspace I would say but from my experience so far, the trance space and subspace feel, are similar things for me.

When asked explicitly about the difference between subspace and trance, the participant identified the emotional and physical needs they experience after each state as a key point of difference.

> Uh I don't have a need of aftercare or comedown like I do from subspace. For subspace, usually that's associated with a more intense activity, and I crave and need connection continuously even through the end of that, where with trance it's much more like, I can go back and forth.

Others, rather than relying on a single spiritual practice, drew contrasts between hypnosis and a wide variety of spiritual practices, such as one participant who described having experience with meditation, energy play, and spirit-walking.

> **…** With meditation um versus hypnosis, hypnosis seems to be more goal-oriented, where meditation is more your goal is the trance itself. Whereas hypnosis, you have to have a goal outside of the trance. Energy play is more focused on the energy exchange, and spirit walking, it's slightly different, because your goal is to separate – you enter the trance state, but your goal is to separate yourself from your body, so it's a slightly different trance state. Rather than going inward, you're going outward. So, those would be the differences.

Overall, while some participants described erotic hypnosis as including substantial differences from these hypnosis-adjacent practices, the specific differences identified were often varied, and sometimes contradictory. Notably, the differences that were identified featured a wide variety of physical, psychological, and purposive factors that varied substantially from person-to-person.

Religious Upbringing or Background as a Source of Erotic Hypnosis Interest (20.5% of Participants)

Some participants, when talking about religion and spirituality, speculated that their own religious upbringing (or other's religious upbringing) may have been a

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primary contributor to their interest in erotic hypnosis. For some, these stories took

the form of religious instruction leading to the eroticization of a hypnotic state, such

as the story of this Jewish participant:

> I went to Jewish day school and in our Bible class, we were learning the story of Adam, and God puts Adam into a deep sleep to take Eve out of Adam's rib. I remember the word in Hebrew is *tardema* (תַּרְדֵּמָה), and I remember being really riveted by that word and that particular, children's Bible, I found years later on my parent's shelf, and I had lightly underlined the word in pencil. That's not a hundred percent confirmation, but I had this very distinct memory that *many* years went by, and I was able to connect the pieces. So yeah, and that was definite- that was my first-grade textbook [laughing].

For others, the suppression of sex common in more sexually conservative

religious traditions acted as an initial pull towards erotic hypnosis as a way to imagine

experiencing eroticism without having sex. One participant described as "being

sexual without having sex" in their conservative Christian college environment as an

asexual man:

> …Not being straight in a conservative Christian college…. I was told you should never have sex until you are married, and I was honestly just very scared about that and the same thing with masturbation. Just like you don't want to masturbate, it's an unholy thing to do, it's a sinful desire. So, I really struggled with that but still wanted to have that outlet, and knowing that I needed that outlet because my body was trying to tell me that I needed that outlet. And so [hypnosis] became sort of a solace in a way, a way that I could let go of that stress not only sexually, but just mentally and physically. And a lot of just like not having to worry about what I'm doing and just letting someone else take control.

Another participant echoed this sentiment as a reason why they felt driven

towards written erotic hypnosis erotica, rather than videos or audio files, and helps

illustrate how a sexuality based around words rather than more explicit sexuality may

have been influenced by his conservative Catholic upbringing.

I'm from a very Catholic country. I'm from a very particular town that's in the very conservative portion of this country, so very Catholic, very conservative, so I did not look for porn when I was growing up. It was just unthinkable. Right? There's also like, "sure I knew that my friends would look for it, but I didn't feel comfortable enough looking for it…So it was easy for me not to focus on sex, sexuality, etcetera, until after I moved out, out of that city and that country in particular. So, and again like that conservativism…I mean it's still ingrained in myself. I grew up with it. It's part of who I am, so I always felt more comfortable with things that didn't have explicit imagery. Which is why I always felt comfortable with the written word.

Another participant echoed this same idea of erotic hypnosis as a way to experience eroticism in a way that felt indirect and less sinful by relying on hypnosis scripts.

Yeah. I was extremely sheltered for most of my life and my parents were very Christian…My parents telling me that God thought that masturbation and things was a sin and evil. I wasn't really sure about how to deal with any of that. And as I came of age, uh, it was something that I decided I wanted to be comfortable with. I wanted to explore my body and understand it. And so, scripts were an easy way for me to experience sexuality without getting too in-depth. I guess the best way to word it is that there wasn't as much intimacy.

One participant credited their erotic hypnosis interest to their parent's former participation in an emotionally traumatic cult, and both the fear and internal sexualization of hypnosis practices associated with it by the participant as a child.

My family was in a cult when I was born and that day a lot of the cult had a still have like a new age stuff going around…I remember that when I was super young I want to say when I was maybe five or so, that my mom took me, that they had given a picture of me to a medium and the medium was going to do some work on it. It was like a little bit I guess scared but like in a sexual kind of way about it. Cause I thought that might be some mind control element to it I think…I blame it fortunately with my hypnokink.

While most of these stories were about religious beliefs that the participant had internalized, one participant who identifies as spiritual but not religious,

described their interest in erotic hypnosis as an outgrowth of their skepticism towards

the Christian religious tradition they were raised in:

> I'm probably more spiritual than religious, I guess. So, actually I approached hypnosis, I got into hypnosis because I don't believe in the Lord. So, I really learned how to do it to prove or disprove whether or not it works so I'm a bit more analytical I guess scientific or something like that.

For this participant, hypnosis was a way to "test out" and analyze spiritual

claims first-hand to see whether they worked or not, as opposed to accepting spiritual

and religious claims based on faith or dogma. This was the only participant who

expressed this view, but was still a larger outgrowth of his Christian upbringing. In

summary for a minority of participants, hypnosis was in some way influenced by their

religious background and upbringing, typically as a child, sometimes as a reaction to

religiously oriented sexual suppression, sometimes from religious literature, and, in

one case, as a revolt against the concept of faith itself.

Results: Race, Ethnicity, Nationality, and Language

To examine how race, ethnicity, national identity, and the language spoken by participants interact with erotic hypnosis fetishism, three coders examined the data. Unlike the coding done for other sections themes, this coding had an additional initial step, intended to incorporate more perspectives. Initially the author (who identifies as White) and a research assistant (who identifies as Black and Taino) collaborated together, reading through portions of the dataset simultaneously that had been content coded in the first round into any codes related to race and ethnicity. This was done as an initial coding step to provide preliminary data for a conference. In that step, several themes were constructed that were suggested as potential themes to consider in future rounds of coding. Later, the regular coding method was followed with a different research assistant (who identified as Chinese, and as a non-native English speaker). By incorporating coders with a variety of experiences related to nationality, race, ethnicity, and linguistic identity, the hope was to provide a more well-rounded set of themes at the end. Both this new research assistant and I conducted a reflexive thematic analysis as described above in the Methods section on a subset of the entire interview dataset. The subset was selected based on participants who had made any reference to race, ethnicity, nationality, or spoken language. To operationalize those references, the two coders analyzed only portions of the dataset which had been content-coded into at least one of the following 46 content categories (For detailed definitions and examples of each content code, see Appendix E):

1) Race, Ethnicity

2) White

3) Black

4) Latino

5) Asian

6) Jewish

7) Indigenous

8) Mixed-Race

9) Participant Speculations Regarding the Lack of PoC in the Erotic Hypnosis

   Community

10) Uncertain as to why there is a lack of PoC

11) Racial Stereotyping, Prejudice, Racism

12) Raceplay

13) Racial Fetishism

14) Nationality

15) Turkish

16) Malaysian

17) Indian, subcontinent

18) US American

19) Icelandic

20) French

21) Canadian

22) Brazilian

23) Australian

24) Kiwi (New Zealander)

25) Czech Republic

26) Greek

27) Mexico

28) Netherlands/Dutch

29) German

30) Immigration Status, living in a different country

31) Language Spoken

32) Accents

33) Chinese

34) Spanish

35) Portuguese

36) Greek

37) English

38) Dutch

39) German

40) Indigenous, First Nations Languages

41) Language Barriers, Features, Idiosyncrasies

42) Hebrew

43) French

44) Malay

45) ASL (American Sign Language)

46) Bilingualism, Polyglot

The results of our thematic analysis yielded four themes, fourteen sub-themes and 3 sub-sub-themes, which will be described in detail below, with several examples of each:

1) Erotic Hypnosis Communities are Struggling with issues of Racial, Ethnic, and National Diversity

    a. Fallout from the Whiteness of the Erotic Hypnosis Community

    b. The Tensions of Racial Fetishization

        i. Negative Reactions to Racial Fetishization

        ii. Ambivalent Reactions to Racial Fetishization

        iii. Positive Reactions to Racial Fetishization

    c. Ethnoreligious and Cultural Stigma Against Hypnosis

    d. Distorted Media Images of Erotic Hypnosis and Race

    e. The Push and Pull of Racial Self-Segregation in Erotic Hypnosis

    f. Fears of Immigration-Related Persecution of Kink Interests

2) Colorblind Ideologies are Prevalent in the Erotic Hypnosis Community

    a. The Failure of Colorblind Platitudes in the Erotic Hypnosis Community

    b. The Endorsement of Colorblind Platitudes in the Erotic Hypnosis Community

<ol start="3" type="c">
Socioeconomic and Logistical Explanations of Lack of PoC in Community

3) Language is Fundamental to the Practice of Erotic Hypnosis

    a. The Challenges of Translating Erotic Hypnosis Skills and Concepts Across Languages

    b. Using Language Features to Enhance Erotic Hypnosis Experience

    c. The Centrality of Accents to Race and Ethnicity in Erotic Hypnosis

4) Erotic Hypnosis Offers People of Color Unique Opportunities

    a. Erotic Hypnosis as an Opportunity for PoC Coping, Reclamation, Resistance, and Celebration

    b. Online Erotic Hypnosis Spaces Offer Opportunity to Hide One's Race

Erotic Hypnosis Communities are Struggling with Issues of Racial, Ethnic, and National Diversity (95.1% of Participants)

Most participants in the study noted that the erotic hypnosis community was experiencing substantial challenges in the area of race, ethnic, and/or national-origin-based diversity, often in the form of noting that the community was an overwhelmingly White one. This theme attempts to capture the wide variety of forms this discourse took, including noting problems stemming from the community being too White, the role played by racial fetishization in complicating the experiences of People of Color in the community, that stigma against hypnosis was perceived as being more prevalent in communities of color, the role of media representations in intensifying these issues, the impact of these challenges on the creation and sustaining

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of people-of-color-only erotic hypnosis spaces, and, for a very small number of

participants, the impact of the U.S. immigration system on inhibiting their full

participation in erotic hypnosis. Many detailed stories of these phenomena can be

found in the sub-themes below:

Fallout from the Whiteness of the Erotic Hypnosis Community (89.2% of

Participants)

There was nearly unanimous agreement among participants that the erotic

hypnosis community was a predominately White community, with many people

spontaneously noticing a lack of racial and ethnic diversity, and other participants

agreeing that there was a lack of diversity *when asked explicitly* for their impression

of the racial and ethnic composition of the community. Most participants whose

responses fell into this category were coded here primarily because they simply noted

an overrepresentation of White people. For example, some speculated explicitly with

numbers, such as one Black participant who described their first experience at an in-

person erotic hypnosis convention as:

> Well you know as a person of color in the community there just are not a lot
> … so you know not entirely unaccustomed to it, but it's just always that
> feeling of 150 people and 4 of them are Black, of the 4 of that are Black, 2 of
> them don't want to talk to you *(laughs).*

Others noted that the overrepresentation of White people in the community

outside of conference spaces as well. For instance, one White participant with a

popular online blog focused on erotic hypnosis observed:

> I don't often get People of Color, to be honest, who are super interested in
> this? Probably cause like the master/slave connotations of submission. I do
> sometimes, like my ten thousand followers like, have maybe three to five that

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I think are not White…So three to five that are not White that I'm aware of. And there could be like hundreds more that just haven't contacted me that I just don't know. Um, but the majority of the people who I find are predominantly White.

Before even prompting participants to talk about race and ethnicity, some participants identified the lack of racial diversity as a key challenge the community was facing. For instance, one Asian American participant, when asked the generic question: "if you could change the erotic hypnosis community in some way, what would you want to change?", responded:

[long pause] Honestly, I think I really do feel very alone as a person of color a lot of times. I really wish that there were more inclusion, or more representation of different kinds of folks, not just PoC but you know. I think that there's a lot of queer and, you know, a little bit of trans representation actually, in the erotic hypnotic community, but not very many People of Color… I feel like it's very, US- and North America-centric, so like folks from other countries and cultures and places. Just more different types of folks…. I think it's weird being the only [Asian American] in a lot of spaces. I think I'm very conscious of it. Even in like the PoC spaces that I've been in, some like, on the rare times that we've had them like, a lot of times I'm still the only Asian cause everyone else is like a different PoC.

Other participants noted how the substantial numerical overrepresentation of White people in the erotic hypnosis community functioned as a kind of White privilege, often by making Whiteness invisible. One gay White participant, for example, expressed some ambivalence about identifying the advantages they experienced as a White person in the gay men's erotic hypnosis community:

So, sadly, a lot of the community is White. A lot of people see me as kind of normal and so [long pause] it's not that I get any special treatment, I mean I do feel like I do get a little bit of special treatment especially since a lot of guys that are White, interacting with other guys that are White. Not as a racist thing, but just preference thing, even though there might be some racist feelings behind that. [sighs] I [long pause] I've never been ostracized for

being White, I've never been turned down because I am White and so I feel like there is privilege, but I've never seen the alternative.

In this quote, the White participant identifies a relationship between the community being highly White, and his own inability to detect privilege because of a lack of experience and exposure to non-White people, not being able to "see the alternative" to White privilege. As a result, he sometimes vacillates back and forth between perceiving that White people get no special privileges, and White people being privileged. Similarly, he vacillates between disavowing racism as a cause of the Whiteness of the community and identifying racist attitudes as a potential cause. This vacillation helps to illustrate how the Whiteness of the community can sometimes serve to make Whiteness and White privilege invisible to some White members of the erotic hypnosis community.

Other White participants expressed the invisibility of Whiteness by expressing surprise when asked to consider potential racial aspects of the community. For instance, when asked to consider how their identity as a White person may have impacted their experience with the erotic hypnosis community, one White participant puzzled:

I don't really know. I know that I most probably have some form of White privilege, maybe, but I'm not, I don't really know the answer to that. Like, I don't know. I've never thought about that, no.

In contrast with many White participants expressing how Whiteness can be fairly invisible within the community, participants of color often identified specific ways in which the Whiteness of the community had negative consequences. For

instance, some noted the difficulty in finding erotic hypnosis partners, such as one

Black participant who noted:

> Typically, it's just like, not as many play partners who are willing, not a lot of people who would be interested. Just because they're not sexually attracted to someone who's Black.

Other participants proposed that the early underrepresentation of People of

Color as teachers and leaders in the community may be a cause of the more general

lack of People of Color. Most of the people who suggested this were White. Some of

these also expressed hope that this was changing, such as one White British

participant who speculated:

> I know through talking to people in the community, when the cons started, it was primarily White guys in neckbeards ranting and raving about hypnosis, right? So maybe, there's still a little bit of that around. Maybe that we have a lot more female-presenters and we have a lot more People of Color presenting, maybe things will change because now we have role models in the community that are not White guys with neckbeards, you know?

Some noted the potential consequences of having so few presenters of color in

the community, such as one White European participant who described an ethnic

microaggression against a person of color in the community:

> …then there are more almost exclusively White presenters so you're like, "Hey, is it for me?" if you're not that. When someone picks up a demo from the others, they're going to pick a White person and you're like "okay does it mean I'm not deserving or whatever". I suspect there's a lot of big ways that are worse. I've seen stuff in my munches as well, like, for example, there was a new person coming who was, I think, Egyptian. And one of the leaders was like "Oh, you should meet such-and-such because they're from Saudi Arabia!" and like that felt like it--I would not like that if it happened to me.

In this story, the participant draws a parallel between the lack of People of

Color in leadership positions creating a sense of lack of belonging, compounded with

White leaders engaging in racial microaggressions (treating Egypt and Saudi Arabia as a cohesive cultural whole). I will note here that while the participant expresses a distaste for being lumped in culturally with a larger geographic region, I have nevertheless chosen to describe their background as "European" here, rather than the specific country from which they hail, in an effort to protect their anonymity as best as possible. Their identity as someone belonging to a specific European country, and not some kind of wholistic European identity appears to be part of how they are imagining resonating with the Egyptian participant's experience here.

Others noted this pattern as well, connecting it with a more general lack of People of Color in the community, rather than focusing on leadership specifically. One White participant described it as a need for a critical mass of People of Color to make the space feel safer and get more People of Color as erotic hypnosis educators:

> There aren't a lot of People of Color, there aren't a lot of People of Color who educate… I can't speak for that first-hand, but all of the like mansplaining I get as a woman, I'm sure people get sort of sense of like "you can't be an authority because you aren't White". Like subtle stuff. Yeah, it's you know, this community that I'm in, we've had very few non-White teachers over the like ten years of its existence and we don't feel great about it, but like there aren't many of them and it's like we are still like part of the problem, so it's like how do you break out of that, out of that cycle and get more folks? And also, when there's very few People of Color, People of Color feel unsafe, and so we need to get critical mass to signal that it's a safe space.

Some participants contended that the lack of People of Color in the community also led to some People of Color being specifically racially targeted for mistreatment by White community members with little recourse from consent teams. For instance, one Black participant detailed how the assumption of implied White

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ownership of communal physical space led to a serious altercation at an erotic-

hypnosis camping event:

> This is a famous event. It was on-I say famous-it was the big hoopla on
> FetLife. And as a camping event…it's a cabin with lots of you common
> sleeping area with little bunkbeds, little racks out there. And my friend, who's
> the one Black lady of 15, 16 people, she shows up late, so most of the beds are
> taken. There's one open next to the bathrooms, which she takes…Well the last
> people to arrive are a couple. Now everybody else kinda knows each other
> already; she was the only one that didn't know anybody else. Well, they
> wanted her to switch beds so that the couple could be together…She felt kinda
> comfortable in the corner and so she said no. And they kept going, and they
> kept going, and so she got up to get away. She went into the bathroom. She's
> right there next to the living space and…she can hear them out there: "Well
> just move her stuff. Just move it." And then the guy standing in the doorway:
> "Let's talk about it." He's talking to her. She's now trapped in the bathroom,
> can't get out, and said, "Well can we go outside," which she took as
> [*threateningly*] "Oh you want to take this outside?" So, they call the cabin
> captain to try to make her move…Now mind you, they all know each other.
> They could've switched with anybody else in there. They could've moved
> anybody else, any of the other 15 people could have changed around so this
> married couple could be together, but now they care about making her move.
> So, she still didn't move, and now the camp people get involved. They
> elevated it to the camp people: "We're being threatened by this woman in our
> cabin. We don't feel safe that she's here." And now she has to go through two
> hours of talking to the consent team of this place. And let me get this straight,
> "You think I came here to harass a whole bunch of people that I don't know in
> a cabin I have to go to sleep after I made them mad? That's what you think?"
> [The consent team responded,] "Woah what did you want us to think that the
> rest of them are lying?" [She responded,] "Yes, yes". So, she packed up her
> stuff and left. Now later on that weekend one of the people involved started
> talking and said, "Oh yeah we made that up." And then that got reported, and
> then that same person went online: "I took part in a racist incident", and tried
> to apologize, but the damage had already been done…That's what I mean with
> your nobody [says], "hey ni**** get out of here."…They weaponized the
> system tried to shoo her away to get what they wanted…and that's why that's
> part of the reason why you don't see more Black people at non-PoC events is
> they're really that concerned of what happens if something goes wrong. Is
> anyone going to listen to me? There's a room full of White people, and me
> saying one thing, and them saying another… is anybody going to listen to me?

Some connected the lack of People of Color in the erotic hypnosis community

to broader institutional systems of racism, such as police brutality or the legacy of the history of slavery in the terms used in the broader kink community, such as *Master/slave* and *bondage*. For example, one White participant talked about how these larger systems may play a role in pushing people away:

> I think [sighs] it's a combination of things. it's a perpetuating cycle because kink has been predominately White, kink uses quite a few racial slavery terms, a *lot* of racial slavery terms that generally goes about in conversation so you have this inherently racist linguistic set in your baseline kink … Systemic racism would probably the best summary of that: for all the reasons that it sucks to be not-White in America in many other ways, the inherent exclusion of being not-White. 'Cause, I'm in rock climbing, we ask ourselves the same question. A Black guy camping in the woods is very different than a White guy camping in the woods to police. It's not that the activity itself is inherently racist or unBlack…And I feel like you just always have this secondary in order to make a community in the United States not predominately White, you need to work intentionally and put in a lot of effort into making it very clear to clean up the things that we brought over from the main society that are inherently racist. Cause a subculture is an inherent part of a larger culture, if a culture's racist the subculture needs to explicitly remove those components or it's going to still be explicitly racist.

While the perceived fallout from the Whiteness of the erotic hypnosis community varied from White privilege to racial discrimination in partner selection, to a lack of People of Color in education and leadership positions to targeted racial harassment, nearly all participants agreed that a high degree of Whiteness was a feature of the community. However, participants also discussed a wide variety of other themes related to race, ethnicity, nationality, and language that they didn't explicitly connect with the broader Whiteness of the community, detailed in the less pervasive themes expressed below.

The Tensions of Racial Fetishization (55.4% of Participants)

Some participants, and primarily participants of color, talked about experiences of racial fetishization (being treated as an erotic object or erotic target specifically because of one's perceived racial identity) in the erotic hypnosis community that had been directed at them. While the literature on racial fetishization discusses it largely as a negative phenomenon (e.g., Hook, 2005; Thompson, 2006), and that was still the most common reaction expressed by participants in this study, we were also surprised to hear ambivalent and occasionally positive reactions to being racially fetishized expressed by participants. Below we will detail examples of each kind of reaction:

Negative Reactions to Racial Fetishization (31.3% of Participants). Most participants in this category who talked about their reactions to being racially fetishized expressed it as a negative experience that made them feel unwelcome in the community. Often these were stories directed at women. For instance, one Black, Caribbean, Hispanic woman discussed receiving an unsolicited racially fetishizing message on a kinky social networking website:

> Actually, yes, I did get [a message], one time that was racially motivated! It was somebody who was a White supremacist who wanted to "fuck the Black out of me". Don't really understand how that works, but it was a hate fuck. For me the thing that I struggle with the most on platforms like FetLife or Tumblr is…I often get a lot of messages from people describing how they would rape me.

Similarly, one Latina participant talked about racially fetishistic assumptions people made about her, connecting her experience in the erotic hypnosis community with larger systems of racial fetishization:

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I think I am fetishized a lot, not just in erotic hypno, but in eroticism in general. People like to view Latinas as bossy and spicy or whatever and having big boobs and a big ass and everything, all that kind of nonsense. So, I do get people who try to fetishize me in that way, like. "I bet you have a big ass," even though they've never fuckin seen it...I've also had people try to be racist towards me you know obviously. I had someone be racist towards me but completely the wrong way. They called me like a "sand n-word". Like a slur for middle eastern people. Like you're a racist, but you didn't even get it right! That's not even my ethnicity. Like I clearly have in my bio that I'm Latina, but you still fucked up the slur. Now you're a double dumbass.

In both of the above quotes, the participants are clearly having negative reactions to their experiences of racial fetishization, but are also using humor, (e.g., "Don't really understand how that works" and "but you didn't even get it right!") to manage the tensions they experience within the community. At other times, participants discussed their negative reactions to being racially fetishized as a constraint on their ability to explore their sexual selves. For instance, the Black, Caribbean, Hispanic woman from earlier explained,

When we look at Caribbean people or Hispanic people, we already have this thing as a people and especially people who identify as women. We're oversexualized to a point that we feel like we have to bring ourselves down…to stop the stereotype-ization. So, for example Caribbean women giving head, or Hispanic women being very feisty in bed. So, I feel like because of that you often find that People of Color don't allow themselves to explore or are not in an environment where they can freely allow themselves to explore their kinks and their taboos, because there's a lot of shame. It's almost kinda like [pause] People of Color are not given the same room to explore different parts of their identity, and that it's a privilege, but it's supposed to be a right…they don't get the room to breathe in these areas.

Other People of Color focused on their discomfort with racially fetishizing themes in erotic hypnosis literature. For instance, one Asian participant described their discomfort with racial fetishization on the erotic mind control story archive website, one of the largest repositories of erotic hypnosis erotica online:

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There is a lot of BBC [Big Black Cock] stuff which obviously is not okay, jeez. And then when Asian people are portrayed, they are usually either submissive or they are trying to subvert that by being overly dommy…I saw one recently where they were not literate and just like described as being less or more infantile than the rest of the characters.

Some forms of racial fetishization, even when unintentional, were characterized as potentially devastating for some People of Color in being able to maintain the headspace they wanted to maintain in an erotic hypnosis space. One Black participant playing with a Black female partner at an erotic hypnosis conference recalled an instance of this unintentional racial fetishization from onlookers threatening their erotic hypnosis scene:

One thing that did bother me…we were playing at a hypnosis conference; we were in the dungeon, and she had headphones in…there were some people watching. We were like one of 6 or 7 Black people at the event, and she's shapely, which I appreciate. But as we're [playing] I hear some guys that are watching are saying, "I'd like to spank that ass" and had she not had her headphones, that would have been the kind of thing that would have taken her completely out of her headspace. That would have taken her completely out… We'd have to shut it down right there and she would have had it all down and she'd have to leave the space. And I get they didn't mean anything bad by it, and he was trying to be appreciative, but she's in there wondering, "Are they looking at my ass?" and "This is the first time they've seen a naked Black woman." These are all the things that she has to go through, that I don't have to go through so I'm empathetic and sympathetic to her situation.

Some White participants also expressed discomfort with the idea of dominating a non-White person for fear of the racially fetishistic dynamics that it might involve. Typically, this was because of discomfort with replicating racist power dynamics in an erotic context, or the perception that it was fetishizing. For instance, one White participant found themselves nervously laughing while imagining that scenario.

As a White person for example, I don't know that I'll ever feel comfortable being dominating towards a person of color. That is not [nervous laughter] something I feel comfortable with, so I guess if I was going to like be a person in the role of hypnotizing, I would only feel comfortable doing it to like other White people, because I wouldn't feel comfortable being in a position of power over a person of color even if that was a very important kink to that person. I couldn't do that.

This discomfort with even imagined, unintentional racial fetishization can, unfortunately, contribute to the difficulty with some People of Color in finding partners (as expressed in the previous theme). Based on the more ambivalent and positive reactions to racial fetishization expressed in the themes below, the key component that may help to distinguish between these reactions is whether or not the fetishization is consensual.

Ambivalent Reactions to Racial Fetishization (25.3% of Participants).

Unlike participants who expressed clear discomfort with being racially fetishized, others felt more neutral or ambivalent about those experiences, often characterizing it as a mixed bag. For some participants of color, this took the form of talking about how the appropriation of the language of slavery was okay for others, so long as it wasn't directed at them, or they didn't witness it. One participant with African ancestry explained:

> Well for me one of my limits are I don't mind the "master" things, if it doesn't trigger me when I see it. But my personal limit is that I don't want to do that because my great grandmother was actually sold from [South American country] to [Latin American Island], my island where I was from. So, it hits very close to home, and we were colonized and all of this, so it's something I don't particularly enjoy, but I've also been very lucky where I haven't even seen any racial play in any of the erotic hypnosis or kink communities that I've been in. I know that it exists and it's out there but thankfully I haven't seen it, so it hasn't negatively impacted me in any way.

A few participants talked about the use of erotic hypnosis to play with race

explicitly, involving using hypnotic suggestion to imagine a transformation of one's

racial identity. One Hispanic participant who discussed this expressed personal

disapproval, while also experiencing intellectual curiosity:

> What's interesting though is that I did come across a person who was
> interested hypnosis and transformation for the purposes of race play, which is
> a very- I wasn't terribly comfortable with that topic but it was interesting to
> discover, and that was indeed his thing.

Some of the ambivalence from participants stemmed from wanting to enjoy

racially fetishistic play, while simultaneously wanting to avoid playing with people

who held racist attitudes. For example, one participant who identified as multi-racial,

Filipino, Asian, Hispanic, and White described their ambivalence as "tricky":

> Honestly, I am very clearly the ambiguously ethnic person in the room, and I
> love to troll White people, so I will dress up as any one of my identities just to
> fuck with them. [laughs] but like also it's interesting because exoticism is
> present in every space that I do kink in, and it is handy that it's also a kink for
> me. So cool, but tricky right? Because um… just because it's exciting for me
> doesn't mean I actually want someone who actually is racist to get off on this,
> so that's tricky and I feel like, I feel like that makes me both more
> approachable in those spaces and also less approachable depending on how
> okay these people are with the way they feel about like racial kinks. Which is
> a thing that I have seen people be much more understanding of and much less
> understanding of depending on how much soul-searching they've done
> themselves.

Some more neutral reactions were discussed primarily in opposition to those

who were imagined to have a negative *overreaction* to interracial kink play of any

kind. For instance, one White participant who plays with men explained,

> And I've seen it, where people would turn away from People of Color and
> more toward White males and that's kind of sad. There's also the idea within
> the fetish community they explore boundaries and look at things that are taboo
> and forbidden topics. Especially when it comes down to even, imagery and

acting out certain scenes, for example White men beating men of color, especially Blacks, as a scene. And a lot of people, especially on the Left would scream bloody murder over that fact. I don't agree with that, because I think that it is taking the idea completely out of context and that what happens in a scene stays in a scene and both people go. I believe most: the two parties go in and participate in this scene do so with knowledge and consent. Safe, sane and consensual, so they're gonna do that, they can do that and go ahead. What comes out of it, later on, is fine. But if they do the scene, it's not like we're suddenly reenacting Uncle Tom's cabin.

While these ambivalent and neutral reactions can help to illustrate the variety of tensions experienced around racial fetishization in the erotic hypnosis and broader kink communities, occasionally participants experienced racial fetishization primarily as a positive thing:

Positive Reactions to Racial Fetishization (13.3% of Participants). Positive reactions to racial fetishization typically focused on how being racially fetishized can make it easier to find partners or enhance the intensity of a scene. Most of the participants in this category identified as men. For some their positive experiences with racial fetishization were relatively simple. For instance, one Hispanic participant described people fetishizing his ethnicity as a "bonus",

> I do have like some people-I know some people like a little spice in their sexual kind of partners and stuff so I imagine, like, it made me be a little more desirable to some people….once or twice I've mentioned, "I'm from like this particular area" where a lot of Hispanic people are from and they're like "oh! So, you're Hispanic?" and I'm like "yeah" and they're like, "okay, that's really cool. I've always-I've never really played around with a Hispanic person" or "I like a little ethnicity" …I know it's been kind of a bonus for some people. It's never been something they like explicitly told me, "I was explicitly looking for a Hispanic boy like you." It's just always been like "cool!" you know? It's a bonus!

For this participant, his positive reaction to being fetishized seemed to be related to it not being a fixation or explicit goal, but instead being a serendipitous

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"bonus". In contrast, others in this category were comfortable being fetishized more deliberately and explicitly. For instance, one Indian Sikh man explained how erotic hypnosis intertwined with his ethnic and religious identities to allow him to exhibit himself as a novelty in a way he enjoyed.

> There is a certain subsection of women where being an Indian man is a great thing. It's a very, very small subsection…Now if I introduced this on the side of sexuality, Kamasutra, tantra, then you can start bringing Indian archetypes into it and you can start owning that space. Very few women are into that, I think. They're just not aware of it. When they're aware of it, yes. Then they're into it…I am still a novelty and a strange factor to them…I try to maintain a positive frame around all this so the answer to your question is I think my identity as a turban, bearded, Sikh, Indian man [pause], let me reword that. My work as an erotic hypnotist would be enhanced by this identity. When I do it in the open, there's a certain novelty factor to it. It's like, "Oh who's this guy?" You know? So, I think it'll be enhanced by it, in the long run.

For some participants in this category, the positive experience of racial and ethnic fetishization was experienced quite elaborately. For example, one participant described a couple they knew who had a World War 2 themed erotic hypnosis scene that involved eroticizing German history to enhance the intensity of their play:

> And one of the couple that was running the munch. One of the first times I'd met them, she was actually flying to Germany to do an interrogation scene out in the middle of nowhere, like an old bomb shelter where they would tie her down, physically tie her down…then trance her into being a spy. And she would go through this several day scene of hypnosis and interrogation and all the delightful things that were going with that. It was like "this is cool shit".

For the couple this participant is describing, physically flying to an abandoned German bomb shelter, and using hypnosis to roleplay a scene involving being a captured spy was a way to utilize the history and thematic power of the space to enhance and intensify their experience. For them, the power of fetishizing German

history in this way was important enough to justify an expensive plane flight in order to engage in erotic hypnosis in that space.

Overall, while most participants, and especially women, experienced racial fetishization primarily negatively, as a force that can make erotic hypnosis spaces uncomfortable for People of Color, some participants of color, especially men, saw racial fetishization as having some potential upsides, or felt more ambivalently about the phenomenon.

Ethnoreligious and Cultural Stigma Against Hypnosis (44.6% of Participants)

In the section focused on religion and spirituality, many participants talked about experiencing stigma from religious sources against erotic hypnosis practices. In this current sub-theme, we categorized participants who talked about those sources of religious, spiritual, and cultural stigma as being intimately tied in with their ethnic, racial, or national identities, often as a way to explain why there was a dearth of People of Color in the erotic hypnosis community. For instance, some people speculated that religious stigma was a force that pushed People of Color out of the community. One Brazilian participant speculated that the influence of Catholicism in Brazil was important in making it difficult to find people who were openly into erotic hypnosis in Brazil:

> Because hypnosis in general is already not something, especially in Brazil, Brazil is a very Catholic country. And when not Catholic, then Protestant, but a religious country, really, really religious. And people always have the impression that hypnotism is already something kind of - witchcraft or something. And then it's already hard enough to talk about hypnosis with people without bringing like the idea of erotic hypnosis.

Along similar lines, one Black participant speculated that both the religious influence of Christianity, as well as a cultural fear against being humiliated might play a role in the lack of Black people in the erotic hypnosis community, while also expressing optimism that this was improving,

> I have some ideas that actually, it's getting better, it's getting better. The younger generation -I'm a little older- the younger generation is not as locked into some of the restrictions: cultural restrictions, religious restrictions and they're getting older. Other Black people…tend to see hypnosis as a kind of voodoo magic or at the very least, it's an interference in their relationship with God. It's an intercedence you know, they feel like they're surrendering their will and they should only do that to their higher power. Typically, after some explanation of what hypnosis actually is, those same people will go, "Oh sure no problem!" They just don't know what it is because all they see is what they see on TV. There's other cultural issues too, that they don't want to be in a position where they're gonna be made a fool of. They see stage hypnosis people dancing around and doing all kinds of stuff and they think that's what you're going to do to them.

For this participant, both the importance of face-saving in Black culture creating a fear of public humiliation, and explicit theological beliefs intertwined to explain the lack of People of Color within erotic hypnosis communities. That same participant later commented on how another aspect of culture, music, played an important role in the discomfort some People of Color feel in predominately White kink spaces,

> The music's different, the vibe is different. God especially the music's different and the music is a very big part of PoC dungeons and there are no PoC hypnosis events but there are for PoC kink events. The music is a very big part of what's happening there and there's it's just hard to get into the mood and the vibe when the music's off.

For other participants, their explanations for the lack of People of Color in the community were solely cultural, without the specific involvement of religious or spiritual practices. One Hispanic participant, for example, said,

> **Participant:** My god. We need some diversity in this bitch…I can see why this isn't exactly the most interesting to, like, minorities. Just because like, let's say, I'm sorry I'm about to kind of say some-I don't know if this is like a shitty thing to say, Sam…Like African Americans or Hispanic people, people who have been in a position of loss of power in history and things like that kind of signing up to give up power again it doesn't seem like the most exciting or like joyous opportunity for like a minority group. Which I think is why we see more, you know, White people in that space…. Maybe it's also just uncomfortable thinking about that. Like taking, like, control or power over someone else. 'Cause that can be really-that can be something a lot of people aren't super uncomfortable with.
> **Sam:** So, it sounds like, at least from what I'm hearing, because you have to deal with these kind of racial power dynamics every day, playing with them might not be something that sounds appealing.
> **Participant:** Yeah, yeah.

For this participant, the cultural legacy of racial oppression was cited as a likely reason why some People of Color found erotic hypnosis, characterized as intrinsically about giving up or taking power, especially unappealing. Some White people similarly speculated that having to deal with racial power dynamics, such as microaggressions, might push People of Color away from erotic hypnosis. One participant who identified as Hungarian-French-Irish-American speculated,

> I think that there probably isn't as much exposure for People of Color. So they might not be as likely to be interested in it and I also think that culturally, a lot of People of Color grow up differently from White people, and I've heard a theory that I think is more than theory, but it was presented to me as a theory, that People of Color have so much stress just from microaggressions in their lives, just from their day to day troubles and tribulations of existing that they don't have the energy or the bandwidth to seek out or deal with situations or to seek out you know, things that raise adrenaline or raise cortisol levels, whereas White people have everything so easy they need things to resist to come up against. Like they climb a huge mountain for no fucking reason.

For this participant, the cultural explanation for the lack of People of Color in the erotic hypnosis community focused on how the social and cultural experience of racism acted as a source of biological stress, making other stressful and intense activities like kink potentially unappealing. Rather than focusing on kink as involving power imbalances, this participant focused on kink as a physically intense practice and relied on biological explanations involving cortisol and adrenaline as a key variable to explain the lack of People of Color in the community.

Distorted Media Images of Erotic Hypnosis and Race (16.9% of Participants)

When discussing the relationship between erotic hypnosis, race, and ethnicity, some participants pointed to the importance of media representation of hypnosis. These discussions tended to fall into two overarching categories: the ways in which hypnosis is misrepresented in media targeted at PoC audiences, and the ways in which erotic hypnosis imagery tends to underrepresent People of Color. For the former, several participants pointed to the film *Get Out* in particular, a horror film in which a White hypnotherapist puts Black victims into a hypnotic trance so as to control them and make them feel powerless. For instance, one White participant speculated that the lack of People of Color in the erotic hypnosis community was the result of a lack of positive media exposure for PoC communities:

> Maybe a lack of outreach, just a cultural aspect that hypnosis may not be something that comes up in more Black cultures or it may have even more negative connotations. Just look at the movie *Get Out* [laughs]!

Another participant referenced the film via employing the language of the "sunken place", a term introduced in the film to both literally refer to the hypnotic

trance state victims were put into, but also has been used to describe Black people

who seem to conform to White cultural norms and/or lack critical racial

consciousness. One Black participant similarly suggested that the images of hypnosis

most familiar to People of Color are those of humiliation and the film *Get Out*:

> There are lots of [pause] blocks in, in the PoC community. There are lots of places where you run into obstacles. If I am in, and I've done this, if I'm standing with a group of, persons of color and I say, "Hey, let's talk about hypnosis", I get a lot of pushback. I get a lot of, "oh no, you're not going to make me quack like a chicken. Oh, I'm not going to the sunken place." And so, it becomes part of what you have to overcome just to get them to be willing to talk about it. So, I find myself talking about it a lot, because now my goal is to get you past that. Let's just move past that.

Another Black participant reported finding the film to be entertaining, but

similarly inaccurate, and not useful for accurately educating its audience.

> Hilarious. So, well first of all, I enjoyed the movie, probably for all types of inappropriate reasons. I treat it like I've treated "50 Shades of Grey." I treated it like I treated "Angel Heart," "Secretary," any of these movies that depict any version of my life. It is a story designed to entertain. It is not designed, necessarily, to educate. I'm watching "Get Out," and I'm like, "Yeah, that's not how it works."

Beyond these media portrayals in mainstream media, other participants noted

a lack of People of Color in erotic hypnosis media that are produced online. One

Black and gay participant, for example, noted the lack of representation was already

discourse in his online erotic hypnosis community:

> I don't want to say his name outright but [username] from [social media platform] he actually made a post like some point last year talking about how, "Oh, there's not a lot of People of Color in the hypnosis community that are like posting videos" a lot of it is like a lot of White guys, a lot of White twinks like going under and being hypnotized.

The concern over a lack of representation extended beyond just people who

made content by posting videos of themselves however, one Black participant noted that the lack of racial diversity in erotic hypnosis media even extended to illustrated erotic hypnosis media shared online:

> If I didn't have such a positive experience on the onset, I would have probably dipped out of it at some point because it really, really got under my skin to see that there was little diversity. It really made me feel like, how hard is it to just if you are putting up these sessions, making me the videos, how hard is it to find other women, especially the drawing artists and the illustrators are drawing comics of people falling under, even that, you can't even find different color paint [laughing]? …As a woman of color, we do, we are into this, we are absolutely into kink, we are into BDSM, we are into erotic hypnosis, we are into erotica, just like everybody else.

For participants in this category, media misrepresentations played an important role in their speculations as to why there was a lack of People of Color in the erotic hypnosis community. However, for participants in the next category, these media misrepresentations also allowed for an opportunity to create erotic hypnosis content themselves to be the representation they wished to see in the community.

The Push and Pull of Racial Self-Segregation (12.0% of Participants)

Most of the discussion of race and ethnicity that came up in the interviews centered on the general erotic hypnosis community, a predominately White space. However, some participants of color also talked about erotic hypnosis spaces specifically for People of Color, noting both the factors that enjoyed about these spaces, but also the challenges they faced in maintaining segregated, PoC-only erotic hypnosis spaces. For instance, one participant who reported creating a PoC-only erotic hypnosis space noted,

> I also started a server…which is for People of Color who are interested in erotic hypnosis as well…it's been a cool space. It was something that I started

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with a couple of other people… We've been feeling this need for PoC spaces. At different cons and stuff, there's usually like one session, or like, one roundtable kind of thing where it's like, "oh yeah, PoC can come talk here," but we were really feeling like in the mood to have a space, so we started it over last summer. It's not the most active space. Honestly, there's just like not very many [chuckles] People of Color, at least that we know of, in the wider community. So, it's kind a bit slow going but I'm glad that it's there for people who need it…glad that it's there and connecting people.

In this quote, the participant noted both the pull factors that generated a need for this space, such as the ephemeral and limited nature of an occasional PoC space at erotic hypnosis conventions, but also identified factors pushing against PoC-only spaces, such as the lack of a critical mass of People of Color to keep it highly active. One Black participant echoed these sentiments when talking about the same group,

These days, I am pretty much a segregationist. I prefer, at this time, to experience kink with People of Color, so I seek our people in colored spaces, and we aren't, erotic hypnosis is not, probably in the top ten of kinks, typically. So other than my personal circle, I'm not having a lot of success meeting a lot of people to explore it with, unfortunately. There is one group on FetLife…But it's not terribly active. The group leader pretty much has made all of the posts. There's not a big interaction with the group. I think there's, maybe, a hundred and fifty members and they're not very talkative, unfortunately.

Another participant noted the benefits of PoC-only erotic hypnosis spaces for their members, in providing a space to vent and receive support from other People of Color,

It's kind of like a safe space, which I know I felt a little weird, in the last PoC roundtable bringing it up. To be like, "okay, we were talking about all spaces being open," and then to be like, "Well, this space is closed". But it was a conscious decision because, just feeling like one space where people could just be, and not have people coming in, and just being like, "Well, I'm going to tell you how you should feel about things, where I'm just going to talk over you" Just so people would feel like "I can", or if someone…wanted to come in and just sort of vent about something that's happened, to be able to feel like 'I can vent and it'll be okay' in that, you know?

While these more permanent PoC-only spaces were reported as valuable and growing, the need for a larger critical mass of people to help make them more active was a common sentiment reflected in these participant interviews.

Fears of Immigration-Related Persecution of Kink Interests (3.6% of Participants)

Lastly, three participants in the sample reported experiencing concerns about being persecuted for their kink interests, including their erotic hypnosis interests, at the larger structural level, because of their immigration status. Much of this was reported as speculative, based on the potentially arbitrary nature of immigration decisions. One immigrant to the United States from Mexico, for example, reported intentionally hiding their identity when posting on kinky social media sites, for fear of an immigration official denying their immigration paperwork on the basis of perceiving their kink interests as evidence of intention to engage in sex work,

> Since I am an immigrant to the U.S., and one of the questions they ask when you apply for citizenship is known as the morality question. Technically the morality question asks if you have been convicted of a crime, but I do not know how malleable or flexible that question is, which is why I'm always extra careful about things that can at some point be considered negative from a morality point of view…The few words they have used so far have been like "have you committed a crime?", "what is your intention with this visa?", "what is your intention coming to the US?". Those are the kind of questions that fall under the morality question. There is also the fact that all visa applications ask you about again, "have you committed a crime?" "Do you intend to come here to commit a crime?" "Did you intend to come here to engage in prostitution?" "Do you intend to come here to engage in this and this and that?" … there's always a question of like what did they ask, and what kind of information did they collate your answers with, because obviously if they are asking "did you come to the state with the purpose of engaging in prostitution?", you can be sure almost everybody will say "no". But that's because they aren't asking if you are doing it. They are asking you, "What is your answer?" and then they will collate that with the information

that they have gathered. And perjuring one of these forms is immediate rejection of your application.

One immigrant to the United States from New Zealand also homed in on these "morality questions" as a source of ambiguity and anxiety as an erotic hypnosis fetishist dealing with the U.S. immigration system,

> Basically, they're looking for anything that's like critical, or threatening to the government or the country…There was actually a case where there was a guy who applied and got into Harvard. And he was from, I want to say was from Pakistan or something. And the US government rejected his immigration. Like he came over here he had all his stuff. And then at the border they were like, "no, come back to your country," …and it was because on his Facebook page, it wasn't even him: one of his friends had posted something that was, like remotely critical of some government policy. And the government said, "Well, you're responsible for the content that's on your page" ….so it's kind of terrifying… How would hypnosis be perceived? Would they just be like, "Oh, that's a weird thing," or would they be like…" Are you trying to steal state secrets". I'm like, "No I just want to control people and get off. It's fine." …It is frustrating, and I think it causes a lot of stress."

Colorblind Ideologies are Prevalent in the Erotic Hypnosis Community (60.2% of Participants)

Colorblind ideologies (the belief that "seeing race" or acknowledging racial difference is the key cause of racial injustice, that race doesn't matter, and/or that ignoring race and treating everyone equally, rather than equitably, was a moral good) came up relatively frequently in the interviews, with some noting their prevalence in the community as an explanation for the community's challenges handling racial diversity, characterizing theses ideologies as failures in the community. Others explicitly endorsed these ideologies, becoming examples of this theme in and of themselves, while others expressed explanations for the lack of racial diversity in the community that centered colorblind explanations around education and

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socioeconomic status. The stories in this section are selected to try to illustrate the

varied ways in which participants both critiqued and embodied the prevalence of

colorblind ideologies in the erotic hypnosis community.

The Failure of Colorblind Platitudes in the Erotic Hypnosis Community (33.7% of

Participants)

A little over a third of participants talked about the role of colorblind

ideologies and in perpetuating racism in the erotic hypnosis community and

contributing the lack of racial diversity. One Hungarian-French-Irish-American

participant commented,

> Well, I think in general in the kink community, there's a lot--there's a lot of
> Whiteness. There's a lot of Whiteness and people who don't realize that it's
> really White. People's idea of diversity is like age and LGBTQ and maybe
> relationship orientation…So those things might be some of the reasons why
> but also there hasn't been much energy to make to specifically create space
> and welcome People of Color into the community. It's just like a, "Sure, show
> up if you'd like. You'll probably be the only one, but we welcome you,"
> rather than creating equity.

For this participant, they are drawing on the distinction between the concept

of equality (treating everyone the same) and equity (treating people unequally in

response to their specific, unique needs to allow for equal access). In their

perspective, failing to acknowledge the Whiteness of the community, and merely

taking a colorblind approach in the form of "everyone's welcome" fails to actually

create a welcoming space for People of Color. Other White participants similarly

noted that the community merely being accepting has been insufficient to improve the

racial diversity of erotic hypnosis events, such as one White participant who said,

By and large the community has been very open and accepting of anyone, but the community also has been by and large mostly Caucasian. I very rarely do I see anyone other than Caucasian in the in-person events. It's hard to really tell unless they actually say so. But I'm thinking this community is still primarily Caucasian.

Another White participant described colorblindness in a local dungeon space in the American South merely as not discriminating against people based on their race, but that being insufficient to create racial integration,

In [large Southern city] our dungeon was open to anyone; we did not discriminate. We had Black members, but they would only come in groups, and they always only played with themselves, they did not venture outside their group…I hate to use the word 'tribal' because it gives the wrong impression but it's a group consensus at the time. There is safety in a group.

Interestingly, three White participants expressed colorblind attitudes, and also used a racial slur during the interview when talking with the White interviewer. After substantial discussion with coders, as well as memoing, we concluded that these three participants should be coded into this category (as well as the following category), as using racial slurs while also endorsing colorblind attitudes seemed to be a good example of the failure of colorblind attitudes to create a space free of racial slurs. The clearest example of this is below, in which a White participant uses the term "Oriental" while expressing frustration at being powerless to help make a kink community more diverse.

…[I]n the leather group we have here in our city, there is one someone Oriental and they say, "well there is not enough visibility, there is not enough people of other races there." Well, what can I as a White guy do to attract someone who is Black or Oriental? I do not again everything I will do will be perceived as a—I don't know. These days anything you can- anything can be thought. You cannot force people to do something they cannot- they don't want to do. That is one of the first law in hypnosis and it applies to those who want to do it or not.

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In this quote, the participant expresses frustration that any actions they take to try to improve racial diversity in their kink community could be misconstrued as racist because he is White and expresses the belief that they are powerless to help. Simultaneously, ceasing their use of the term "Oriental" is a good example of an action they could take to help make the community more welcoming, as the term carries a long history of racist baggage, and is usually experienced as an offensive slur by many people with Asian and Middle Eastern ancestry.

Lastly one White participant who runs erotic hypnosis conferences talked about how realizing that merely being colorblind was not sufficient to bring People of Color to erotic hypnosis events was part of a "learning curve",

> I think for me the learning curve has been, as running events I put myself into a lot of places where I can learn more about PoC communities, and I've spent more time on that than anything else in trying to learn to make my conference better. And that's because I thought it wasn't, when I first started, I didn't think I'd have to do anything because I'm not racist, and I was really frustrated that I kept getting pushed into, "why aren't you going to these PoC events, why aren't you going to these meetups, why aren't you doing this?" and I was like, "Why do I need to?" and then it finally hit me that it's because I'm not doing anything to think about it to make it better, that it wasn't good enough just to say, "I'm not doing anything" but how am I making it so if I was a PoC running this event I wouldn't be doing anything either, but I would already just be being inclusive by being there, I can't be inclusive as a White female. So, I have to work harder to also make it inclusive for people who don't look like me. And I don't think I realized that when I started the event, so now I have a PoC ambassador and who goes through all of my stuff, goes through my website and goes through all of my publications to make sure that nothing is inadvertently offensive or they can tell me that something is should be better or could be different. I've made sure to make PoC represented in my ads. I do a lot, because it really does matter to me.

The Endorsement of Colorblind Platitudes in the Erotic Hypnosis Community

(31.3% of Participants)

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In contrast with participants who saw colorblindness as a problem, some participants, especially participants who were White, expressed colorblind attitudes and ideologies during their interviews, characterizing them as positive attitudes to hold. For some participants, this endorsement was expressed simply, often around the choice of potential erotic hypnosis partners. One White hypnotist, for example, explained,

> There's no drawbacks whatsoever to being a White male. I've had many different subjects. You know, it doesn't matter. White, Asian, Black, whatever, they're all wonderful. If you respond, you respond. That's great. Come on over.

Other participants often endorsed these colorblind ideas as a solution to issues related to racism. For instance, one Hispanic participant described holding internalized racist beliefs, and relying on adopting a colorblind attitude as a way to try to resist those beliefs,

> I still, I still see, people of different like, people of different genders or different colors slightly different- I try not to. I have to catch myself and say, 'no, that's not right'. Like just because this person is Black and he doesn't have, like, like the best clothes, doesn't mean that he is dangerous. But it's something that's been fed in the subconsciously, so, I have to actively fight against that.

For this participant, holding subconscious beliefs that Black people are dangerous is the result of seeing "different colors slightly different", and is endorsing avoiding seeing difference as a solution fight against those subconscious biases. Another White person expressed a similar endorsement of colorblindness, but applied it to how he wished others saw him:

> I think the White male stereotype is the standard- Tom of Finland- is the standard for most, male fetish communities. The White—it used to be "blue-

eyed, blonde", but now people kind of are getting away from that part. The White man is still the prize, which sucks. [Chuckling] I don't like that at all, even though I am one. I'd just rather you be you. Much more internal, I care much more about the internal, and that's where I want people to care about me, for what's inside- not the color of my skin.

For this participant, colorblindness is seen as a desirable solution to the problem of White privilege, with a focus on seeing people for their internal traits. Other participants expressed relief that the erotic hypnosis community in particular was a space that was generally colorblind, such as one South Asian participant who explained when asked about his experience as a South Asian person,

> I don't think it particularly has affected the hypnosis part of it. I think there are the usual issues around, the gay community, around representation, beauty standards etcetera [laughs]. I mean if people looked into hypnosis more then they might actually look into the kind of things that South Asian cultures and religions have been doing around trances, but they haven't, so they've not been fetishized. So, I've not been fetishized as a result. I think when people are looking for a trance experience…If the thing they're looking for is a trance, then you know, I'm just another trance provider.

In summary, while participants in the previous category talked about how adopting a colorblind approach to the erotic hypnosis community was a problem that failed to solve the lack of diversity in the erotic hypnosis community, participants in this category were more hopeful and optimistic about the benefits and usefulness of adopting a colorblind approach as a solution to White privilege, fetishization, and internalized racist attitudes.

Socioeconomic and Logistical Explanations of lack of PoC in Community (19.3% of Participants)

When speculating as the potential causes of the lack of People of Color in the erotic hypnosis community, some speculated that erotic hypnosis conferences, and

even erotic hypnosis as a practice in and of itself was inaccessible to people of lower

socioeconomic status, situating educational, financial, and logistic explanations as the

central cause of a lack of People of Color in the erotic hypnosis community. For

instance, unlike swinging a flogger or tying people up, erotic hypnosis as a kink

practice was sometimes seen as necessitating advanced educational training, such as

one White participant who speculated,

> I do notice that like there does seem to be quite a few individuals, like, in the erotic hypnosis community who have, the education and training in hypnotherapy, so it could be that the reduced access to like higher education and things like that for People of Color sort of prevents them from like having that avenue into going over into the erotic side of things. I don't know; it's a theory.

> Others focused less on education and more on the class privilege of being able

to get time off work, such as one multiracial participant who suggested,

> Often people gathering together tend to be white and part of it might be just the class connection that has to happen, that if you have the time to get out of your daily grind and got to one of these conventions, you know then you're likely to be a little more affluent.

> Similarly, one Asian participant answered the question of why the community

might be so White succinctly with the words, "Too much free time." Other

participants highlighted racially oriented class distinctions not in terms of the

availability to have time off from work, but instead as a safety net in the event of

being disowned by a family if their kink interest was discovered and stigmatized. One

participant, for example, argued,

> Since I'm a White middle class person, you're a lot safer to engage in these things. For example, if my parents found out that I was kinky and kicked me out of the family, I would still be safe in my queer community, and I would still be fiscally fine on my own. Because unfortunately we live in a very racist

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society where People of Color often are less financially secure and have more housing insecurity, I think it can be a lot easier to lose everything, and you have to be a lot more careful. So, I think people with more privilege have a lot more freedom financially and emotionally to experiment with kink.

As a kink, erotic hypnosis does not necessarily require any expensive equipment or clothing, in contrast with leather fetishism, electrical play, or some other forms of kink. Nevertheless, some participants pointed to the cost of travel for erotic hypnosis conferences in particular (often held in hotels) as a financial barrier to People of Color getting involved in the erotic hypnosis community. One White participant suggested,

> A lot of it I think has to do with access. This is recreational stuff. This is extra credit stuff that, in terms of things to do, maybe people who are White have more resources…I would think it has to do with leisure time - availability of leisure time and money. You know, to go to this conference…last year it was like $1300 just for me, it was expensive. So, you've got to have the resources to do it…You have to have money. It's like any sport. Like horseback riding, I don't see a lot of minorities in horseback riding. You have to have a lot of money to buy the horse and take care of the horse and transport them and all that. I've done some work in the equestrian community. Seems like it's all Caucasian. That would be a guess as to why.

By focusing on class, education, logistics, and socioeconomic status, rather than race and ethnicity, these explanations undergirded some of the colorblind ideologies prevalent within the erotic hypnosis community, for helping to explain why the community was so White.

Language is Fundamental to the Practice of Erotic Hypnosis (26.5% of the Sample)

Some participants, nearly all of whom were multilingual, talked about how the nature of erotic hypnosis as a highly verbal kink activity meant that their language

skills and manner of speaking were highly relevant to their practice. For some, this focused on the challenges of language barriers, or the varied ways people reacted to them having an accent, while for others it was focused on how speaking another language or doing hypnosis in a language other than English provided distinctive hypnotic capabilities that couldn't be done with English, because of the linguistic features of that other language. These stories are detailed in the three sub-themes below:

The Challenges of Translating Erotic Hypnosis Skills and Concepts Across Languages (18.1% of Participants)

For some participants, key ways in which their nationality and ethnicity played out in the erotic hypnosis context was the result of English not being their first language and having difficulty translating erotic hypnosis techniques they had learned in English into other languages in which they wished to conduct hypnosis. Given that hypnosis is a highly verbal kink, as opposed to mainstream BDSM or other fetish interests, the role of language barriers was especially heightened for some. For instance, one participant whose first language was German discussed how difficult they found it to switch to hypnotizing partners in German:

> There were a couple of funny things that happened when I tried it in German. Uh, one time I did try it in German. I, at some points during the trance where I'd hypnotized somebody, I switched to English without noticing. That happened, and, I don't know, it's like, for some reason, it feels weird for my brain. And it may be just because I engage in it all the time in English that it just feels weird to my brain because it's unusual. But it also was a whole lot harder for me because I didn't have that intuition for what to say or what to do basically. Whereas in English that just happens. I talked to a couple of people about that. And, unsurprisingly, I'm definitely not the only person that thinks that way. I have two friends who have as their native language Dutch and they

have the same thing with Dutch and English that they, for them it's more, feels more comfortable and more natural to do it in English than in Dutch. But I think that's just because the online community for erotic hypnosis is predominantly English-speaking. So, it may be because of that.

Another participant who spoke Portuguese as their native language reported a similar phenomenon, noting the difficulty of translating particular words commonly used in English language hypnotic inductions without creating unintended connotations:

> I started doing text hypnosis because I was scared of speaking English, because I never spoke English before. And it started working pretty well with people. But then they start, "Oh talk to us" because they thought it was better to talk. And then I started talking and doing hypnosis in voice as well. And to me nowadays it's easier to do hypnosis in English than in Portuguese. Just because I got way more used with like the words in English, and I feel like there are words that fit better in the context that in Portuguese. Or maybe because Portuguese is my primary, my born language. Sometimes the words have a deeper meaning to me and sometimes it's not the very nice meaning…I can feel the difference because sometimes I'm - I'm trying to go in a direction but the word in Portuguese sounds too harsh…Like, when you say in English, you tell the person "you're going down, down into trance." In Portuguese when you say like *"você está indo para Baixo." "Baixo"* is the same word for down. But like for us "Baixo" has a very [pause] negative meaning, it's not just the direction. Sometimes it includes like that you're feeling sad…It kinda has a deeper connotation, implications that are not always the ones you want to make people think about, and sometimes it's complicated.

For other participants who spoke a non-English language as their first language, the difficulty in doing hypnosis in a language other than English was compounded by the usual social contexts in which they used their first language. For one participant whose first language is Dutch, for instance, their use of Dutch in everyday settings made it feel separated from erotic hypnosis.

> I feel like my Dutch personality, because it revolves around my job, my family, which are like places where I don't do erotic hypnosis, so it is tied to the English language for me and I have, like, some of my partners here I say,

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"Hey, do you mind if we do this in English because I'm a better hypnotist in English." and they don't mind because most of them speak really good English.

Another participant who spoke Filipino as their first language expressed a similar sentiment, though instead of the discomfort coming from their use of Filipino in serious, everyday settings, it came from their use of Filipino in casual, humorous settings:

> To me, the default and preferred language that I prefer fetish play, in general, would be in English because I think that (laughs) dirty talk in Filipino is very [makes ambivalent sound], for me at least. People are fine with it but, for me, it's just weird (laughs)…I swear a lot in Filipino and a lot of the swears that I use are things that people would use in dirty talk in Filipino and it's (laughs), it's, it's, it's, it's weird to me…I swear very casually so it feels more, it's not as serious, it feels like dirty talk in Filipino is not serious but I say a lot of those words when not serious so what ends up happening is I just start laughing. I start being like, "what's happening?" it's not sexy for me.

Others focused on how the linguistic sounds of words might also play a role in the effectiveness of hypnosis in different languages. One participant who struggled to learn hypnosis in French, for example, bemoaned,

> … "Sleep" …In French is *dors*, see that? The sharpness of the word compared to the smoothness of the word in English? In French usually the words are longer, and the explanations are more emphatic than in English, but unfortunately English is made of buzz words and words that are very sharp. "Sleep now" in French [is] *dors maintenant* you have too many too many syllables. You cannot, so sometimes the impact is not the same.

Using Language Features to Enhance Erotic Hypnosis Experience (13.3% of Participants)

While the category focused on language earlier in this section identified the challenges and barriers faced by non-native English speakers in attempting to translate erotic hypnosis practices outside of the English language, participants in this

category discussed how specific linguistic aspects of other languages could be

leveraged in erotic hypnosis to benefit and enhance their play experience. For

example, the Dutch participant from earlier talked about taking advantage of the fact

that their partner couldn't speak Dutch helped to enhance the dog-like mental state

they were attempting to create for their partner through erotic hypnosis:

> On the other hand, I've played a couple of scenes with a lover where he doesn't speak Dutch, and I dominated him in Dutch, and that was fun because he wanted to do puppy play, and dogs can't understand human language, so him being unable to understand what I was saying actually helped him get into that headspace.

Another participant who spoke French as their first language noted how

different levels of formality in French 2nd-person pronouns allow him to enhance

experiences of humiliation in the erotic hypnosis context, but using informal forms

for the person being dominated, while requiring formal forms for himself,

> There's a slight difference. In French, you can decide between a formal and a friend--form when you talk to people. Which is used a lot in BDSM context. Cause there's like a humiliation or like subservient amount of one. Like if those don't match in a relationship, like one speaks formally and the other one with the friend form.

Another French-speaking participant noted other features of French that they

perceived made the language especially conducive to hypnosis,

> Where I am, we are mainly French-speaking and taking a course in a language and translate this, all the hypnotic inductions, at first was extremely difficult because all my training was with English. When someone came here and spoke French, then I had to flip the switch to French. So, after a while, I discovered the YouTube hypnotists who actually did it in French. You would not believe, for you an American, you would not believe the difference in approach between a North American and French person. A French person is all in a concept, imagery, and long explanations…We North Americans are much more go to the point and do it. French are using to get to the point B

they go through the L, M, N, O, P and then perhaps they get to B. It really is a very very very different frame of mind.

For this participant, the perceived non-linearity of the French language played a role in weaving longer, more conceptual, and more image-based inductions, resulting in a different state of mind for the subject being hypnotized. Another participant who speaks Malay talked about the lack of some grammatical features present in English can create strategic ambiguity to enhance the erotic hypnosis process:

> I think Malay tends to have a lot more room for ambiguity, which I think could be useful in hypnosis 'cause that's something that people try to play with a lot Cause there's no article, so there's no "the" or "a." …You can sometimes tell plural but sometimes you can't. So, like someone could be talking about, like, one person but they could also be talking about like a bunch of people and you're just like not sure depending on the context of the sentence, things like that could be cool to play with that you can't do in English.

Other participants talked about how the act of translating a word used in erotic hypnosis fetishism can lead the use of a variety of meanings in the language being translated into, in order to suit different needs. For instance, one participant whose native language was Chinese wrote in a follow-up email after their interview about a variety of terms used to translate "sissy" in the Chinese erotic hypnosis forced sissification (a fetish involving being brainwashed into a "sissy") community.

> I've listed below some of the Chinese translations for the word sissy - including the original Chinese characters and my explanations. I don't think Chinese (erotic) community distinguish very much the erotic use and the use for self-expression when translate the word.
> 娘娘腔 - the first two character denote 'femininity'; the third means 'accent/tone/pitch'
> 伪娘 - 'fake/false' and 'femininity'

CD - short for 'crossdressing'

女装 - 'woman' and 'clothing'

雌堕 - 'female' and 'degenerate'. This is borrowed from the Japanese word '雌堕ち'. In my opinion, this is the most precise and accurate translation for the word 'sissification'. This has also become a specific fetish in the Chinese erotic community. It describes a male wants to be feminised, to have anal play or sex, and to be humiliated and degraded. It is related to another term in both Japanese and Chinese - '肉便器' (literally 'meat' and 'toilet') or '公共便器' ('public toilet'). This is usually used to describe a female wanting to be used and have lots of sex. 雌堕 can be used to describe a guy wanting to be a 'public toilet'.

男娘 - 'man/guy' and 'femininity'

Lastly, some subjects talked about how erotic hypnosis was enhanced by being able to be hypnotized in their native language, rather than English, because communication in general was easier in their native language. One participant who spoke Portuguese, for example, reported,

> The trance itself, it was the same. But the, the rapport and the aftercare when sharing impressions, it was more comforting, because I could find exact words I wanted, for expressing what I was feeling. It was easier for me to express myself. And speaking in another language, it's a struggle to find the exact words that translate what I'm feeling.

The Centrality of Accents to Race and Ethnicity in Erotic Hypnosis (10.8% of Participants)

Several participants commented on how the accents with which they spoke English played an important role in understanding how their race and/or ethnicity was read and understood by others in the erotic hypnosis community. For some, they perceived their accent as an advantage for finding partners in the community, with one participant describing their accent as giving them an "edge",

> Sometimes it's just the language, but as I said like, people are really welcoming about when you don't speak English. And I think one of the big

turn-ons for people in that kind of community is accents. I don't know, everybody says, "I love accents! Oh my god, accents are so nice." So, I feel like it's kind of giving me an edge [laughing]. At the worst it gives me an edge somehow…People just want to have sessions with you because your accent, more than anything else. And because you're Brazilian or whatever. And it can work in your favor - in my favor sometimes, so I don't mind it. But sometimes it's just too like, they're pushing it too hard. It's just like, you know? It's just because you're Brazilian, it's just because your accent. And I - sometimes I join voice calls or people join voice calls and they're like "Oh, speak Portuguese to me" or - or, you know? "Why don't you talk?" Because usually when I'm in voice chats, I'm really quiet, I don't like talking much. And they're like "Why don't you talk much, I love your accent" and stuff like that. And that kind of rubs me in the wrong direction, I suppose [laughing].

Similarly to participants who felt ambivalent about being racially fetishized, this participant expressed a similar ambivalence regarding being linguistically fetishized, especially when on erotic hypnosis voice-chats, in which their voice is central. For others, they experienced this kind of linguistic fetishization in-person. For example, one participant with a specific European accent noted:

I have had so many times people come up to me and be like "I love your accent" which I hate. I wish that it never happened anymore, it makes me feel so over them. So called out or something I have no control over… Sometimes I wish to just tell them you know, "I hate this so much that I can't fetishize it."

Another participant reported having a very specific accent because of where they were born being separate from where they have lived, leading to a blending of the two accents. For that participant, they reported being treated as "exotic" at conferences, despite being White, because of the sound of their voice.

So, my accent is kind of fucked. [laughing] Which is interesting because when people hear my voice, they're like "Oh my god, that accent though", and I'm like "What accent though?". Of course, most of these people are American, so especially to them, when I go to conventions and stuff, I'm like an exotic bird that people always look at. They're like "Oh my god, you're so exotic". I'm like "I'm really not. This is pretty generic where I come from". I do find especially making audio files, people will be drawn to the accent.

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While most of these engagements with spoken accents were relatively minor emotionally, one mixed-race participant reported an experience of backhanded racism related to fears over the participant potentially having an accent.

> [W]e exchanged pictures of ourselves before having an audio call. She later told me that she was very relieved when we had an audio call… and she said "It was when I saw your photo, you know you were mixed race I was afraid you would have an accent and that turns me off" and I was just like [pause] "Thanks?" and she said "But no, your voice is just perfect; it's liquid sex." I was like "Thanks? But ouch?" [laughs]…what a fucking back handed compliment.

For this participant, their racial identity came with the assumption of potentially having an accent, marking them as a linguistic other as well as a racial other. When they were found not to be a linguistic other, the partner's positive reaction felt insulting to the participant, as it revealed a preference to be other, but not "too other", a sentiment that can be especially hurtful to mixed race people. In summary, the verbal nature of erotic hypnosis may play a key role in funneling the reading and understanding of race and ethnicity in the erotic hypnosis community through the identification, fetishization, and rejection of people's spoken accents.

Erotic Hypnosis Offers Unique Opportunities for People of Color (18.1% of Participants)

Some participants, primarily participants of color, noted that the story of erotic hypnosis for People of Color was not always purely negative, but instead that participation in erotic hypnosis as a practice and/or erotic hypnosis communities offered unique opportunities for People of Color in a variety of forms. For some, this was about how participation in erotic hypnosis helped them to challenge racism or

reclaim and celebrate their own racial or ethnic identity. For others, it was about how

the many opportunities to practice erotic hypnosis in online spaces meant an

opportunity to be racially or ethnically anonymous in online spaces. Details of these

stories can be found in the two sub-themes below:

Erotic Hypnosis as an Opportunity for PoC Coping, Reclamation, Resistance, and

Celebration (13.3% of Participants)

While many of the categories focused on race and ethnicity focused on the

challenges, barriers, and negative experiences faced by People of Color, this category

captured the ways in which some participants of color found erotic hypnosis to be a

liberatory space for empowerment and celebration of their identity as a person of

color. For instance, two of the participants who discussed the dearth of erotic

hypnosis media featuring People of Color talked about how positive they felt at being

able to create erotic hypnosis media featuring themselves, as a way to diversify the

representation seen in the community. For instance, one Black woman explained,

> I was saying that from what I see from content creators, or people who are
> creating their erotic hypnosis video clips, or Instagram accounts, I typically
> see non-women-of-color, thin, long-haired White women, and it's not that
> there's anything wrong with that, but it is so heavily saturated that you can't
> help but feel like my personal image is what's not desired. And at least on
> Twitter and other platforms, I kind of made it my point to note that I am here
> to help change up what we see. I think that there could be this league of
> women of color, "very powerful and we don't submit" and that's not true! We
> are happy to hand our minds over and listen to someone else and take
> directions from someone else, we are. And I think that people don't see us that
> way, so I like to show that side of myself when I can. I have also seen that on
> the platforms people have been recognizing it lately, and they have been
> trying to do better and if they create content, they've been trying to change it
> up…They will use women of color or different body images. I can tell that it's
> leaking into the community now, it's kind of an interest over all communities,

in terms of the kink community, people are starting to wake up to that and create better places and inclusion, which is really really great to see.

For this participant, the stereotype of the "strong Black woman" is one that she characterizes as being limiting, and so by exhibiting herself as a Black woman and a submissive, she finds she is able to challenge that stereotype in the erotic hypnosis context. A Black man similarly reported feeling positive about the erotic hypnosis video content he created and put out into the community:

> It actually feels like really good and very nice that I'm not only trying to like do this niche but I'm also just putting on a more positive Black experience out there in the kink community.

For other participants, the empowerment and reclamations they felt in erotic hypnosis was situated in the reclamation of ethno-spiritual traditions through trance practice. For instance, one participant with both Black and Indigenous Identities explained,

> …it's also like a point of almost pride because it's just a celebration of my own uniqueness, difference. I know that's a part of why it works so well, because I'm a unique person, and I have these African-Indigenous roots, which are, I wanna say, spiritually connected cultures….I think the propensity to get people to altered states, which is conditionally a shamanic practice…I feel it's like in my blood. I know I have a great grandfather that was like a Native American chief, just like straight up stereotypical. Never met him but, African sangomas, African shamans, and even just African religions and general…they do like dances to get into trance states. They play more with fantastical areas of the mind. I feel like I'm connected to that history.

One White participant at an erotic hypnosis conference similarly commented on what they saw as a unique opportunity to celebrate diverse ethnoreligious practices in hypnosis through the sharing of these practices in erotic hypnosis class spaces:

> I think it would be really interesting to have more people that were not White involved in hypnosis. In general, because I think just, aside from like all of the

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normal kind of considerations of diversity, there are a lot of like really cool cultural practices that are like hypno-adjacent, that are just amazing. Like there's a dual inductions class tomorrow…where they teach something to do with like rhythm and like it's kind of based on like some ancient traditions and I'm just like this is so cool. And I just think that it would be so much richer for having that stuff kind of woven into it, and having us exposed to like these new ideas and like your things that have been around longer than then Erickson or James Braid you know.

Referencing two famous White hypnotists, this participant contrasts the opportunity to celebrate the diverse hypnosis-adjacent practices practiced by some instructors of color that have a much older history. By creating a space that can value and teach those forms of cultural knowledge, these participants characterized the erotic hypnosis community as a space that can offer an opportunity to reclaim, empower, and celebrate the identities of People of Color.

Online Spaces Offer Opportunity to Hide One's Race (6.0% of Participants)

Given that erotic hypnosis, as a kink activity, is uniquely conducive to online formats, typically requiring no physical contact, the online erotic hypnosis spaces experienced by participants were noted by a few participants of color as providing a unique opportunity to experience racelessness, where others might not know they were a person of color. For some, the lack of an ability to identify one's race was a problem, despite being an opportunity for other People of Color. For instance, one Hispanic participant who is also an erotic hypnosis content creator, explained:

I guess the most visible parts of it are in terms of content creators are…I was trying to think of other content creators who are not White, and I really couldn't think of any. I have subs who are of other different ethnicities, but they aren't really publicly known. It's hard, especially online because you don't really always know what people's ethnicity is. I guess I've had one person who has disappointed me a lot. I always thought they were White because their profile picture is of a White person and I recently found out that

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they were Black…when they reached out to me recently and were like, "I wanted to reach out because you're a person of color and as a Black man, I'm worried about you."… It's hard to tell in an online space what percentage of people are People of Color or not. I only really know like my small group because a few of them like post pictures or are more open about it to state their ethnicity but as a whole it's kind of hard to tell.

For this participant, the ability to hide one's ethnicity in online spaces contributes to the lack of visibility for People of Color, especially when People of Color are using White profile pictures. Because it is difficult to find other People of Color, this ability is experienced as problematic by this participant. On the other hand, others experienced this capacity to hide one's racial identity as a positive opportunity. For instance, one Puerto Rican participant talked about how their racial identity hasn't negatively impacted their erotic hypnosis experienced because of that anonymity, describing it as being thankfully "all clear":

> I don't think it's really impacted my experience with erotic hypnosis. Simply because of, like again, like the whole aspect of anonymity through Discord. Like, no one can tell you're Puerto Rican through Discord. So thankfully I'm all clear [laughing].

An Asian participant recounted a similar experience on both Vanilla dating sites and the erotic hypnosis community:

> I started out anonymously, wouldn't post my picture and obviously didn't disclose my full name, didn't fill in the race section because all my life I've experienced that people who don't know me or their first contact with me is to hear me, that don't even know or suspect that I'm Asian, and you can imagine sometimes the look on their face when they see me for the first time. It's amusing sometimes, and sometimes it hurts. You can tell that, you know, it was not a positive type of reaction and that goes more into the broader sense of living in this country as an Asian. So, I've hidden that, I've disclosed it upfront, I guess let me say it's hit or miss. I'd say most of the time when I've set up my profile, I do not say it, I leave that part blank.

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For this participant, by not disclosing their racial identity upfront, it allows them an opportunity to not be first judged based on their race, and avoid racially prejudiced reactions, at least initially, though has also resulted in negative surprised reactions from some people they who later saw their face. Overall, these online erotic hypnosis spaces provide an opportunity to not be identified as a personal of color, but that opportunity was characterized by participants as having both positive and negative outcomes.

Discussion

As the first study of its kind to conduct a large number of in-depth interviews with erotic hypnosis fetishists, this study revealed a great deal of detail and intricacy about both the individual and larger community factors involved in recreational play with erotic hypnosis. In exploring the origins, motivations, and purported benefits of erotic hypnosis, we were able to examine what erotic hypnosis fetishists perceive they "get out of" the practice, including the ability to play with power, cope with mental and physical health challenges sexual and non-sexual pleasure, relaxation, personal growth, improved sleep, improved communication skills, the ability to relieve the stresses associated with an overactive mind, and the capacity to subjectively experience physically and ethically impossible kink interests, as well as enhance the sensations and experience of other kinks. Some of these findings align well with what we already know about the purported benefits of kinky practices in general, such as the capacity to heal from trauma, manage pain symptoms play with power, and experience a stress-relieving escape from the self, and exploring alternative social roles (Barker & Langdridge, 2009; Bauer, 2018; Baumeister, 1988; Hammers, 2014, 2018; Sheppard, 2019). Other findings align well with the clinical literature on the therapeutic benefits of hypnosis, such as improved sleep, stress relief, personal growth, and managing physical and mental health challenges (Bowker & Dorstyn, 2016; Curtis, 2001; Elkins et al., 2012; Flammer & Bongartz, 2003a; Hilgard et al., 2013; Rotaru & Rusu, 2016), though for insomnia in particular the sample sizes aren't well-powered enough to determine if the benefits of hypnosis are superior to a sham

ontrol (Lam et al., 2015). However, the findings in this study that point to erotic hypnosis as a "Swiss-army-kink" for enhancing other kink interests, or subjectively experiencing physically and ethically impossible kink interests appear to be new for the literature and may help to explain why so many different other kink interests are represented in erotic hypnosis media.

Participants reported a variety of sources for where they first experienced or heard about hypnosis, though media-based origins were among the most common stories. Unlike many other kinks that people may be more likely to encounter at a young age in unmediated contexts (such as discipline experiences from parents, power dynamics in social interactions, clothing and materials that later become fetishized, bodily fluids like urine and feces, and other common encounters recalled by kinky participants as occurring at a young age (Hughes & Hammack, 2020), The high prevalence of stories involving media may point to the rarity of first encountering hypnosis outside of a mediated context, and may also explain some participant's experience of the appeal of hypnosis to experience the physically impossible (as physically impossible experiences are much easier to represent in media than in reality).

In the area of consent and safety concerns, our analysis revealed that participants often recognized erotic hypnosis to be a risky practice necessitating detailed and extensive consent practices, though disagreements persisted about what practices were "best" for everyone, and what can be done to challenge abuses in the erotic hypnosis community, especially for people in positions of leadership. The

analysis also revealed the unique psychological and practical considerations involved in those who enjoy erotic hypnosis specifically because it provides an opportunity to engage in consensusal-nonconsent play. At the same time, ways in which erotic hypnosis was especially safe were also identified by participants. Overall, the lack of agreement among participants about the capacities that hypnosis has to interact with a person's capacity to consent help to explain the difficulties experienced within the community around how to fairly police alleged consent violations. More broadly, the many risks identified (especially around the potential for abreactions) by participants indicate that hypnosis is likely to fall entirely outside of a Safe, Sane, and Consensual ethical framework for kink, and instead may fit more squarely into a RACK, PRICK, or CCCC framework. Given participant's perceptions that a person's desires may be modified over time as a result of playing with hypnosis, and the widespread view that a person who is hypnotized or fractionated is not able to negotiate as a free and independent agent may challenge overly simplistic neoliberal models of consent.

For people with disabilities, erotic hypnosis practices seemed to both offer the opportunity to manage and cope with some disability symptoms, while also potentially risking negative mental health outcomes for others. The erotic hypnosis community itself seemed to involve a perceived high representation of neurodivergent people, who were sometimes described as being especially apt for engaging in erotic hypnosis, while at the same time others reported experiencing ableism and other disability-related barriers to engaging in erotic hypnosis play. The reported aptness of people who are neurodivergent (especially people with ADHD and autism) has not

been well-documented in the existing clinical hypnotherapy literature, which, for autism, mostly consists of case studies, and heavily focuses on children (Huynh et al., 2008; Moat, 2013), and for ADHD, is primarily framed as an alternative to medication for ADHD symptoms, rather than focusing on whether people with ADHD are especially more likely to be hypnotically suggestible (Hiltunen et al., 2014; Nimmo-Smith et al., 2020; Shrestha et al., 2020; Virta et al., 2015), with one study suggesting a particular pharmacological intervention may enhance hypnotizability in adults with ADHD (Lotan et al., 2015). Unfortunately, minority stress processes such as stigma and rejection associated with being an erotic hypnosis fetishist, including having to hide their fetish interest, and internalizing negative attitudes about being into hypnosis were reported as a source of negative mental health outcomes, in alignment with the minority stress perspective (Meyer, 2003).

When spirituality and religion are considered, the erotic hypnosis community seemed to involve people with a variety of spiritual experiences, who sometimes found that spiritual and religious hypnosis-adjacent practices like yoga and meditation served as stepping stones to the development of their erotic hypnosis interests, while others experienced religious stigma and conflict over the perception that hypnosis was demonic or a form of witchcraft, as predicted by existing literature finding people with more conservative religious attitudes having more negative perceptions of kink-oriented practices in general (Grigoropoulos, 2022). For Christians into this practice in particular, the challenges and strategies employed to integrate their erotic hypnosis practices in with their faith also appear unique to this study, as the experiences of

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Christian kinky people are rarely investigated in the literature, often with only sporadic references to "Christian Kink" practices focusing on a man as the head of the household disciplining his wife (Moser & Kleinplatz, 2007). Ironically, a handful of participants did explicitly conceptualize and describe erotic hypnosis as a form of magic or witchcraft, or at least a practice to help enhance these forms of spiritual magic, akin to other forms of sacred and neopagan kink traditions described in the literature (Fennell, 2018; Kaldera & Harrington, 2009; Mueller, 2018). Unfortunately, some people who had religious faith practices also reported experiencing some level of religious stigma coming from the erotic hypnosis community itself, a phenomenon not well-documented in the literature, and worthy of further study. Nevertheless, for some, religious and spiritual themes became a source of pleasure in and of itself within erotic hypnosis settings, especially for participants who reported their erotic hypnosis interest as initially deriving from their religious background, a phenomenon also not very well documented in the literature (for an example, see Guglielmi & Reddy-Best, 2021).

Lastly, on the axes of race, ethnicity, nationality, and language, nearly all participants agreed that the community was overwhelmingly White and had a long way to go in terms of improving racial diversity within the community. A variety of hypotheses were suggested for the dearth of People of Color in the erotic hypnosis community, including cultural and ethnoreligious taboos, socioeconomic barriers (already documented in the literature in Sheff & Hammers, 2011), experiences of unwanted racial fetishization and racial harassment (documented more extensively in

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Jackson, 2017; Kuzmanovic, 2018; Smith & Luykx, 2017), language barriers experienced by non-native English speakers, and fear of ambiguous immigration policies in the United States potentially targeted them for online kink activity during the "morality question" section of an immigration interview. Several of these explanations are not well-documented in the literature and may be worthy of further study to explore the intersections of kink and language, and kink and race. Despite these barriers, participants of color noted the small but growing PoC-only spaces for erotic hypnosis as a source of optimism for reaching a greater critical mass, as well as the ways in which erotic hypnosis practices themselves can serve as a place for People of Color to celebrate and reclaim aspects of their identity, and push back against a lack of representation of People of Color in erotic hypnosis media by creating that media themselves (mirroring some similar stories in Cruz, 2016). Along similar lines, non-native English speakers noted particular advantages to being able to utilize features of other languages in erotic hypnosis contexts to create and enhance intended effects, a feature not documented, to my knowledge, in the literature, in part because many other forms of kink are less focused on language and explicitly verbal interaction.

Limitations

The goal of this study was to attempt to describe erotic hypnosis communities, practitioners, and practices in a great deal of detail, and as such, was not driven by a hypothesis. Some findings from this study, as a result, may simply happen to be the idiosyncratic experiences of only the people interviewed. Similarly, the sample was

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intentionally drawn to oversample for diversity, so frequencies of themes identified

should not be interpreted as representative frequencies of themes that would be found

in the erotic hypnosis community more generally. All participants were fluent in

English, even if it wasn't their native language, so many of the findings related to

language may not apply to people who don't speak English at all or have never

conducted hypnosis in English. Additionally, while we did manage to interview a

handful of people with no connection to the larger erotic hypnosis community, most

of our interviews were drawn from community insiders, so the experiences

represented may not involve the full breadth of experience levels with erotic hypnosis

(thought we did intentionally also oversample for people new to erotic hypnosis.

Lastly, the need to keep the length of this manuscript to a reasonable degree and

timeline for a dissertation also meant that not all analyses conducted on this dataset

(notably, targeted analyses related to gender and sexual orientation, age and

parenting, erotic hypnosis conventions, political ideologies, problems and challenges

not related to consent, drugs, and Covid-19) could be included. Future publications

will be sure to include these additional analyses.

Future Directions

While this study provides rich and detailed insights into the world of erotic

hypnosis and its practitioners, these initial findings are only scratching the surface of

what can be known. Experimental research involving the effects of erotic hypnosis,

modeled after similar BDSM studies (e.g., Ambler et al., 2017), might help to better

understand the impact of erotic hypnosis practices on the body and brain, while

further quantitative research can test hypotheses suggested by some of the themes of this study. This study also provides a potential model for individuals interested in exploring other poorly understood fetish communities and fetish practices, while centering diverse perspectives and intersectionality. Others might also consider the potential application of consent-interventions already designed for mainstream audiences and their applicability to people whose diverse sexual practices might not fall neatly into standard consent frameworks. Larger socio-structural concerns, such as ambiguity for sexual minorities in the U.S. immigration system, the systematic targeting of erotic hypnosis media for censorship by credit card companies, threatening the livelihood of sex workers, and the negative mental health ramifications of anti-kink and anti-hypnosis sentiment, are also brought to the forefront by this study as an implication to consider.

Conclusion

Erotic hypnosis fetishists constitute a surprisingly large, both online and in-person, exceptionally creative fetish community, motivated by a massive variety of desires and benefits, and originating from a variety of sources. Erotic hypnosis practices emphasize consent and safety in the face of risk, but erotic hypnosis communities still face challenges over how to handle consent violations effectively without over-policing consent or erasing nuance. Erotic hypnosis communities also have substantial areas for improvement in countering the barriers to entry that push some religious people, some People of Color, and some people with disabilities out, despite the unique opportunities erotic hypnosis can present for these groups, some of which (such as the participant using erotic hypnosis to improve sleep, reportedly improve cognitive symptoms related to a traumatic brain injury, or alleviate gender dysphoria) have never been documented in the literature on kink. Overall, the erotic hypnosis community appears to involve a unique, creative kink that opens up unique possibilities for those seeking impossible experiences, and enhancement of sensation, the exploration of roles and possible selves, the management of some medical symptoms and as a source of personal growth, but still faces substantial challenges related to consent and diversity, despite efforts to overcome these challenges. My hope is that this dissertation will help to serve both as a guide for better understanding this poorly understood group, as well as a potential series of considerations for people within the erotic hypnosis community looking to identify and solve problems and promote equity and progress.

Figure 1: Screenshot of Erotic Hypnosis Content Ban on FetLife

Create a New Group

A group is where kinksters can come together to share experiences,
common interests, make plans, and more!

___

Name

Erotic Hypnosis Test Example

can't contain the words "hypnosis" in it.

Description

This is a test to demonstrate that "hypnosis" is a banned word.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Recruitment Venue	*N*	%
Online Advertisements and Snowball Sampling	*43*	51.8%
MindQuake (In-Person Conference)	*14*	16.9%
EEEHU (Online Conference)	*12*	14.5%
Hypnocon (In-Person Conference)	*9*	10.8%
E-Quake (Online Conference)	*5*	6.0%
Gender Identity	*N*	%
Cisgender Man	37	44.6%
Cisgender Woman	25	30.1%
Queer	8	9.6%
Transgender Woman	7	8.4%
Genderqueer	5	6.0%
Genderfluid	4	4.8%
Agender	3	3.6%
Nonbinary	3	3.6%
Transgender Man	2	2.4%
Two-Spirit	2	2.4%
Gender Non-Participatory	2	2.4%
Bigender	1	1.2%
Genderflix	1	1.2%
"Object"	1	1.2%
Demiboy	1	1.2%
Pangender	1	1.2%
Androgynous	1	1.2%
Sexual Orientation	*N*	%
Bisexual	22	26.5%
Gay Man	19	22.9%
Pansexual	17	20.5%
Heterosexual	14	16.9%
Asexual	11	13.3%
Queer	11	13.3%
Gray Asexual	3	3.6%
Questioning	3	3.6%
Lesbian	2	2.4%
Sexually Fluid	2	2.4%
Demisexual	2	2.4%
Homoflexible	1	1.2%
Bicurious	1	1.2%
Heteroflexible	1	1.2%
Race/Ethnicity	*N*	%
White/European	58	69.9%
PoC-Identified	34	41.0%
Latino/Hispanic	11	13.3%
Asian/Asian-American	10	12.0%
Black/African American	10	12.0%

Jewish	3	3.6%
Native/Indigenous	3	3.6%
Middle Eastern/North African	1	1.2%
Interest in Hypnosis	*N*	%
Real Hypnosis Only	49	59.0%
Both Real and Roleplay Hypnosis	31	37.3%
Roleplay Hypnosis Only	3	3.6%
Preferred Hypnosis Role (Among Those Interested in Real Hypnosis)	*N*	%
Only Subject	27	32.5%
Hypnoswitch	26	31.3%
Only Hypnotist	20	24.1%
Uncertain, Interested in Real Hypnosis	9	10.8%

Note. Participants were allowed to select any number of gender identities, sexual orientations, and racial categories as they would like, so the percentages will not add up to 100%

Appendix A: Informed Consent for Community Question Submissions

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO   SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

UCSC IRB Protocol #HS-3500
Study Title: Awakenings: A Study of the Lives and Experiences of Erotic Hypnosis Practitioners

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Introductory section*:* You are invited to take part in a research study conducted by Sam Hughes, Nick Santer, and Phil Hammack from the department of Psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Before you decide whether or not to participate in the study, you should read this form and ask questions if there is anything that you do not understand.
Purpose*:* The purpose of the study is to better understand the lives and experiences of people into erotic hypnosis, including those who are hypnotists, subjects, erotic hypnosis role-players, or some combination of the above. We hope to better understand the erotic hypnosis community, how people who are into erotic hypnosis came to discover their interests, manage challenges in their lives, navigate online spaces and issues of consent. We also hope to ensure that questions that you as a community have can be answered through confidential research, to ensure that this research is relevant to and responsive to the erotic hypnosis community's needs.
Decision to quit at any time*:* Your participation is completely voluntary; you are free to change your mind at any time and quit the study. Whatever you decide will in no way penalize you or result in loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled.

What you will do in the study*:* If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to write any questions on the flipchart that you would like to see asked to participants in in-person interviews. You will also be asked to vote for any questions you would like to see asked to participants from the questions already listed, and to also choose to vote for any other questions submitted today. The top three most popular questions that are not already on our protocol will be asked to participants during in-person interviews.
Time required*:* Participation will take approximately five minutes.
Risks or discomforts*:* There is a risk that your identifiable information could be accidentally disclosed if you have a very unique handwriting style that a member of the public could recognize; however, the researchers are taking measures to protect your data. After the questions are submitted and voted on, the researchers will type of a transcript of the questions and votes, and then shred the flipchart page to ensure your handwriting style cannot be identified.
Benefits of this study*:* Although there will be no anticipated direct benefit to you for taking part in this study, the researchers may learn more about needs of the erotic hypnosis community, which may improve the interviews conducted at this conference, by making them more responsive to community needs.
Rights and Concerns*:* If you have questions about this research, please contact Sam Hughes, a PhD student at the University of California Santa Cruz, at samdhughes@ucsc.edu. He can also be contacted at 612-816-6511 or by mail at Sam Hughes, Psychology Department, Psychology Faculty Services, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064,

though email is the best way to contact him. You may also contact the faculty member supervising this work, Phil Hammack, a Professor of Psychology at the University of California Santa Cruz, at hammack@ucsc.edu, 831-459-1050 or at the same address above. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Compliance Administration at the University of California at Santa Cruz at 831-459-1473 or orca@ucsc.edu.

Confidentiality: The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name will not be collected and will not be used in any report. No identifiable research data will be collected.

Future Research: De-identified information (such as the transcript of this flipchart) might be used for future research without asking for additional consent, as there may be unanticipated research questions that we or other researchers might have that are not anticipated at this time. With your permission, researchers may use your de-identified information for future research, using the transcript of the flipchart, with your handwriting removed.

Compensation: You will receive no compensation for participating in this part of the study.

In case there is any injury to the subject: If submitting a question to the flip board, or the results of the vote not going the way you wanted causes you any injury, such as negative mental health symptoms, please remember that you are not alone, and that confidential help is available for free. You should write or call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 to be connected to mental health resources if you need them.

Signature:

Because the primary risk of this study is a breach of confidentiality, we will not ask you to sign this document, because we do not want a record of your name. Instead, we will ask you to state verbally that the information in this form was provided to you and that you voluntarily agree to participation in the research described above. You will be asked whether you agree to the following:

___ I agree to participate in this question submission activity.

___ I give my permission for my de-identified data to be retained and used in future studies described above.

Please keep this consent form for yourself.

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Purpose*:* The purpose of the study is to better understand the lives and experiences of people into erotic hypnosis, including those who are hypnotists, subjects, erotic hypnosis role-players, or some combination of the above. We hope to better understand the erotic hypnosis community, how people who are into erotic hypnosis came to discover their interests, manage challenges in their lives, navigate online spaces and issues of consent.

Decision to quit at any time*:* Your participation is completely voluntary; you are free to change your mind at any time and quit the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. Whatever you decide will in no way penalize you or result in loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled. You will still receive full payment for the study, even if you decide to stop participating in the study early.

What you will do in the study*:* If you decide to take part in this study, here is what will happen: You will be interviewed in a hotel room at this conference with an interviewer of your choice. You will be asked questions about your interest in erotic hypnosis, your life history, your experiences in the erotic hypnosis community, your practices online, your identity, and challenges you face. You will also be asked questions submitted for inclusion in this study by community members at this conference. This study will not involve actually doing any hypnosis or engaging in any intimate behavior. We are only interested in hearing you share your stories, thoughts and experiences.

Time required*:* Participation will take approximately 90 minutes.

Risks or discomforts*:* You may feel uncomfortable discussing your experiences or challenges you face during the interview. Please remember that you can take a break from the interview at any time if you feel the need or skip any questions you don't want to answer. You may also feel uncomfortable because the interview is taking place in a hotel room (which is not ideal). We recognize that hotel rooms can be uncomfortable spaces and will try our best to minimize any discomfort caused by being in a hotel room. There is a risk that your identifiable information could be accidentally disclosed; however, the researchers are taking measures to protect your

data, including protecting the data in encrypted, password protected servers, and deleting the audio file immediately after the data has been transcribed.

Benefits of this study*:* Some people may find sharing their stories and experiences cathartic or may provide them with more insight about their lives. You may or may not experience these benefits. Although there will be no anticipated direct benefit to you for taking part in this study, the researchers may learn more about experiences of people in your community, which may be used to help improve erotic hypnosis communities or reduce stigma and discrimination around this activity.

Rights and Concerns*:* If you have questions about this research, please contact Sam Hughes, a PhD student at the University of California Santa Cruz, at samdhughes@ucsc.edu. He can also be contacted at 612-816-6511 or by mail at Sam Hughes, Psychology Department, Psychology Faculty Services, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064, though email is the best way to contact him. You may also contact the faculty member supervising this work, Phil Hammack, a Professor of Psychology at the University of California Santa Cruz, at hammack@ucsc.edu, 831-459-1050 or at the same address above. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Compliance Administration at the University of California at Santa Cruz at 831-459-1473 or orca@ucsc.edu.

Confidentiality*:* The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name will not be collected and will not be used in any report. Identifiable research data will be encrypted, and password protected.

With your permission, I would like to audiotape this interview so that I can make an accurate transcript. Once I have made the transcript, I will erase the recordings. Your name and any other identifying information will not be in the transcript or my notes.

Your part in this study is confidential within legal limits. The researchers will protect your privacy unless they are required by law to report information to city, state or federal authorities, or to give information to a court of law. None of the information will identify you by name. All records will be maintained without any identification of who you are immediately after they have been transcribed.

Future Research: De-identified information might be used for future research without asking for additional consent, as there may be unanticipated research questions that we or other researchers might have that are not anticipated at this time. With your permission, researchers may use your de-identified information for future research, using the transcripts of these interviews that have had any identifying information removed.

Compensation: You will receive $20 in cash for participating in this study.

In case there is any injury to the subject*:* If discussing your experiences causes you any injury, such as negative mental health symptoms, please remember that you are not alone, and that confidential help is available for free. You should write or call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-

800-273-8255 to be connected to mental health resources if you need them.

<u>Signature</u>:
Because the primary risk of this study is a breach of confidentiality, we will not ask you to sign this document, because we do not want a record of your name. Instead, we will ask you to state verbally on the audio recording that the information in this form was provided to you and that you voluntarily agree to participation in the research described above. You will be asked whether you agree to the following:
___ I agree to be interviewed.

___ I agree to have my interview audiotaped.

___ I give my permission for my de-identified data to be retained and used in future studies described above.

Please keep this consent form for yourself.

Appendix C: Online Interview Participant Screener and Consent Form

Q2 **UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ**
UCSC IRB Protocol#3500
Study Title: Awakenings: A Study of the Lives and Experiences of Erotic Hypnosis Practitioners

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Introductory section: You are invited to take part in a research study conducted by Sam Hughes, Nick Santer, and Phil Hammack from the department of Psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Before you decide whether or not to participate in the study, you should read this form and if there is anything that you do not understand, please submit your questions to Sam Hughes at samdhughes@ucsc.edu.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to better understand the lives and experiences of people into erotic hypnosis, including those who are hypnotists, subjects, erotic hypnosis role-players, or some combination of the above. We hope to better understand the erotic hypnosis community, how people who are into erotic hypnosis came to discover their interests, manage challenges in their lives, navigate online spaces and issues of consent.

Decision to quit at any time: Your participation is completely voluntary; you are free to change your mind at any time and quit the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. Whatever you decide will in no way penalize you or result in loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled. You will still receive full payment for the study, even if you decide to stop participating in the study early.

What you will do in the study: If you decide to take part in this study, here is what will happen: You will be asked to answer a series of demographic questions and provide your email address. If you are selected, you will be interviewed via an online program called Zoom with an interviewer of your choice. You will be asked questions about your interest in erotic hypnosis, your life history, your experiences in the erotic hypnosis community, your practices online, your identity, and challenges you face. You will also be asked questions submitted for inclusion in this study by community members at a recent national erotic hypnosis conference. You may choose to answer the questions from either a gay erotic hypnosis community conference, or a more general erotic hypnosis community conference. This study will not involve actually doing any hypnosis or engaging in any intimate behavior. We are only interested in hearing you share your stories, thoughts and experiences.

Time required: Participation will take approximately 90 minutes.

Risks or discomforts: You may feel uncomfortable discussing your experiences or challenges you face during the interview. Please remember that you can take a break from the interview at any time if you feel the need or skip any questions you don't want to answer. There is a risk that your identifiable information could be accidentally disclosed; however, the researchers are taking measures to protect your data, including protecting the data in encrypted, password protected servers, and deleting the audio file immediately after the data has been transcribed. While we

have taken these steps to protect your confidentiality, there is always a risk that if your or my computer has been compromised without our knowledge that the interview, we are conducting online could be recorded without either of our knowledge.

Benefits of this study*:* Some people may find sharing their stories and experiences cathartic or may provide them with more insight about their lives. You may or may not experience these benefits. Although there will be no anticipated direct benefit to you for taking part in this study, the researchers may learn more about experiences of people in your community, which may be used to help improve erotic hypnosis communities or reduce stigma and discrimination around this activity.

Rights and Concerns*:* If you have questions about this research, please contact Sam Hughes, a PhD student at the University of California Santa Cruz, at samdhughes@ucsc.edu. He can also be contacted at 612-816-6511 or by mail at Sam Hughes, Psychology Department, Psychology Faculty Services, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064, though email is the best way to contact him. You may also contact the faculty member supervising this work, Phil Hammack, a Professor of Psychology at the University of California Santa Cruz, at hammack@ucsc.edu, 831-459-1050 or at the same address above. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Compliance Administration at the University of California at Santa Cruz at 831-459-1473 or orca@ucsc.edu.

Confidentiality*:* The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name will not be collected and will not be used in any report. Identifiable research data will be encrypted, and password protected. With your permission, I would like to audiotape this interview so that I can make an accurate transcript. Once I have made the transcript, I will erase the recordings. Your name and any other identifying information will not be in the transcript or my notes. You will not be videotaped during this interview, even though the interview will take place over webcam. Your part in this study is confidential within legal limits. The researchers will protect your privacy unless they are required by law to report information to city, state or federal authorities, or to give information to a court of law. None of the information will identify you by name. All records will be maintained without any identification of who you are immediately after they have been transcribed.

Future Research: De-identified information might be used for future research without asking for additional consent, as there may be unanticipated research questions that we or other researchers might have that are not anticipated at this time. With your permission, researchers may use your de-identified information for future research, using the transcripts of these interviews that have had any identifying information removed.

Compensation: You will receive $20 in cash for participating in this study.

In case there is any injury to the subject*:* If discussing your experiences causes you any injury, such as negative mental health symptoms, please remember that you are not alone, and that

confidential help is available for free. You should write or call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 to be connected to mental health resources if you need them.

Signature: Because the primary risk of this study is a breach of confidentiality, we will not ask you to sign this document, because we do not want a record of your name. Instead, we will ask you to state verbally on the audio recording that the information in this form was provided to you and that you voluntarily agree to participation in the research described above. You will be asked whether you agree to the following:
___ I agree to be interviewed.
___ I agree to have my interview audiotaped.
___ I give my permission for my de-identified data to be retained and used in future studies described above.
Please keep this consent form for yourself.

Q1
How would you describe your current gender identity? [please mark all that apply]

☐ Man (1)

☐ Woman (2)

☐ Genderqueer (3)

☐ Genderfluid (4)

☐ Agender (5)

☐ Two-Spirit (6)

☐ Androgynous (7)

☐ Queer (8)

☐ Demiboy (9)

☐ Demigirl (10)

☐ Some other Gender Identity: please describe (11)
_____

Q4 What is the sex you were assigned at birth? [e.g., the sex listed on your birth certificate]

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Other (3)

Q5 Which of the following describe your sexual orientation? [please mark all that apply]

☐ Gay (1)

☐ Lesbian (2)

☐ Heterosexual (3)

☐ Heteroflexible (4)

☐ Bisexual (5)

☐ Pansexual (6)

☐ Asexual (7)

☐ Queer (8)

☐ Homoflexible (9)

☐ Bicurious (10)

☐ Unsure/Questioning (11)

☐ Some other Sexual Orientation: please describe (12)

_____

Q6 What is your age, in years?

_____

Q22 How would you describe your racial/ethnic identity?

_____

Q23 If you are selected to be interviewed, what email address would you like to be contacted at?

_____

End of Block: Default Question Block

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ
Awakenings: A Study of the Lives and Experiences of Erotic Hypnosis Practitioners
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to participate in today's interview. The purpose of this research is to better understand the lives and experiences of people with an interest in erotic hypnosis. Specifically, we are interested in what these activities mean to you, how you have experienced these interests over the course of your life, the challenges you face, and the role of social media in your kink and fetish interests.

Before we begin, I wanted to remind you that there are some jurisdictions in the United States where erotic hypnosis is illegal. As a result, as ask that you not mention identifiable physical locations, such as the names of cities or states, to minimize any legal risks to what is discussed here today. In the event you do mention the name of a state or city, we will omit this information from the transcript made of this recording.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Section 1: COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES
In this first part of the interview, I'm going to ask you some questions about your experiences in the erotic hypnosis fetish community.

1. To start, tell me about the first time you realized that other people shared your fetish interests?
● PROBE: At what age did this happen?
● PROBE: How did you feel during that experience?
● PROBE: How do you feel now looking back on that experience.
2. What was it like when you first became part of the fetish community?
● PROBE: How did you feel during that experience?
● PROBE: How did you feel about yourself during that experience?
●
CONCLUDE: Thank you so much for sharing your experiences in the community with me so far. It's helpful for me to know a bit about your personal history in order to understand your experiences better.

Section 2: Personal Background
So, in this next part of the interview, I'm going to ask you some questions about your personal background with erotic hypnosis fetishism.

1. To start, tell me about your earliest memory of being interested in erotic hypnosis.
● PROBE: At what age did your interest in them begin? ● PROBE: Did it start with an interest in hypnosis that wasn't sexual?
● PROBE: How did you feel during these experiences?
● PROBE: How did you feel about yourself during these experiences?
2. Tell me about the first time you ever told another person about your interest.
● PROBE: In-community member or not?
● PROBE: Did this happen online? Or offline?
● Sub-probe: *Who are the people you connected with online?* 1. *Do you connect with these people offline*?

● Were there any specific periods of inactivity that you remember, or any times you deleted content from an entire period of your life online?

3. Next, could you tell me the story of the first time lived out your fetish interests with another person?

● PROBE: Online or in-person?

● PROBE: How did it make you feel?

4. Next, could you tell me about the best erotic hypnosis experience you've ever had?

5. Next, how would you describe the way you live out your fetish interests now?

● PROBE: Online or in-person?

● PROBE: How did it make you feel?

As you might remember, as part of our effort to make sure this research is meaningful for the community, people from this community submitted questions during our time at(Mind Quake/Hypnocon), and we would like to ask you three of the most voted for questions that weren't already covered in *our* set of interview questions.

Section 3: COMMUNITY SUBMITTED QUESTIONS

The First community-submitted question is:

The Second community-submitted question is:

The Third community-submitted question is:

SECTION 4: Privacy and Online Communities

In this next section of the interview, we would like to hear about your fetish experiences online.

1. What are some of the main websites and applications you use, that provide a space to engage with your fetish interests online? 2. How do you feel about sharing your personal identifying information (such as photos of yourself) on the online community spaces that you engage with?

● PROBE: How do you manage privacy online?

● PROBE: Do you only let people you know engage with you?

● PROBE: Do you read the privacy policies on the sites that you use?

● PROBE: Are all of your accounts on these websites or applications private, or are some of them publicly accessible/visible?

● PROBE: Do you feel like the information you post or contribute online is kept privately accessible?

● PROBE: Do you think that it is important to keep all of your accounts on these websites set to 'private'?

● PROBE: Do other people ever post content (pictures, stories, posts) about you on these websites? If so,

are you okay with that?

SECTION 5: Problems and Minority Stress

In this next section of the interview, we would like to ask about challenges and issues you may have experienced. In this section of the interview, you will also be asked about your worst experience with erotic hypnosis, which may be challenging for you to discuss. Please remember you may choose not to answer any question you do not wish to answer during this interview.

1. Have your fetish interests caused any challenges or problems for you in your life?

Probe: How have you dealt with or coped with those problems?

1. Can you tell me about the worst erotic hypnosis experience you've ever had?

2. What do you think are the biggest problems or challenges facing the erotic hypnosis community?

a. Probe: Are there any other challenges?

1. If you could change the erotic hypnosis community in any way, what would you change?

Section 6: Consent
Next, we'd like to hear your thoughts about consent in erotic hypnosis.

1. Some people think that consent in the context of erotic hypnosis is straightforward. Other people think of consent as complicated. Other people think it's somewhere in between. What is your perspective on consent in the context of erotic hypnosis?

2. PROBE: Some people are into erotic hypnosis because of the fantasy of making people do things against their will or being made to do things against their will. How does the presence of this fantasy among some people into erotic hypnosis relate to how you think about consent in the hypnosis community?

3. PROBE: Have you ever had an experience in which your consent was unclear or was violated during erotic hypnosis? What was that experience like?

SECTION 7: Age, Gender and Sexual Orientation
As we move towards the end of the interview, we have sections left. First, we'd like to hear about how your fetish experiences may have been affected by or relate some other identities you hold.

1. First, how has your age as a (Age from Screener) year old person impacted your experiences with the fetish community.

2. How has your identity as a (Gender Identity from Screener) impacted your experiences with the fetish community?

3. How has your identity as a (Sexual Orientation from Screener) impacted your experiences with the fetish community?

4. How has your identity as a (Race/Ethnicity from Screener)impacted your experiences with the fetish community?

5. Are there any other identities you hold that have impacted your experiences with the fetish community? How so?

Overall Reflections and Closing
Now we are going to wrap up the interview with a few final questions.

1. First, how has the experience of this interview been for you? How does it feel to go back to the past and look at the development of your fetish interests?

2. How do you think you have changed over the past few years? PROBE: How has your engagement with your fetish communities changed over time?

3. How have your online communities changed over time? 4. How have your offline communities changed over time? 5. Finally, is there anything else you would like to share about your fetish experiences and community that you haven't had a chance to say yet?

Thank you for completing the interview.

(Turn off Tape Recorder)

Lastly, is there anything you wanted to say that you didn't want to be recorded?

Appendix E: Final Round 2 Content Analysis Codebook

1) **Demographics and Identities**
   a) **Age**
      i) **Definition:** The participant talks about a time when they were a particular age or others were a particular age, indicated either by a specific year, reference to a period of time in their life, an age in their future, or talking in general about an age period.
         (1) "When I was young"
         (2) "In my childhood"
         (3) "When I was six
         (4) "When my partner was 20"
         (5) "Once I'm 50, I plan to…."
      ii) **Ageplay**
         (1) Definition: The participant talks about ageplay, a roleplay behavior involving taking on the role of a different (typically younger) age than the person actually is chronologically.
            (a) We do a lot of ageplay together
            (b) I often like to pretend I'm a little girl with my partner
      iii) **Hypothetical age**
         (1) Definition: The participant talks about how they would do things differently, or how their life would have turned out differently if they had made different choices at a previous age, or how they imagine their life would be in the future.
            (a) "If I were to do things all over again"
            (b) "If I could send a message back to my past self and give myself some advice"
            (c) "I imagine that by the time I'm 60 I'll still be a part of this community"
            (d) "If I had found the erotic hypnosis community back when I was 18…"
      iv) **Early Childhood (1-4)**
         (1) Definition: The participant talks about being in early childhood, between the ages of 1-4 or about people within that age category.
            (a) Infancy
            (b) Infant
            (c) Toddler
            (d) Baby
            (e) Pre-school
      v) **Middle Childhood (5-10)**
         (1) Definition: The participant talks about being middle childhood, between the ages of 5-10 or about people within that age category.
            (a) Kindergarten-5th grade
            (b) Elementary School
            (c) Child
            (d) Kid

        (e) Young child
- **vi)** **Early Teens (11-14)**
    - **(1)** **Definition:** The participant talks about being in their early teenage years, between the ages of 11-14 or about people within that age category.
        - (a) Puberty
        - (b) Middle School
        - (c) 5th -8th grade
        - (d) Early teens
- **vii)** **Teen (15-18)**
    - **(1)** **Definition:** The participant talks about being in early childhood, between the ages of 15-18 or about people within that age category.
        - (a) High School
        - (b) 9th -12th grade
        - (c) Teen
        - (d) Late Teen
- **viii)** **Young Adulthood (19-24)**
    - **(1)** **Definition:** The participant talks about being young adulthood, is between the ages of 19-24 or about people within that age category.
        - (a) Young adult
        - (b) College
        - (c) Early 20's
- **ix)** **Late 20's (25-29)**
    - **(1)** **Definition:** The participant talks about being in their mid-to-late 20s, being between the ages of 25-29 or about people within that age category.
        - (a) Late 20's
        - (b) Right out of college
        - (c) Mid-20's
- **x)** **30's (30-39)**
    - **(1)** **Definition:** The participant talks about being in their 30s, between the ages of 30-39 or about people within that age category.
        - (a) Early 30's
        - (b) Mid 30's
        - (c) Late 30's
- **xi)** **40's (40-49)**
    - **(1)** **Definition:** The participant talks about being in their 40s, between the ages of 40-49 or about people within that age category.
        - (a) Early 40's
        - (b) Mid 40's
        - (c) Late 40's
- **xii)** **50's (50-59)**
    - **(1)** **Definition:** The participant talks about being in their 50s, between the ages of 50-59 or about people within that age category.

        (a) Early 50's
        (b) Mid 50's
        (c) Late 50's
        (d) After Retirement
            (i)   NOTE: if they specifically state after retirement, CROSS-CODE with old age

xiii) **Old Age (60+)**
    (1) Definition: The participant talks about being in their elderly years, being at or above the age of 60, or about people within that age category.
        (a) Early 60's
        (b) Mid 60's
        (c) Late 60's
        (d) Older than 60's
        (e) After Retirement
            (i)   NOTE: if they specifically state after retirement, CROSS-CODE with old age, CROSS-CODE with 50s

xiv) **Eternal**
    (1) Definition: The participant talks about a time period that has always existed, something having always been true for them, or about something being permanently the case.
        (a) Always
        (b) "Since I was born"
        (c) "Since I can remember"
        (d) Forever

xv) **Generic youth**
    (1) Definition: The participant talks about being young in a generic fashion, or about young people in general.
        (a) "Young"
        (b) "When I was young"
        (c) "When I was younger"
        (d) "Early in my life"
        (e) "In my youth"
        (f) "Before I was an adult"
        (g) "Before I lost my virginity" if no specific age or age range listed for virginity loss or if virginity loss takes place between 18 and 25.
        (h) **NOTE**: This is exclusive from other age groups. For example, if they talk about being 16, then this doesn't go in generic youth, since it belongs in the 15-18 category.

b) **Language Spoken**
  i)   **Definition:** The participant discusses a language they speak, or aspects of a spoken language.
  ii)   **Accents**

(1) **Definition:** The participant discusses their own accent, the accents of others, or any other considerations relating to the accent with which one speaks.
      (a) People find my Brazilian accent sexy.
iii) **Chinese**
   (1) **Definition:** Someone who speaks Chinese, mentions use of Chinese language or someone else who speaks Chinese
      (a) **NOTE:** Any dialect of Chinese should be coded here
iv) **Spanish**
   (1) **Definition:** Someone who speaks Spanish, mentions use of Spanish language or someone else who speaks Spanish
      (a) I've never done hypnosis in Spanish.
v) **Portuguese**
   (1) **Definition:** Someone who speaks Portuguese, mentions use of Portuguese language or someone else who speaks Portuguese
      (a) "Um, because like since my first language is Portuguese, and [pause] we have a different way of dealing with consent in a lot of ways."
      (b) "Just the thing I told about people just sometimes bothering me because they want to hear my ft or they want me to trance them in Portuguese."
vi) **Greek**
   (1) **Definition:** Someone who speaks Greek, mentions use of Greek language, or someone else who speaks Greek
      (a) ... it's in my plans to start to try doing [erotic hypnosis] in Greek
      (b) I think the way I would say it in Greek…
vii) **English**
   (1) **Definition:** Someone who speaks English, mentions use of English language, or someone else who speaks English
      (a) "You know, being a word geek, it's pretty easy to figure out guys who aren't native-born English speakers, you know."
      (b) "There's kind of a holier than thou attitude. Especially, and, I really don't want to discriminate here, but usually abo-around like, Americans, like, people like English-speaking Americans."
viii) **Dutch**
   (1) **Definition:** Someone who speaks Dutch, mentions use of Dutch language or someone else who speaks Dutch
      (a) "Uh, like I had, um, have two friends who have as their native language Dutch and they have the same thing with Dutch and English that they, for them it's more, feels more comfortable and more natural to do it in English as in Dutch."
      (b) "But I've also been hypnotized in Dutch, but I prefer English just because Dutch sounds like it--it's still nice."

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ix) **German**
   (1) **Definition:** Someone who speaks German, mentions use of German language or someone else who speaks German
      (a) "So, um, there were a couple of funny things that happened when I tried it in German. Uh, one time I did try it in German. I, at some points during, uh, during the, the trance where I'd hypnotized somebody switched to English without noticing"
      (b) "Um, but sometimes I've seen like people who are have German, not as their primary language, uh, have hearing them say the opposite. Like German is hot for kink."

x) **Language Barriers, Features, Idiosyncrasies**
   (1) **Definition:** Someone who shares personally or knowing someone who has had experiences of difficulty participating in the erotic hypnosis community because of differences in language, or talks about specific features or idiosyncrasies of the language that relate to erotic hypnosis.
      (a) He was from Europe, and I was like "Oh hey". And I always thought the language barrier might be a thing, but he was super cool and super into it.
      (b) Like, part of the reason is that I live in a country in which I don't speak the language. So this kind of limits me in coming in contact with the erotic hypnosis community
      (c) I have never been hypnotized other than myself, exactly because I - I don't because of __ and not speaking the local language here I am - smaller popular local hypnosis community here __ know people, so, you know, I haven't made connection with another person.

xi) **Hebrew**
   (1) **Definition:** Someone who speaks Hebrew, mentions use of Hebrew language or someone else who speaks Hebrew
      (a) I don't speak Hebrew at all, and have never done hypnosis in it.

xii) **French**
   (1) **Definition:** Someone who speaks French, mentions use of French language, or someone else who speaks French
      (a) In French we have the vous/tu distinction, that we use for power roles in D/s contexts.

xiii) **Malay**
   (1) **Definition:** Someone who speaks Malay, mentions use of Malay language or someone else who speaks Malay
      (a) I speak Malay, but I mostly swear in it, so it wouldn't be sexy for hypnosis.

xiv) **ASL (American Sign Language)**

          (1) Definition: Someone who speaks American Sign Language, mentions use of American Sign Language or someone else who speaks American Sign Language
            (a) I can't find a hypnotist who uses ASL.

   xv)   **Bilingualism, Polyglot**
          (1) Definition: The participant indicates they are bilingual, a polyglot, or talks about speaking more than one language in general, either themselves or referencing others speaking multiple languages
            (a) I speak both Spanish and English

c) **Religion and Spirituality**
   i)   **Definition:** The participant discusses religion, spirituality, or some other aspect involving spirits, the divine, gods, and/or magic.

   ii)   **Christianity**
          (1) Definition: Participant mentions the Christian religion or their experiences around that religion
            (a) So I Googled rope and things like that and I found a dungeon in a conservative city in the South of that big state which is - was also where I went to school. A, you know, very Christian, conservative community.
            (b) I, in a lot of ways, see religion a lot like hypnosis, that especially when you're the hypnotist that a lot of the reactions you get from subjects is like— the Evangelical Christians especially having Jesus as their lord and savior and their master and following…
            (c) Yeah. I was extremely sheltered for most of my life and my parents were very Christian.

          (2) Catholicism
            (a) Definition: Participant mentions the Catholic religion or their experiences around that religion
              (i)   So I'm from a very Catholic country. I'm from a very particular town that's in the very conservative portion of this country, so very Catholic, very conservative, so I did not look for porn when I was growing up.
              (ii)   I'm still Catholic umm this is something that I've been struggling with a lot recently actually.
              (iii) I was 14 for six months, and my second experience was with a man who was a catholic priest.

          (3) Protestantism
            (a) Definition: Participant mentions Protestantism, or a specific protestant sect of Christianity.
            (b) Mormonism
               (i)   **Definition:** Participant mentions the Mormon religion or their experiences around that religion
                  1. There were people that are across the way who are Mormon and have, you know, their

<blockquote>mission is to convert people to their - well all religions want people to convert but they especially have a push to do that.</blockquote>

2. There were two religions- Mormons and Catholics. And that was the limit of our cosmology, right there.

(c) Christian Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism

    (i) Definition: Participant mentions the Christian fundamentalism, evangelicalism, an evangelical sect, or concepts involving biblical inerrancy, or their experiences with that religion

        1. Pentecostal
        2. Evangelical

iii) Hinduism

    (1) Definition: Participant mentions Hinduism or a sect of the Hindu religion or their experiences around that religion.

iv) Paganism/Neopaganism

    (1) Definition: Participant mentions the Pagan/Neopagan religion or their experiences around that religion.

        (a) I use hypnosis as a part of my practice

        (b) In my practice as kind of a Witch and a follower of [Username for Content Production, Origin Deity] and also a hypnotist I kind of use my hypnosis as a way to worship [Username for Content Production, Origin Deity]

        (c) **NOTE:** discussing the stigma of perceiving hypnosis as a form of witchcraft should go in "Hypnosis as Witchcraft/Stigma" rather than here.

v) Atheism, Agnosticism, and Non-Religiosity

    (1) Definition: Participant mentions having no religion and identifying as "atheist", "agnostic" or their experiences as a non-religious person.

        (a) Oh, I'm an atheist and I feel strongly about that but I don't know that it's, I haven't noticed it coming into play.

        (b) They're always surrounded by converts, people who come from different backgrounds, different faiths, they probably were agnostics or atheists or what have you and they just came into the Church.

vi) Spiritualism

    (1) Definition: Participant mentions having faith or practicing according to a non-organized set of principles, or the perception hypnosis is a spiritual practice itself, without reference to a specific group.

        (a) It was more when I started exploring my, not just exploring my sexuality but also exploring my spirituality.

        (b) My spirituality is developed into my own, though I've dabbled in Christianity, Buddhism, um, has impacted me, I

mean my spirituality is very important to me, my spiritual growth.

vii) **Buddhism**
  (1) **Definition:** Participant mentions the Buddhist religion, Buddhist chanting, or other Buddhist practices
  (2) **NOTE:** If the participant is talking about meditation, mindfulness, etc., make sure to CROSS-CODE it into Meditation, Buddhist Chanting, Mindfulness.
  (3) **NOTE:** If they are just talking about meditation in general, don't code it here. It specifically needs to be identified as Buddhist or associated with Buddhism
    (a) I'm a Buddhist.

viii) **Judaism**
  (1) **Definition:** Participant mentions the Jewish religion or their experiences around that religion
    (a) I'm a religious Jew, so figuring out Saturdays with erotic hypnosis conferences is challenging.

ix) **Cults**
  (1) **Definition:** Participant mentions experiences or perceptions of erotic hypnosis as a cult, or a general experience with a cult, even if erotic hypnosis wasn't involved.
    (a) "I feel like that guy who was abusing people was basically starting his own hypno-cult.

x) **Sikhism**
  (1) **Definition:** Participant mentions the Sikh religion or their experiences around that religion.
    (a) "And Sikhs have a very positive, um, very positive impression, very positive, uh, [pause] public image."

xi) **Hypnosis as Spiritually or Religiously Evil, Religious Stigma, Conflict with Religion**
  (1) **Definition:** Participant mentions of hypnosis used in witchcraft or the perception of Hypnosis as an evil form of witchcraft or devil worship, or generally conflicting with religious beliefs
    (a) Note: Distinct from talking about it as a neopagan practice
    (b) I guess identifying as a Witch sometimes makes people feel different kinda ways… You know and then sometimes, people will fetishize that, specifically? Like they'll ask me to do a spell on them? or something? Sometimes I do play into that idea of putting a spell on someone, like in a hypnotic way.
    (c) And people always have the impression that hypnotism is already something kind of - witchcraft or something
    (d) Well, hypnosis wasn't very well understood then. You could still be accused of using witchcraft in some places.
    (e) So the most difficult thing is the perception. Making sure people don't see it as witchcraft…

(f) **NOTE:** This should be automatically CROSS-CODED with Religious Stigma Around Hypnosis

d) Race, Ethnicity
   i) Definition: Participant identifies themselves as part of a particular racial or ethnic group or mentions perceptions of the White racial/ethnic identity of others in the community.

   ii) White
      (1) Definition: Someone who identifies as White, Caucasian, European or mentions others who hold that identity.
         (a) As a White person
         (b) I see a lot of White people in the community
         (c) I'm Anglo-Saxon

   iii) Black
      (1) Definition: Someone who identifies as Black, African-American, or mentions others who hold that identity
         (a) I think it's that feeling of not being welcome. But when I go to munches, the People of Color, both from dominant. There's a whole group of Black women that are, you know, hold munches. More than welcome. And the People of Color munches, I've been more than welcome
         (b) ...I tend to not really associate myself much with stuff like the culture or anything like that of being a Black person um I find it, like I've never noticed in any like substantial way sort of like discrimination or anything like that based off of that.

   iv) Latino
      (1) Definition: Someone who identifies as Latinx, Latino, Latina, Chicanx, Chicano, Chicana or mentions others who hold that identity
         (a) ...how has your identity as a Latino person impacted your experience with erotic hypnosis? So far it hasn't, but again that's because it seems that the way I've entered the erotic hypnosis community has been very welcoming and engaging. Then again, I do understand I know a very small portion of it. I am well aware that it can impact my experience in the future.
         (b) I'm Brazilian so I grew up thinking I was White because my whole life I was White. And then I joined the community, and… I don't know. I was having a conversation with someone, and I included myself as White people and they started laughing at me. Because they said "No you're not White, you're not White, you're Latino you're Brazilian, you're not White at all.
         (c) So I haven't met anyone in the - the EH community that's Latin.

   v) Asian

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(1) Definition: Someone who identifies as Asian, Asian-American, or other associated identities, or mention others who hold that identity.

> (a) Um, [laughs], um, I mean if people looked into hypnosis more then they might actually look into the kinda things that South Asian cultures and religions have been doing around trances etcetera, but they haven't so they've not been fetishized. So, I've not been fetishized as a result.
>
> (b) ...I think my identity as a turban, bearded, Sikh, Indian man [pause] — let me reword that. My-my work as a erotic hypnotist would be enhanced by this identity.

vi) Jewish

(1) Definition: Participant who identifies as ethnically Jewish or mentions others who hold that identity.

> (a) I'm Ashkenazi Jewish.
>
> (b) **NOTE:** This may also CROSS-CODE into Judaism (under religion and spirituality)

vii) Indigenous

(1) Definition: The participant identifies as Indigenous, Aboriginal, Native American, an Alaskan native, or mentions people who hold that identity.

> **(a)** Here in Australia, it's mostly about aboriginal folks.

viii) Mixed-Race

(1) Definition: Someone who identifies as mixed-race, biracial, or two or more racial/ethnic backgrounds, or mentions others who hold that identity.

> **(a)** "**Sam**: Um, the next question we have is how has your identity as a mixed race person experience impacted your experience in the erotic hypnosis community? **Participant**: Hmm. I don't know. To be honest, I never really experienced, at least in the community that I am, being treated any differently. So, um, I don't really know."

ix) Speculations Regarding the Lack of PoC in the Erotic Hypnosis Community

(1) Definition: The participant speculates, makes a guess about, or claims to know why there are so few PoC in the erotic hypnosis community.

> **(a)** Note: When talking about a specific racial or ethnic group, it should also be coded in that code, in addition to here.
>
> **(b)** Well, Black people are more likely to think that hypnosis is voodoo, so they are more skeptical
>
> **(c)** Black people don't want to be made a fool, so the cluck like a chicken thing turns them off.
>
> **(d)** The community just feels really White-centric.

(2) Uncertain as to why there is a lack of PoC:

(a) Definition: The participant indicates they are uncertain about why there is a lack of People of Color in the erotic hypnosis community.

    x) **Racial Stereotyping, Prejudice, Racism**

        (1) **Definition:** Participant mentions experiencing or holds beliefs based on assumptions about one's ethnic or racial background.

            (a) "Um, yeah, I- I haven't experienced any like, overt racism. So like nobody's said anything to me that I'm like, 'that's really offensive.' Um, but there's like several things that like ... being at a physical con and people thinking, mistaking me for someone else."

        (2) **Raceplay**

            (a) **Definition:** Participant discusses raceplay, or the practice of engaging with racial identities, racism, racial transformation, or racial stereotyping as part of a scene of kink activity

                (i) They asked me to hypnotize them to see me as being of a different race

        (3) **Racial Fetishism**

            (a) **Definition:** Participant mentions experiences being attracted to or being fetishized for solely or mostly race/ethnicity.

                (i) And in fact I have a thing for guys who are Black - and I like guys - I like men who are Latino.

                (ii) I think I am fetishized a lot not just in erotic hypno but in eroticism in general. Like people like to view Latinas as bossy and spicy or whatever and having big boobs and big ass and everything all that kind of nonsense.

        (4) **Absence of Racial Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Racism**

            (a) **Definition:** Participant explicitly mentions not experiencing racism, racial prejudice, or stereotypical assumptions about one's ethnic or racial background.

e) **Class/Socioeconomic Factors**

    i) **Definition:** The participant discusses socioeconomic status or class-related factors, such as the amount of money participants have to spend at conferences, or being highly educated.

        (1) I feel like most people in the erotic hypnosis community have graduate degrees

        (2) I can't afford to go to a hotel for a conference.

f) **Nationality**

    i) **Definition:** Participant identifies or mentions others as belonging to a given nation.

    ii) **Turkish**

       (1) Definition: Someone who identifies themselves as Turkish or mentions others who are from Turkey or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.

iii)   **Malaysian**

       (1) Definition: Someone who identifies themselves as Malaysian or mentions others who are from Malaysia or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.

iv)   **Indian, subcontinent**

       (1) Definition: Someone who identifies themselves as Indian (not Indigenous) or mentions others who are from Indian or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.

            (a) NOTE: Do not put references to being "Indian" which refer to Native Americans or Indigenous American ethnic identities into this category. This is only for those referring to the subcontinent of India.

v)   **U.S. American**

       (1) Definition: Someone who identifies themselves as a U.S. American, or mentions others who are from the U.S.A., or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.

            (a) NOTE: a participant who calls themselves "American" almost certainly means this, but be careful to check for context clues in the event they mean South American.

            (b) People within the American community in the Church, they're more, um, like they've grown in the Church, they're like second, third generation in the Church.

            (c) I have my own ideas of how Americans usually behave, you know, in a general context. Not a—not a stereotype as a stereotype—but as [stutters] some behavior patterns, but there's always a feeling that there is something I don't know, you know?

            (d) I have a Facebook account, which I'm not super active on, but got a friends list and am comfortable enough with including friends that I met through kink on there. Um, so I have a weirdly high number of American friends on Facebook [laughs]."

vi)   **Icelandic**

       (1) Definition: Someone who identifies themselves as Icelandic or mentions others who are from Iceland or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.

vii)   **French**

       (1) Definition: Someone who identifies themselves as French or mentions others who are from France or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.

viii)   **Canadian**

(1) Definition: Someone who identifies themselves as Canadian or mentions others who are from Canada, or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.

    (a) "Um, pretty often if I say I'm Canadian, in, um, in the, um, — 'tists, they'll whip up some stereotypes. But I imagine that's pretty common with, uh, any country. Um, I found that it's, uh, — in the area of Canada I'm in, it's very sparsely populated. Um, it means that, like, IRL stuff is pretty much entirely out of the question just because of the distance."

ix) Brazilian

  (1) Definition: Someone who identifies themselves as Brazilian or mentions others who are from Brazil, or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.

    (a) "He was from Brazil I think, really nice guy…"

x) Australian

  (1) Definition: Someone who identifies themselves as Australian, or mentions others who are from Australia, or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.

    (a) I'm not sure what it is [laughs] it's some religious--it's not as common here I think, like, in Australia, versus America, yes--for some reason people always seem to think like being like a sexual deviant in any way means like

xi) Kiwi (New Zealander)

  (1) Definition: Someone who identifies themselves as Kiwi or mentions others who are from New Zealand, or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.

    (a) I'm from New Zealand. I moved here about a year ago, and pretty much a week before MindQuake was like when I moved here.

    (b) I used to run workshops and stuff back in New Zealand but there weren't, there's this there's nobody I was it, I was the community.

    (c) We would meet certain times of the week and then we'd be in different time zones for everyone 'cause some people were literally on opposite sides of the globe. I'm here in America, someone is from New Zealand. Someone else was from Canada. And um, we would talk hypnosis.

xii) Czech Republic

  (1) Definition: Someone who identifies themselves or mentions others as being from the Czech Republic, or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.

    (a) I'm living in the Czech Republic right now, even though I'm originally Greek.

xiii) Greek

- **(1) Definition:** Someone who identifies themselves as Greek or mentions others who are from Greece, or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.
    - **(a)** "Partially, I mean I'm a - I'm a very Google-able person, right, I'm a Greek person living outside Greece. So if you type my first name and the country I live, you will get my employee home page with my photo and, yeah, my boss next to me and the boss is in, so, you know…"
- **xiv) Mexico**
    - **(1) Definition:** Someone who identifies themselves as Mexican, or mentions others who are from Mexico, or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.
        - **(a)** he first guy I carried was the Mexican guy, my Mexican friend [Friend 2]
- **xv) Netherlands/Dutch**
    - **(1) Definition:** Someone who identifies themselves as Dutch or mentions others who are from the Netherlands, or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.
        - **(a) Sam:** Um, what country is that? **Participant:** Uh, the Netherlands.
- **xvi) German**
    - **(1) Definition:** Someone who identifies themselves as German, or mentions others who are from Germany, or mentions someone or themselves who lives there.
        - **(a)** And I met this play partner um, who lives in Germany
- **xvii) Immigration Status, living in a different country**
    - **(1) Definition:** Someone mentions their immigration status or the immigration status of others, or moving to or living in a different country than the one in which they were born.
        - **(a)** "But it's an interesting topic like as an immigrant right now, too. Because there are certain policies and things around... So I feel like I have to be careful about my media."
- **g) Participant's Own Erotic Hypnosis Role**
    - **i) Definition:** The participant discusses their experiences or identity within a specific erotic hypnosis role.
        - **(1) NOTE:** Talking about other people's roles of the roles in general does not go here, but goes into the "Other people's roles" category.
    - **ii) Hypnotist, Hypnotop, Tist**
        - **(1) Definition:** The participant indicates they are a hypnotist, hypnotize others, or talks about others being hypnotists or hypnotists in general.
    - **iii) Subject, Hypnotee, Hypnobottom**
        - **(1) Definition:** The participant indicates they are a subject, gets hypnotized by others, or talks about others being subjects or being hypnotized in general
    - **iv) Switch, Hypnoswitch, Hypnoversatile**

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(1) Definition: The participant indicates they are both a hypnotist and subject, talk about taking on both roles, being a hypnosis switch, or talks about others who take on both roles in general.

h) Others' Erotic Hypnosis Role

    i)   Definition: The participant discusses other people who embody particular erotic hypnosis roles, or the roles in general.

        (1) NOTE: If they are discussing their own role, code it into Participant's Own Erotic Hypnosis Role instead

    ii)   Another is a Dominant, Hypnotist, Master, or Mistress

        (1) Definition: The participant mentions another person being a in a dominant or topping role in an erotic hypnosis context.

            (a) "at that point I was 40 and there were all these 20 year olds, which I'm just like, you know, saying they're going to be my Dom or whatever. And I'm just like, you're 20 and I'm old enough to be your mom"

            (b) "So it's like my partner is my dom and he wants me to take care of myself, take care of my body so I have to eat properly and make sure I go to bed on time so that I do right by him"

    iii)   Another is a Submissive, subject, hypnotee, or slave

        (1) Definition: The participant mentions another person being in a submissive, or bottoming role in an erotic hypnosis context.

            (a) "I was told that to be careful, to—to be very clear with what you're doing, [stutters] and trying to be very—to observe how this male sub was behaving"

            (b) "I could imagine a situation where I like negotiate to do a scene with a sub and then afterwards like something happens, like they disagree about what happened or like there's some kind of misunderstanding or misinterpretation, so I would say that being around a bunch of other people that are into hypnosis in general is kind of comforting in that sense -- because I feel like that kind of misunderstanding or misinterpretation is less likely to happen when you can talk to other people who have experienced it"

    iv)   Another is a Hypnoswitch

        (1) Definition: The participant mentions another person being a switch, or engaging both in a submissive, or bottoming role and a dominant or toping role, in an erotic hypnosis context.

i) Gender Identity

    i)   Definition: The participant mentions their own gender identity or that of others.

    ii)   Gender-Related Oppression/Discrimination, and Stigma, Sexism

        (1) Definition: The participant discusses being stigmatized, marginalized, oppressed, discriminated against, or otherwise externally harmed as a result of their or other's actual of perceived

gender identity or gender expression, or explicitly states this has not occurred, or discusses these features occurring towards others

    (a) Women are often treated much more harshly in this community than men.

    (b) I've been really lucky that people have been way more accepting of me being transgender in the erotic hypnosis community than in my daily life.

iii) **Men**

    (1) Definition: Participant mentions their own identity or the identity of others as identifying as a man.

        (a) "Umm, as a man [chuckles] I can always speak as a man cause that's all I've ever been"

        (b) "Of course it makes sense that, you know I have these feelings, and there are other men who also other men who have these same feelings."

iv) **Women**

    (1) Definition: Participant mentions their own identity or the identity of others as identifying as a woman.

        (a) "I feel like there's so many women who have a really easy time getting paid for doming in like the BDSM community and I would not be surprised if that's that trend follows through to the erotic hypnosis community too."

        (b) "We are taught as women… you have to conduct yourself in a certain way you have to want certain things and so when you are a person who is naturally submissive and you feel that way that's a part of your identity it becomes very easy to feel bad about things you naturally feel great about."

v) **Transgender**

    (1) Definition: The participant discusses gender identities other than those assigned at birth, such as transgender identity, which might involve transbinary or non-binary identities.

        (a) NOTE: If participant only says "transgender" and doesn't specify what kind, put it into this category and not into the more specific categories.

    (2) Nonbinary

        (a) **Definition:** Participant mentions their own identity or the identity of others as identifying as nonbinary. One may not identify with the two binaries of male or female.

            (i) "Figuring out that I'm nonbinary, it kind of… makes everything that I've felt before feel right. Because it's like I've never felt like I 'girl' right and I was like, well, I don't girl right because I'm not a girl."

            (ii) "She doesn't even know I'm nonbinary or that I'm pansexual. I have a rainbow tattoo and she hasn't

asked any questions about why so I just leave it at that."

    (iii) "I don't know enough about, uh, trans and, uh, nonbinary people, to tell you I don't know enough about them"

    (iv) Indigenous, Two-Spirit, and Third Gender Identities

        1. **Definition:** The participant describes themselves or others as having an indigenous gender identity, such as two-spirit or a third-gender tradition.

(3) Transbinary

    (a) **Definition:** Participant mentions their own identity or the identity of others as identifying as transbinary, identifying with a gender identity that is the binary opposite of their

    (b) gender assignment at birth.

    (c) **NOTE**: If transwoman, put in both woman and transbinary, and similarly for men.

        (i) I feel like transbinary people have an easier time than nonbinary people in the community, because there are so many straight men.

vi) **Gender-related Hypnosis play, Feminization, Masculinization, Bimbofication, Himbofication, Sissification**

    (1) Definition: The participant discusses using erotic hypnosis to play with gender, such as being turned into a bimbo, sissy, himbo, or using erotic hypnosis to alleviate gender dysphoria.

        (a) NOTE: the participant who discusses this may or may not be transgender. Cisgender people engage in this type of play too, sometimes in a cisgender direction (such as gay men into being turned into dumb jocks)

        (b) **NOTE:** code it here even if the participant talks about not liking it or finding it causes them dysphoria to play with gender in this way.

        (c) I love being turned into a bimbo.

        (d) There was a series of bimbofication files that were super dangerous.

vii) **Participant Pronouns**

    (1) Definition: The participant discusses their own pronouns, and/or preferred pronouns

        (a) NOTE: if participants indicate multiple/all pronouns, CROSS-CODE into multiple pronoun categories; they are not mutually exclusive.

    (2) He, his, him

        (a) Definition: The participant indicates wanting to be identified with he/his/him pronouns

    (3) She, her, hers

    (a) **Definition:** The participant indicates wanting to be identified with she/her/hers pronouns

   (4) They, them, their
    (a) **Definition:** The participant indicates wanting to be identified with they/them/their pronouns

   (5) Object-oriented gender, it- pronouns
    (a) **Definition:** The participant indicates wanting to be identified with it/it/itself or object or robot related pronouns

   (6) Other Pronouns
    (a) **Definition:** The participant discusses wanting to be identified with other pronouns not listed already in this category.

j) Sexual Orientation
 i) Definition: Participant references patterns in relationship to the genders or sexes they are attracted to, either in themselves and others, or other concepts that might be considered dimensions of sexual orientation under Sari van Anders Sexual Configurations Theory

  (1) Oh boy I - I don't know how he would've replied. I - I didn't know his sexual orientation. I think that would have umm maybe changed the - the situation a little but in terms of my comfort level

 ii) Straight, Heterosexual
  (1) Definition: Participant references their own or other's identities as Heterosexual; a man who is exclusively attracted to/dates/has sex with women or a woman who is exclusively attracted to/dates/has sex with men

   (a) "he was straight and into women with extremely large breasts

   (b) "But it's not easy to find a male that will because well it seems like the majority of males who are hypnotists are straight or portray that role."

 iii) Gay Men
  (1) Definition: Participant references their own or other's identities as gay men (i.e., men who are exclusively attracted to/date/have sex with men)

   (a) "But there was a situation where, prior to that, and you have to realize that I realized I was gay when I was nine and I was already having very erotic thoughts"

   (b) "I've always assumed that most people I've worked with knew that I was gay and so uh that was the basic part of it."

 iv) Gay Women/Lesbians
  (1) Definition: Participant references their own or other's identities as gay women, or lesbians, (i.e., women who are exclusively attracted to/date/have sex with women).

   (a) There's the sub book and there's the topping book, written by two lesbians, good books, easy to read.

v) **Ace-Spectrum**
  (1) **Definition:** Participant references their own or other's identities as a person who has no sexual feelings or desires, or who is not sexually attracted to anyone; existing along a spectrum of lack of attraction (some asexuals experience no desire or attraction at all and others experience desire or attraction to varying degrees)
    (a) "As an ace person, I'm just like, I would love to see some bimbofication that's nonsexual."
    (b) "As a somewhat sex-repulsed person, they're not something I want to be looking at. And the ace servers I've found never discussed any kink."
    (c) "I can be somewhere on the Ace spectrum where I can, I can figure out what it is I want from a relationship or a sexual interaction."

vi) **Bisexual**
  (1) **Definition:** Participant references their own or other's identities as sexually/romantically attracted not exclusively to people of one particular gender; potential attraction to people of any gender
  (2) **NOTE**: If the participant uses the word "pansexual", code it only into pansexual, even if it could fit the definition here.
    (a) "So I didn't even really realize I was bisexual until I was in the community."
    (b) "So, it doesn't matter who the dom is for me as a bisexual male."
    (c) "I know especially, for me too, I come from a background where my mum was very distrusting of bisexuals, so when I came out as bisexual it was like 'Well, just pick one', the whole 'pick a side' mentality."

vii) **Pansexual**
  (1) **Definition:** Participant references their own or other's identities as not limited in sexual/romantic choice/attraction with regard to biological sex, gender, or gender identity; potential attraction to people of any gender
  (2) **NOTE**: If the participant uses the word "bisexual", code it only into bisexual, even if it could fit the definition here.
    (a) "Because it's hard to explain and this kind of thing so I usually say I am bi or pan—or pansexual."
    (b) "I view pansexuality as I am attracted to the mind before the body, and um it's – I actually – I very rarely experience sexual attraction to the body."
    (c) "A lot of the downsides being bi or pansexual, like the erasure or people claiming you're not valid unless you pick a side, you don't experience that as much when you're queer on another axis as well."

viii) **Queer**

(1) Definition: Given that "queer" is a politically contested term, this is operationally defined as the participant uses the word "queer" or "queering" to describe an identity, group, or activity.

    (a) "suddenly to discover oh my husband is bisexual or queer in some way and discovering his sexuality"

    (b) "GLBT community, has always been one that is not fully accepted by mainstream society and historically we have created our own queer friendly environments"

    (c) **NOTE:** Please do not code people referring to queer as a slur into this category, (Example: I got bullied mercilessly and called "queer" all the time.)

ix)   Sexual Fluidity, Sexually Fluid

(1) Definition: The participant discusses past sexual orientations or orientation labels that they no longer hold, or describe a change or shift in their or others' patterns of sexual attraction

    (a) I used to say I was straight but since getting involved in erotic hypnosis I've realized I'm bisexual.

x)   Sexual Orientation-Related Oppression/Discrimination, and Stigma

(1) Definition: The participant discusses being stigmatized, marginalized, oppressed, discriminated against, or otherwise externally harmed as a result of their or others' actual of perceived sexual orientation, or explicitly states this has not occurred.

    (a) They shut down those websites because of homophobia

    (b) They banned gay content because it is gay.

(2) Absence of Sexual Orientation-Related Oppression/Discrimination, and Stigma

    (a) Definition: The participant explicitly states they have not been stigmatized, marginalized, oppressed, discriminated against, or otherwise externally harmed as a result of their actual of perceived sexual orientation, either ever, or in a specific context (such as the erotic hypnosis community)

        (i) I've never experienced biphobia in the erotic hypnosis community.

xi)   Sexual Orientations Outside of Gender

(1) Definition: The participant mentions a dimension of sexual orientation that isn't specifically focused on the gender/s of the persons to which they are sexually attracted

    (a) Poly, Polyamorous, Open Relationship

        (i)   **Definition:** Participant references themselves or others being polysexual/amorous, swinging.

            1. "We are monogamous, interested in poly in the future but we both agree that like we're not there like as a relationship ready for that."

            2. "We're friends with some wonderful poly people."

> **3.** I am, well outside of the BDSM world, I am polyamorous, I have multiple romantic partners."
>
> **4.** I think that being in a relationship with someone who is also polyamorous that I jive so well with and that, just that we have this amazing mutual attraction to everything makes me feel more comfortable about being polyamorous and more comfortable finding a relationship at some point in my life and that kind stuff.

(b) Monogamy, Monogamous Relationship

 (i) **Definition:** The participant references themselves or others being monogamously-inclined, or being in a monogamous relationship.

  1. We are in a monogamous relationship
  2. It's very important to me that my partner and I only play with each other, and not other people. We both get jealous and insecure
  3. NOTE: Just because the participant mentions a marriage or being married does not inherently mean the relationship is monogamous

k) Political Orientation

 i) **Definition:** The participant mentions either their own political identity or the orientation of others.

  (1) I tend to be more left leaning politically, especially in recent years
  (2) NOTE: References to hypnosis being legal or illegal do not go here, but instead go into law, legality, and government

 ii) **Right-wing Political Orientation**

  (1) Definition: the participant describes their political attitudes or ideologies as right-wing, conservative, or (if in the context of US politics, Republican)

 iii) **Left-wing Political Orientation**

  (1) Definition: the participant describes their political attitudes or ideologies as left-wing, liberal, progressive, or (if in the context of US politics, Green or Democratic)

 iv) **Libertarian Political Orientation**

  (1) Definition: the participant describes their political attitudes or ideologies as libertarian, Randian, or (if in the context of US politics, affiliated with the Libertarian party)

l) Disability

 i) **Definition:** the participant describes a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with society

and/or physical barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others

- **(1)** I'm a social worker - I was a social worker, working with the disability population. And umm - and so after four surgeries and procedures and injections and medication and narcotics and every other thing that they can do to you, I thought hypnosis, I - I knew nothing about it so I sought out a professional, a licensed professional that does you know uhh - he's a clinical hypnotist.

ii) Mental Health/Mental Disability/Neurodivergence

- **(1) Definition:** The participant describes a long-term mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment which, in interaction with society and/or physical barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others
  - (a) I lot of people in this community have mental health issues.
- **(2) Anxiety and Stress**
  - (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others experiencing anxiety (including social anxiety), excessive and/or ongoing worry and fear, or high levels of stress.
    - (i) "I'm, um, social anxiety up to *here*"
- **(3) Gender Dysphoria**
  - (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions gender dysphoria, and/or psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one's sex assigned at birth and one's gender identity
    - (i) I'll turn you into the animal that you fantasize about being, I'll help you achieve your experience as the gender of your choice so that you can experience that without having to go through surgery and things having to do with body dysphoria"
    - (ii) **NOTE**: just because a participant is transgender doesn't mean everything they say about gender goes here. This category is only for distress associated with gender.
- **(4) ADHD**
  - (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others having ADHD, and or having a chronic condition including a combination of persistent challenges, such as difficulty sustaining attention, hyperactivity, and impulsive behavior.
    - (i) "I have extremely severe ADHD, the inattentive variety, if it's not completely obvious by the rates at which I go on tangents"
    - (ii) **NOTE:** if the symptoms are ambiguous and the participant doesn't label the disorder, code this into both ADD and ADHD
- **(5) Insomnia**

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others having chronic difficulties with falling or staying asleep, or having insomnia
  (i)   I had really bad insomnia for a while before I started erotic hypnosis.

(6) ADD
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others having ADD, or a developmental condition characterized by behaviors such as inattention (such as distractibility, disorganization, or forgetfulness)
  (i)   "Um… what was the other part of the question? Sorry! *(laughs)* Sometimes my ADD kinda gets in the..."
  (ii)   **NOTE:** if the symptoms are ambiguous and the participant doesn't label the disorder, code this into both ADD and ADHD

(7) Bipolar Disorder
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others experiencing bipolar disorder, or being diagnosed with the condition.
  (i)   **NOTE:** The abbreviation "BPD" if used by a participant very likely does NOT indicate bipolar disorder, but instead indicates borderline personality disorder.

(8) Depression:
(a) **Definition**: The participant mentions themselves or others experiencing depression, or a mood disorder including persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness, as well as a loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyed.
  (i)   "As someone who struggled with mild mental illness, depression mostly…"

(9) Borderline Personality Disorder:
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others having Borderline Personality Disorder, or BPD, and/or describes marked instability in interpersonal relationships, self-image, and emotion, as well as marked impulsivity beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts
  (i)   Folks with BPD have trouble with this stuff.

(10)   PTSD, Trauma
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others having Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and/or persistent, distorted cognitions about the cause or consequences of the traumatic event(s), and/or ongoing fears of traumatic event(s) recurring and/or psychological experience of reliving the traumatic event(s)

(i) "I have a former partner who suffered from PTSD so I, there were times when I would have to shift into aftercare, we would have to stop what we were doing to address that."

(ii) **NOTE:** The participant may simply mention "Trauma", which, in the absence of an explicit disavowal of PTSD, should be coded here as a precautionary measure.

(11) **Sexual Dysfunction**

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions experiencing sexual dysfunction, such as erectile disfunction, unwanted genital pain during sex, or other clinically significant disturbances in a person's ability to respond (psychologically or physically) sexually or to experience sexual pleasure

(i) "I experienced a severe sexual dysfunction… There was nothing wrong with medically. Went to a psychiatrist, they said there was nothing going on there. Then we started going to guided meditation a little bit more and realized that a shared guided meditation, AKA hypnosis, worked!"

(ii) **NOTE**: All codes in here should also be CROSS-CODED into the Sexual Dysfunction category under Physical Health.

(12) **Dissociative Identity Disorder**

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions dissociative identity disorder and/or the outdated term Multiple Personality Disorder, in themselves, others, or in general.

(i) I was told never to do identity play with someone who has DID

(13) **Autism-Spectrum Identities and Disorders**

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others being on the autism spectrum, or features of people on the autism spectrum in general.

(i) A ton of people in the community are on the spectrum.

(ii) I have Aspergers.

(iii) **NOTE:** Some participants may not reference autism, but instead describe this category as being "on the spectrum"

(14) **Therapy, Mental Health Treatment and Care:**

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions the practice of diagnosing or treating mental conditions via therapy, medication, or any other aspect of mental health care

(i) "I got put into group therapy, and I learned how to listen in tho-those sessions. There was a lot of

guided meditation, and I instantly picked up, this is basically the same thing as what we're doing."
- (ii) "I use SSRIs to deal with my depression"
- (iii) **NOTE**: participants discussing erotic hypnosis as therapeutic, a form of therapy, or as a treatment for mental health conditions do go here.
- (iv) **NOTE:** if the participant mentions a hypnotherapist (either themselves or others), CROSS-CODE this into hypnotherapist under occupations

iii) **Physical Health, Physical Disability**
  (1) **Definition:** the participant references a long-term physical or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers (like an ableist society) may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others
  (2) **Blindness or Visual Impairment**
    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others being blind or visually impaired
      (i) I was born blind
  (3) **Cancer**
    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others experiencing, living with, or dying from cancer
      (i) I have stage 4 cancer.
      (ii) I survived breast cancer.
      (iii) NOTE: only actual literal cancer goes here, something using cancer as a metaphor, such as "abusive hypnotists are a cancer on this community" should not be coded here.
  (4) **Deafness or Hard of Hearing**
    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others being deaf or hard of hearing
      (i) I have a cochlear implant
  (5) **Sexual Dysfunction**
    (a) Definition: The participant mentions a clinically significant disturbance in a person's ability to respond (psychologically or physically) sexually or to experience sexual pleasure
      (i) " For the duration of the entire time I was with her I experienced a severe sexual dysfunction, I could not ejaculate to save my life"
      (ii) **NOTE**: All codes in here should also be CROSS-CODED into the Sexual Dysfunction category under Mental Health.
  (6) **Traumatic Brain Injury:**
    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions a disruption in the normal function of the brain that can be caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or penetrating head injury.

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            (i) With the brain injury, I don't do well with numbers period and um uh just auditory really doesn't do much, I still have to have some kinesthetic aspect to it."

(7) Chronic Pain, chronic pain disorders, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, Migraines

    (a) Definition: The participant mentions persistent or recurring pain, usually lasting for longer than six months

        (i) "I was rear-ended 3 times. And, long story short, it led to a series of back surgeries, I had 4 back surgeries. And I experience chronic pain."

(8) Obesity, Overweight

    (a) Definition: The participant mentions themselves or others being overweight or obese.

        (i) NOTE: Not all participants conceptualize their overweight as a physical disease or disability, which is valid. Those perspectives should still be coded here for the sake of organization and keeping the number of codes manageable.

(9) Mobility concerns

    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions issues with physical mobility, such as inability to drive, using a cane, or relying on a wheelchair.

m) Occupations

    i) Definition: Participant mentions their job or occupation or the occupation of others

    ii) Occupational Concerns

        (1) Definition: The participant references concerns related to their occupation, such as fearing losing their job, hiding their interests from coworkers, or being discriminated against

        (2) Job Loss

            (a) **Definition:** Participant references job loss, stifled promotions, or being denied a hiring due to stigma around erotic hypnosis and/or the kink community in general.

               (i) I'm afraid of losing my job.

               (ii) I was denied an opportunity to work at a startup because they found out I did tantric sex conferences.

               (iii) **NOTE:** This will also be CROSS-CODED with Employment stigma

        (3) Concealment from work

            (a) Definition: participant discusses hiding their erotic hypnosis interests, practices, or relationships from coworkers, clients, and/or their boss.

               (i) I would never tell any of my coworkers.

    iii) Hypnosis-Related Occupations

(1) Definition: The participant discusses either themselves or another person doing hypnosis for pay, or as part of their larger career

(2) Hypnosis-Related Sex Work

(a) Definition: The participant discusses engaging in some form of paid labor for the purpose of bringing sexual or intimate pleasure to others, involving hypnosis (such doing erotic hypnosis for pay).

(b) Erotic Hypnosis File-Making

    (i) Definition: The participant mentions themselves or others creating videos or MP3 files for pay intended to hypnotize the listener

        1. **NOTE:** If the participant discusses creating content that involves hypnotizing another person on camera, filmed for the viewer to enjoy sexually, but not to actually hypnotize the viewer, do not code that here, but instead code it into Erotic Hypnosis Porn Production

        2. "I was part of a group that- of- on discord that was just around a particular file maker."

        3. I couldn't find any files that I liked, so I made my own

        4. My partner and I are long distance, so I make files for them to play and hear my voice

(c) Erotic Hypnosis Findom, Financial Domination

    (i) Definition: The participant mentions financial domination, a relationship in which the submissive allows their dom partial to full control over their finances in this power fetish, and involved hypnosis

        1. I had an experience where I gave my bank information to my dom when she hypnotized me

        2. I was in control of their finances and would give them an allowance to work with

(d) Erotic Hypnosis Porn or Art Production

    (i) Definition: The participant discusses either themselves or others acting in, creating, scripting, or in some other way involved in the production of erotic hypnosis porn (whether artistically rendered images, or filmed) for pay

        1. This porn production company specializes in creating erotic hypnosis porn content

(e) Erotic Hypnosis Author

    (i) Definition: The participant discusses themselves or others engaging in writing about erotic hypnosis for

pay, including selling books, writing erotic hypnosis stories for pay, or writing training manuals.

(ii) He makes most of his money writing erotic hypnosis books.

(3) Stage Hypnotist
   (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions themselves or others performing hypnosis live on a stage for pay.
   (b) **NOTE:** automatically CROSS-CODE into Stage Hypnosis

(4) Teaching about Hypnosis
   (a) Definition: The participant discusses being paid to teach others about hypnosis, whether erotic or otherwise.
      (i) NOTE: If the participant mentions teaching about erotic hypnosis at erotic hypnosis workshops, conferences, etc., also CROSS-CODE into **Teaching at an erotic hypnosis convention or workshop.**

(5) Hypnotherapist
   (a) Definition: Participant mentions themselves or another being a paid qualified practitioner of hypnosis specifically with the aim of being a paid, professional, therapeutic practice (such as helping clients to work through trauma, helping with cessation of bad habits, etc.)
      (i) I went to a hypnotherapist and they helped me to work through a lot of my anxiety
      (ii) my interest somehow is more about hypnosis itself than the - only the erotic part of it. You know? So... because also I - I'm like a… earlier this year I finished my - I got like certified as a hypnotherapist
      (iii) I didn't pursue the hypnotherapy certification.. Ummm I just was satisfied with my certification as a master hypnotist
      (iv) **NOTE**: The concept of hypnosis being psychologically beneficial or therapeutic in general does not belong here.
      (v) **NOTE:** likely to be CROSS-CODED into the mental health care category.

iv) **Non-Hypnosis-Related Occupations**
   (1) Clinical Psychology Occupations
      (a) Definition: Participant indicates they are in a clinical psychology profession, such as being a therapist, social worker, psychiatrist, psychologist, or talks about others in these professions.
         (i) That's why I became a psychologist

   (2) Student
      (a) **Definition:** Participant indicates they are a student, or discusses students in general

- (i) I'm in college right now
- (ii) I'm a student
- (iii) Students are so concerned about consent these
- **(3) Teaching about something other than hypnosis**
    - (a) **Definition:** Participant works as an educator or mentions other educators within the erotic hypnosis community.
        - (i) "I'm an elementary school teacher"
        - (ii) "I teach erotic hypnosis classes"
- **(4) Tech/Computer Programming, Engineering**
    - (a) **Definition:** Participant works in the tech/computer industry, working with computers, being an engineer, or mentions others who work in these fields
        - (i) "At my job in computer programming"
- **(5) Government/Military**
    - **(a) Definition:** the participant indicates working for the government or military, and/or references people who work in these fields.
        - (i) I work for the U.S. Army.
        - (ii) I'm a police officer.
- **(6) Non-Hypnosis-Related Sex Work**
    - **(a) Definition:** The participant discusses engaging in some form of paid labor for the purpose of bringing sexual or intimate pleasure to others, but does not involve hypnosis.
        - (i) I was a regular sex worker, and did a lot on phone sex lines before discovering erotic hypnosis.
        - (ii) I used to be a stripper, so I've always loved grabbing people's attention.
- **(7) All other Jobs**
    - **(a) Definition:** the participant mentions working in a job that is unrelated to hypnosis, and does not appear elsewhere in the rest of the job codes in this section.
        - (i) I'm a nurse.

2) **Consent and Safety**
   a) **Definition:** The participant talks about consent violations in the community, consent violations outside of the context or erotic hypnosis, their experience with consent and hypnosis, their perception of consent and hypnosis, the nature of consent, feelings toward consent violations, consensual-non-consensual scenes, enablers to consent violations and/or barriers to consent violations.
   - i) "Consent is a big part of EH"
   - ii) "My safety during a scene is important to me…"
   - iii) "I gave permission to my tist to do X to me"
   - iv) "During pre-negotiation…"
   b) **Answer to Question about Complexity of Consent**
   - i) **Definition:** The participant indicates their answer to the question of how complicated consent is in the context of erotic hypnosis.
   - ii) **Consent is Simple**

<div style="margin-left: 3em;">

(1) Definition: The participant indicates their answer to the question of how complicated consent is in the context of erotic hypnosis, is that consent is simple, straightforward, or otherwise doesn't involve much complexity.

</div>

iii) **Consent is Complicated**

<div style="margin-left: 3em;">

(1) Definition: The participant indicates their answer to the question of how complicated consent is in the context of erotic hypnosis. Is that consent is complicated, extremely complicated, multifaceted, or involves a wide variety of considerations.

</div>

iv) **Consent is somewhere in between Simple and Complicated**

<div style="margin-left: 3em;">

(1) Definition: The participant indicates their answer to the question of how complicated consent is in the context of erotic hypnosis.is that consent is neither simple nor complicated, both simple and complicated, or somewhere in the middle of simple and complicated.

</div>

c) **Safewords**

i) **Definition:** The participant references or mentions the use or lack of use of safewords in the context of erotic hypnosis.

<div style="margin-left: 3em;">

(1) NOTE: Depending upon context, there's a good chance this might also CROSS-CODE into some of the categories comparing the level of risk between erotic hypnosis and other kink/BDSM interests.

</div>

d) **High-Quality Consent and Aftercare**

i) **Definition:** The participant talks about the qualities of what good consent looks like, such as good clear communication, talking about boundaries and limits, or discussing in-depth about their psychological vulnerabilities before engaging in a scene of kink activity, and/or discusses engaging in aftercare.

<div style="margin-left: 3em;">

(1) In order for a scene to truly be consensual, they have to talk extensively beforehand

(2) Doing good consent means listening carefully to your partner.

(3) In order to fully engage with consent properly, you have to be honest and open with one another.

</div>

e) **Hypnosis is dangerous, Hypnosis is more dangerous than other kinks**

i) **Definition:** The participant endorses the perception that EH is risky or dangerous either in and of itself or is riskier than other kinks in terms of participant safety, the ability of trance to impair consent, and number of consent violations, even if they indicate they like that aspect of it.

<div style="margin-left: 3em;">

(1) "EH is riskier"

(2) "EH is more dangerous/violent"

(3) "EH is an unhealthy"

(4) "When a person is in trance, it's harder for them to speak, so they might have more difficulty saying a safeword"

(5) "At a certain point, I lose my ability to give consent when I'm under deep enough.

</div>

      ii)   NOTE: If the participant discusses other people's attitudes that hypnosis is dangerous, but doesn't endorse them themselves, code into **STIGMA**

f) Hypnosis is low-risk, Hypnosis is less dangerous than other kinks
    i)   **Definition:** Participant discusses perception that EH is less risky than other kinks in terms of participant safety, the ability of trance to impair consent and number of consent violations.

        (1) "My other kinks pose more of a risk than EH"
        (2) "I don't feel like EH is as dangerous as X"
        (3) "I feel safer during EH than when I…"
        (4) "If someone panics you can end the scene easily, but if someone is tied up, it takes more time to get them out of scene."

g) Consensual Non-Consent (CNC), Fearplay
    i)   **Definition:** The participant talks about consensual non-consent, rape roleplay, simulated rape, or fearplay (an adjacent concept) scenes or fantasies, or using erotic hypnosis to play out any of these scenes or fantasies.

        (1) "Yeah. So. it was a CNC fantasy. And I had toys all over the room. Normally I'm smarter than this, but I left a knife out. Right? And it was a CNC scene."
        (2) "you know it's just like CNC but it's just more popular."
        (3) "Well, it's our CNC thing that we do, and we can do it better than everybody. You know, because like. I. I will do things where the conscious mind will forget the safe word, right? But subconscious mind doesn't. It can opt out at any time."
        (4) I don't think it would be nearly as problematic as I have a 24/7 live-in BDSM consensual non-consent experience with a slave who never wears clothes.
        (5) "I fantasized about him trying to violate my consent, but it turns out I'm actually into it."
        (6) "I'm into agreeing to give up my ability to revoke consent for a period of time".

h) Deprogramming and Unwanted Triggers
    i)   **Definition: The** participant talks about harmful, nonconsensual, or unwanted triggers and/or suggestions already stored (programmed) into their/someone else's brain, and/or attempting to remove them.

        (1) "I did a lot more deprogramming than programming in those days, it was a lawless wild west-esque frontier out there, there were no real concepts of consent,"
        (2) "I wasn't doing all that much deprogramming I was doing plenty of programming, but the people that you know trusted me that I trusted"
        (3) "Sure uhh so early on in my deprogramming days I came across someone who - she got worked over bad, it was really really bad. Like the person was intentionally installing all sorts of stuff knowing that there would someone trying to come in and deprogram, either a new relationship or what have you, and so as I

it was, was working with her I kept hitting abreaction after abreaction and it was just - it was so bad and it was less a deprogramming and more an exorcism."

i) **Opinion about Renegotiating, Negotiating Up, Pushing Boundaries Mid-scene, or Negotiating in the Middle of an Erotic Hypnosis Scene**

    i) **Definition:** The participant expresses an opinion or viewpoint about whether it is or isn't a violation of consent to "negotiate up" or renegotiate in the middle of a scene when someone is already under trance.

j) **Consent violations**

    i) **Definition:** The participant mentions consent being violated, ignored, or boundaries and/or limits being gone past, either in general, involving themselves, or to another person, this also includes catfishing, or lying about identities or aspects of the person's body, or other forms of fraud to get consent.

    ii) **Past Abuse (Outside of Erotic Hypnosis)**

        (1) **Definition:** Participant mentions lived experiences in which they or others were physically, emotionally, or otherwise abused sexually, outside of the context of erotic hypnosis

            (a) **NOTE:** If the participant has had their consent violated in a sexual way inside of an erotic hypnosis context, code it into **Participant's Consent was Violated by Another**

            (b) **CROSS-CODE:** This will also usually go into Trauma, unless the participant denies it being traumatic.

            (c) "I do have a personal past of trauma, um, non sexual abuse from when I was young and healing from that has been a really long process"

            (d) "I'll discover if someone has multiple personalities, and sexual abuse"

            (e) "I am a uh a child sexual abuse survivor and uh so some of my earliest memories are kind of tied in with that"

    iii) **Enablers of consent violations**

        (1) **Definition:** Participant talks about either themself or others allowing consent violations to occur in the community, or mentioning of letting people continue being active in the EH community even after violating some form of consent, or the norms of the community are labeled as enabling consent violations, mentioning of losing agency, or increasing the likelihood of a consent violation.

            (a) "This tist was overstepping boundaries during inductions, but no one really called him out"

            (b) "I'm not too concerned about how others in the community handle their consent being broken…"

            (c) "The community doesn't work as hard as it should to keep people who violate consent out"

    iv) **Barriers to consent violations**

(1) **Definition:** The participant talks about ways in which the erotic hypnosis community protects against consent violations, mentioning of having agency
- (a) "This guy in the community was notorious for consent violations so they blacklisted him"
- (b) "Moderators are pretty quick to shut down any inappropriate behavior"
- (c) "They were kicked out of the local scene for consent violations"

v) **Consent Violation Allegations are Overpoliced**
(1) **Definition:** Participant mentions how consent in the erotic hypnosis community is over-regulated and/or obstructs sense of personal freedom, or the participant expresses the attitude the community is too "PC"
- (a) "Moderators are too stringent about consent"
- (b) "Some people are too hyper sensitive/touchy when it comes to consent"

vi) **Consent Violation Allegations are Underpoliced**
(1) **Definition:** Participant mentions how consent in the erotic hypnosis community is under-regulated
- (a) "There is not enough oversight of consent issues in the community"
- (b) "Moderators need to work harder at regulating consent violations spaces"

vii) **Consent Violations are Common**
(1) **Definition:** Frequent/typical experiences of consent violations that participants go through in the erotic hypnosis community
- (a) "The tist did not ask my desires and boundaries before we started"
- (b) "A well known tist kept doing…"
- (c) "And they would change their fantasies while the subject was under"
- (d) "Consent violations happen a lot in the EH community"

viii) **Consent Violations are Uncommon**
(1) **Definition:** Rarely experienced situations in which consent was violated in the erotic hypnosis community
- (a) "I've heard a story of _____ but I haven't heard of anything like that happening to someone in my community"
- (b) "Consent violations don't happen that much. The community is good about establishing consent before engaging in play"

ix) **Consent Violation Allegations are Adequately handled**
(1) **Definition:** Participant expresses satisfaction with how the erotic hypnosis community intervened with a consent violation
- (a) "I feel like consent issues are handled well in the community"

    (b) "The community works hard at making sure we confront people who violate consent"

    (c) "We do a good job of catching people who do bad things"

 x) **Fears of Consent Violations**

  (1) Definition: Participant mentions personal anxieties surrounding new experiences in the erotic hypnosis community due to someone else violating consent

    (a) "I really have to talk with someone before I can do a scene with them because I have old triggers"

    (b) "I'm hesitant to online video chat because I don't know what they're going to do with my information"

  (2) Fear of getting own consent violated

    (a) **Definition:** The participant describes themselves or others being afraid that their consent will be violated within the erotic hypnosis community context.

  (3) Fear of Violating Others' Consent

    (a) **Definition:** Participant expresses anxieties around the possibility of they themselves violating someone else's consent

     (i) "I'm always asking for, like, if we can do it - this or that. And I understand that it was more about like some times when they say 'Maybe not.' And I take it as 'Maybe yes.'"

 xi) **Participant's Consent Violation Status within Erotic Hypnosis Context**

  (1) Definition: The participant talks about whether they have or have not had their consent violated in the context of erotic hypnosis, or whether they have or have not violated another's consent.

  (2) Participant never has had consent violated

    (a) **Definition:** Participant shares that they have never had their own personal consent violated

     (i) "No - no I haven't [had my consent violated]."

     (ii) **NOTE:** Only code it into this category if they clearly indicate they have not had their consent violated. Merely the absence of mentioning having their consent violated during the interview is not enough for them to fit into this category.

  (3) Participant's Consent was Violated by Another

    (a) **Definition:** The participant states or describes an experience in which their consent was violated by another person

     (i) My consent was violated.

    (b) **NOTE:** if a participant says they have never had their consent violated by another person, do not code it here. Code it in **Never had my consent violated** instead.

          (i)   He kept trying to make me do things in trance that I didn't want to do.

    (4) Participant Violated Others' Consent
        (a) **Definition:** Participant brings up personal experience of violating somebody else's consent
          (i)   "And like - again it's still that I was not trying to force it. But still that I broke consent by pushing it further than it should've been."
          (ii)   "Even if I'm the guy who is violating consent left and right."

    (5) Participant has never violated another's consent
        (a) **Definition:** Participant explicitly states they have never violated another person's consent.
          (i)   "I've never had anyone safeword on me, because I've never violated anyone's consent. I'm really careful about that."
          (ii)   **NOTE:** Only code it into this category if they clearly indicate they have not violated another person's consent. Merely the absence of mentioning violating someone else's consent during the interview is not enough for them to fit into this category.

3) **Legality, Government, and Law**
    a) **Definition:** Participant mentions the legality or illegality of erotic hypnosis within their country, as well as personal or other's experiences with the law in relation to their EH practice.
       i)   Before we had the internet, for someone like me up 'til 25 years ago there weren't any places to go. And some of the stuff is illegal - was illegal at the time.
       ii)   I want to say that I'm happy to participate in a kink-related survey, uhh, [chuckle] so uhh, and, I don't know, can you give me an example where hypno - in which, like, country hypnosis is not - hypnosis is illegal?
       iii) Licensure around doing hypnosis
       iv) Working for the Government (NOTE: also CROSS-CODE in Government/Military Category under occupations

4) **Death**
    a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or discusses their own death or the death of another person or animal, or talks about death in a symbolic or metaphorical way
       i)   "The death of LiveJournal"
       ii)   "I ended up begging for death before the scene was over"
       iii) "Experiencing something like ego-death through hypnosis can be, it's not therapy, but therapeutic."

5) **Erotic Hypnosis Community**
    a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or discusses the erotic hypnosis community, a group of people who organize around a shared interest in the practice of erotic hypnosis, a practice which involves focused attention, reduced peripheral

awareness, and an enhanced capacity to respond to suggestion for a variety of sexual and intimate uses.

b) **Never Been Part of the Erotic Hypnosis Community**
   i) **Definition:** The participant indicates that they have never been a part of, or felt like they were a part of, the erotic hypnosis community.
      (1) I wouldn't really ever consider myself involved in the community. I mostly just read fantasy stories online.

c) **Munches**
   i) **Definition:** The participant talks about munches, a meeting in a public space in which kinky people get together to meet one another, talk about kink, and/or engage in other non-kink activities. These most typically take place at restaurants, bars, or other public accommodations, and people typically wear vanilla clothing.
      (1) I went to my first hypno munch and had an awesome time.
      (2) Note: if it is not clear if an event being describe is a convention, munch, or dungeon space, put it into the erotic hypnosis community parent code.

d) **Erotic Hypnosis Community Drama**
   i) **Definition:** Participant talks about how the features of the community create drama, gossip in the community, doxxing or other retaliatory behavior, or references interpersonal drama in the community in general, such as labeling it toxic.
      (1) There's so much gossip in the community, it's worse than in my professional life.

e) **Wish for Change in the Community**
   i) **Definition:** The participant describes a hope or wish for how they want the community to change, most likely in response to the direct question regarding if they could change something about the community, what would they change.

f) **Accessibility of Community, Events, and Forums**
   a) **Definition:** Discussing ease and/or difficulty in gaining access to erotic hypnosis community happenings
      i) It was exciting but at the same time [pause] uh...not as accessible or I wasn't comfortable engaging with it as much.
      ii) I would think that one of the challenges is - is accessibility. Trying to find - trying to - there's really not like an organization, that I know of - like a trade group, if you will.
      iii) I'm curious if some kind of online meeting with, you know, a large group of people all in video chat would be something that would feel accessible to you?
      iv) May CROSS-CODE with class if it is about cost.

g) **Didn't know there was a community until interview**
   i) **Definition:** The participant expresses surprise that there is an erotic hypnosis community and/or indicates they did not know there was a community until coming across either the study advertisement or being interviewed.

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- **(1)** There's a community of people who do this?
- **(2)** NOTE: All codes in this category should be automatically CROSS-CODED into **Never Been part of the erotic hypnosis community**

h) **Gay Men's Erotic Hypnosis Community**
- i) **Definition:** The participant references a community of people organized around a shared interest in hypnosis and a shared gay (male) identity. The Gay Hypnosis community tends to be male-oriented and welcome any man who has sex with men (whether they identify as gay or not)
  - **(1)** "And whereas in the gay community everybody's male [laughs] and nobody really has dominance other than through personality or whatever."
  - **(2)** "going to and doing research at a gay men's hypnosis con and I was initially surprised that there was a specific con for the community"
  - **(3)** NOTE: Automatically CROSS-CODE into gay men under sexual orientation and men under gender identity

i) **Straight, Bisexual, Pansexual Erotic Hypnosis Community**
- i) **Definition:** The participant references a community of people organized around a shared interest in hypnosis that includes people of any gender or sexual orientation (i.e., not the gay men's community)
  - **(1)** I'm mostly involved in the pansexual EH community.
  - **(2)** NOTE: Do not automatically code this into "pansexual" If they are using the term "pansexual" to mean "people of all sexual orientations" and not "people who identify as pansexual.

j) **Changes in Community over Time**
- i) **Definition:** The participant discusses ways in which aspects of the Erotic Hypnosis community have been perceived to change over time, throughout the participant's engagement with the community.
  - **(1)** Sam: As you think about how your online communities have changed over the last few years, what kind of changes have you seen? Participant: "Just the one where they, everyone left Tumblr to go communicate on Discord and Fet"

k) **Never Been Part of the Erotic Hypnosis Community**
- i) **Definition:** The participant indicates they haven't actually engaged or participated in the Erotic Hypnosis Community.
  - **(1)** I've never been in an erotic hypnosis group. I just do my own thing.

l) **Starting Own Offline Erotic Hypnosis Event**
- i) The participant discusses creating a new erotic hypnosis conference, workshop, event, or munch. The event has to be an in-person event.
- ii) **NOTE:** Online events, munches, and conferences should be coded into **Participant Engaged in Online Placemaking** instead
  - **(1)** The old WEEHU had a whole implosion, so I ended up starting my own event to replace it.
- iii) **NOTE:** IF they are running the event, this also belongs in Community Leadership

m) **Community Leadership**
   i) **Definition:** The participant discusses the people who are either the perceived or actual people who lead or organize the erotic hypnosis community.
      (1) Community leaders have a huge responsibility to handle consent violation allegations appropriately.
      (2) NOTE: IF they are talking about themselves taking on a community leadership role, it still counts
n) **Erotic Hypnosis within Mainstream BDSM Community Spaces**
   i) **Definition:** The participant mentions BDSM spaces that also cater to erotic hypnosis interests, such as general BDSM community events that might feature an erotic hypnosis panel or workshop.
      (1) They had an erotic hypnosis workshop at IML and it went great!
o) **Online Erotic Hypnosis Community Involvement:**
   i) **Definition:** The participant mentions ways in which an individual can engage with the Erotic Hypnosis community through online contexts, such as different social media platforms or online hypnosis sessions, that allow them to interact with others who share the interest of Erotic Hypnosis.
      (1) I often visit erotic hypnosis community websites
   ii) **Online Banning/Persecution of Erotic Hypnosis**
      (1) Definition: The participant discusses their own erotic hypnosis-related online content, their own erotic hypnosis-related profiles, the erotic-hypnosis related profiles or content of others, or an erotic hypnosis group they belong to being removed from or officially prohibited from being a part of an online website or app.
         (a) They keep removing erotic hypnosis content from Patreon.
      (2) Hypnosis Specifically as Rationale for Online Erotic Hypnosis Persecution
         (a) Definition: The participant states or speculates that the reason erotic hypnosis content was banned was because it involved hypnosis, or that only erotic hypnosis content was banned, or that erotic hypnosis content was banned along with a list of other specific fetish content, but did not include the banning of eroticism in general.
            (i) Somebody was trying to start a, um, group for a, uh, local, um, study group and they tried to put the word hypnosis in the title and FetLife rejected it because it's on the list of banned words. And I'm like, you can't, it's still a banned word. So I feel like any moment you could kick us off again.
      (3) General Erotic Nature of Erotic Hypnosis as Rationale for Online Erotic Hypnosis Persecution
         (a) Definition: The participant states or speculates that the reason erotic hypnosis content was banned was because it involved eroticism at all, involved a specific sexual

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orientation's eroticism, or mentioned that all forms of erotic content were banned, not just erotic hypnosis.

    (i) **NOTE:** if the participant mentions erotic hypnosis content was banned because it was gay, CROSS-CODE into gay men and into sexual-orientation-related stigma and discrimination.

(4) Online Diaspora, Finding New Online Home

    (a) Definition: The participant discusses having to find a new website, new online home, or new online community for erotic hypnosis, following an erotic hypnosis content ban

iii) **Internet Privacy, Privacy Settings, Sharing Real Name or Face Online**

    (1) Definition: The participant talks about their approach to privacy on the internet or in online spaces, such as whether they share their real name, their face, rely on a fake screen name, when they disclose their real identity to others online, how they manage privacy settings on the websites they visit, or other privacy-related internet concerns.

        (a) NOTE: references to coming out on the internet should go into the coming out related codes as well as here.

        (b) NOTE: if the participant is talking about privacy in general, which may or may not implicate the internet, you can put it in here as well.

iv) **Participant Engaged in Online Placemaking**

    (1) Definition: The participant indicates that they engaged in some form of online placemaking, such as starting their own website, Skype group, discord channel, either independently, or as part of a group, study group, or online conference

    (2) NOTE: This does not include creating a physical place, such as starting their own munch, erotic hypnosis house parties, or in-person conference, which should instead be coded into **Starting Own Offline Erotic Hypnosis Event**

    (3) NOTE: If the participant ran the group or talks about being a moderator, leader, organizer, etc., CROSS-CODE it into **"Community Leadership"**

    (4) NOTE: this code does not include people who take over for a group that already exists, which should only be coded into **"Community Leadership" and should not be coded here.**

        (a) I started my own online group

        (b) I broke off from a group that was really toxic to start my own discord server

        (c) This group was for outreach as an extension of a larger group

        (d) I made a space to post my art/content

v) **Specific Applications, Programs, and Websites**

(1) Definition: The participant names a specific website either explicitly designed for erotic hypnosis, or in which erotic hypnosis content or community is implicated.

    (a) NOTE: The participant does not have to actually use the website to be counted into the category. For example, "I don't use Grindr" should be coded into "Grindr"

(2) FetLife

    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references FetLife, A website run by members of the BDSM/Kink community that creates a space for those who are interested in BDSM/Kink, as well as other fetishes.

        (i) "I finally umm I have a FetLife page also, and so I started looking on FetLife and I found somebody through FetLife but then all kinds - all kinds of people."

        (ii) "I contacted this person through FetLife"

        (iii) "But I think when I first kind of started getting involved in the community aspect of things, was when I signed up for FetLife and started joining groups and things."

(3) Reddit

    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Reddit

(4) Recon

    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Recon

(5) Scruff

    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Scruff

(6) Grindr

    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Grindr

(7) Tinder

    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Tinder

(8) Literotica

    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Literotica

(9) Teen Talk

    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references the website Teen Talk

(10) Fetster

    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references the website Fetster.

(11) Dragon Corps (Dragon Core)

    (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Dragon Corps (Sometimes spelled as Dragon Core)

(12) Nimja, HypnoNimja, NimjaHypno, NimjaHypnosis

    (a) The participant mentions or references Nimja (a major figure in the erotic hypnosis community), or another name related to Nimja's site or content. Mentioning Nimja

himself, as a person, also goes here unless it is about in-person play with Nimja.

(13)   Skype
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Skype, Skype calls, or Skype groups

(14)   Nifty Archive
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references the Nifty Archive

(15)   AO3
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references AO3

(16)   Gentlybitten
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Gentlybitten

(17)   Tearhouse
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Tearhouse

(18)   Master Kopp
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references The website Master Kopp
    (i)   NOTE: This is also the name of a person. Just code this if they are talking about the website.

(19)   MCstories
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references MCstories
    (i)   NOTE: If anyone mistyped this as "Emcee Stories", please correct it; it is a transcription error.
    (ii)   CROSS-CODE into "Written Text" and "Sexually Explicit Media"

(20)   YouTube
(a) **Definition:** Participant mentions the video uploading website YouTube
    (i)   "So when you were first making your… your YouTube channel… what kinds of people did you envision would be watching your videos?"
    (ii)   And I'm finding the people who enjoy it are not unlike the people who liked my YouTube videos.
    (iii)   "So after Facebook and YouTube, what were the next websites that you were using?"

(21)   Facebook
(a) **Definition:** Participant mentions the social networking website Facebook

(22)   Omegle
(a) **Definition:** Participant the anonymous chat website Omegle

(23)   Zoom

(a) **Definition:** Participant mentions the video chat application Zoom

(24) **Hypnosisforguys**

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions hypnosisforguys, a hypnosis site catering to men interested in doing hypnosis with other men, sometimes abbreviated as HforG, or H4G, HfG

  (i) "Um I have been--yeah I sort of recently made an account on hypnosisforguys."

  (ii) "Um, so, um on hypnosisforguys there's an events page and I can easily say that I've put more on there than anyone else on the site…"

  (iii) "Eventually, that congregated around hypnosisforguys and the momentum was there and everyone just uses that."

(25) **Tumblr**

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions Tumblr, an American microblogging and social networking website

  (i) "I still use Tumblr, but not as much."

  (ii) "I could reach people super quickly through Tumblr."

  (iii) "However, they also need to understand that this is what builds Tumblr in the first place. You know, Tumblr is built on porn."

(26) **Pornhub**:

(a) **Definition:** Pornhub is the world's leading free porn site

  (i) But PornHub was very difficult because they mainly have, like, lots of sissy transformation ones and it's very difficult."

  (ii) "I mean I've watched videos on like, pornhub and whatever, things like that, redtube and all those kinds of things, but I haven't actually like put myself out there"

(27) **Hypbook:**

(a) **Definition:** Hypbook is a free, volunteer-run erotic and recreational hypnosis community for adults, offering a chat room and other services

  (i) "I had an account on HypBook"

(28) **Hypwatch:**

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions Hypwatch, a social media platform for people into erotic hypnosis.

  (i) but the third guy was through Hypwatch. Which impressed me because Hypwatch is so weird. It's more weird.

(29) **Discord:**

(a) Definition: Discord is a VoIP, instant messaging and digital distribution platform designed for creating communities. Users communicate with voice calls, video calls, text messaging, media and files in private chats or as part of communities called "servers".

    (i) "Like I, I um, had joined the Erotic Hypnosis Discord, um maybe, like 3 years ago…"

    (ii) "Uh, mostly it's just Discord, that's where the primary or biggest part of the community is from what I can tell."

    (iii) "Yes, so the first time was the very first day that I joined the erotic hypnosis community on Discord…"

(30) **Hypnotising.org:**

(a) Definition: a website for recreational hypnosis, "for all those interested in the world of hypnosis". Members include Stage Hypnotists, Subjects, Therapists and the curious wanting to chat about all things hypnosis. The site offers video chat, profiles, upload of videos and since it is run by volunteers, it is a free site.

    (i) " Hypnotising.org did come later."

    (ii) "Through um another gay man from hypnotising.org."

    (iii) "Um and then absolutely various websites that we've had. Hypnotising.org etcetera."

(31) **Sleepychat:**

(a) Definition: a now closed/no longer operating website for hypnotists, subjects, and people who just want to learn. All kinds of hypnosis were acceptable there, from therapeutic to recreational to erotic.

    (i) "I was looking like for people to do hypnosis online, and then I came across Sleepy Chat."

    (ii) "...after Sleepy Chat it took me a long while to get back to that kind of English hypnosis."

    (iii) "...if I'm taking my - my time back from the - the Sleepy Chat it's completely different."

(32) **Dreamychat:**

(a) Definition: DreamyChat is a community-driven hypnosis chat site. They aim to provide a safe and friendly environment to explore and practice recreational hypnosis, learn from watching others, or even just chat with friends.

    (i) I tried DreamyChat when SleepyChat died down.

(33) **Amazon**

(a) Definition: Amazon.com, Inc. is an American multinational technology company based in Seattle, Washington, which focuses on e-commerce, cloud

computing, digital streaming, and artificial intelligence. It is one of the Big Five companies in the U.S. information technology industry, along with Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook. The company has been referred to as "one of the most influential economic and cultural forces in the world", as well as the world's most valuable brand.

- **(i)** "Um, there's an author on Amazon, Douglas Benjamin. He posts his stories to hypnosis."
- **(ii)** "And there is another book about amnesia. I have it in my Amazon list."
- **(iii)** "You know, he'd send me a book that he saw was on my Amazon wishlist or something

(34) **Chaturbate**
- (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions Chaturbate, a randomized sexual chat platform
  - (i) I use chaturbate every so often.

(35) **Mastodon:**
- (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions the social networking platform Mastodon
  - (i) "There was a person on Mastodon who would go to people's posts…"
  - (ii) "So, yeah, I posted on Mastodon…"

(36) **Wikipedia**
- (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Wikipedia

(37) **BDSMlr:**
- (a) **Definition: The participant mentions the** Microblogging and social media platform BDSMLR, a platform for people into Bondage, BDSM and Fetishes
  - (i) "Somebody suggested BDSMlr as a replacement, but it wasn't as good."
  - (ii) "Um...and...there was another one like Tumbler - BDSMblr."

(38) **Tumbex:**
- (a) **Definition: The participant mentions the** Tumblr clone site, Tumbex
  - (i) After Tumblr went down, several of us tried going to Tumbex, but we couldn't

(39) **Yahoo Groups:**
- (a) **Definition:** Yahoo! Groups was a free-to-use system of electronic mailing lists offered by Yahoo. It ended in December 2020.
  - (i) "Yahoo groups was very good for that cause they had specific groups you can go in and interact, find people, describe themselves, they want this sort of thing."

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      (ii)   "There had been so many diaspora, when Yahoo groups closed that was a diaspora because everyone was disbursed and there was no plan for the next steps."

      (iii)   "Like, way back in the early 2000s and late 90s, the Yahoo groups you could post images and audio files..."

      (iv)   NOTE for Final Coding: Split off any references to Yahoo Instant Messenger that have been coded in here, into a new Yahoo Instant Messenger code instead of yahoo groups.

(40)   Usenet Groups:

(a) **Definition:** a repository usually within the Usenet system, for messages posted from users in different locations using Internet. They are discussion groups and are not devoted to publishing news. Newsgroups are technically distinct from, but functionally similar to, discussion forums on the World Wide Web.

      (i)   "Yeah it was Internet Relay Chat, it was um, also, some of it was Usenet."

      (ii)   "I didn't really get into the Usenet groups"

(41)   IRC Chat:

(a) **Definition:** Internet Relay Chat (IRC) is an application layer protocol that facilitates communication in the form of text. The chat process works on a client/server networking model.

      (i)   "Huge. Especially on IRC chat."

      (ii)   "...we've moved to IRC chats to Discord"

      (iii)   "...and the IRC chats as well a couple of years"

(42)   Mysturbia

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Mysturbia

(43)   Feeld

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Feeld

(44)   Gayspiralstories

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Gayspiralstories

(45)   Hypnotube

(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references hypnotube, a site primarily for erotic hypnosis sissification pornography

(46)   AOL:

(a) **Definition:** an American web portal and online service provider based in New York City. It is a brand marketed by Verizon Media.

      (i)   "AOL, I probably met him when I was 17..."

> (ii) "so I would go onto AOL and search up like BDSM"

(47) Twitter
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Twitter

(48) GayRomeo
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references GayRomeo

(49) Adam for Adam (Adam4Adam) (A4A)
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Adam for Adam, sometimes referenced as Adam4Adam or A4A

(50) Soundcloud
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Soundcloud

(51) StudsinStone:
(a) **Definition:** website dedicated to men being petrified, hypnotized, role playing or otherwise transformed into statues of stone or other hard, inanimate substances, frozen in ice, being robotic or made into robots, mannequins, windup toys, frozen in time or otherwise immobilized. A community of men, gay men, heterosexual males but gay-friendly, who are intrigued by the idea of a complete bondage or reduction to a mere object, either aware or not aware, blank and mindless or fully awake to appreciate the and enjoy the stillness of the moment.

> (i) "I created my own website, which I called StudsInStone, which is directly oriented towards gay men, um interested in being a statue, being a robot, a mannequin or something like that.
> (ii) "Um, well particular websites StudsInStone…"

(52) Warpmymind
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Warpmymind

(53) Motherless
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Motherless

(54) Deviantart
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Deviantart

(55) Hypnochan
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references Hypnochan

(56) ReadOnlyMind
(a) **Definition:** The participant mentions or references ReadOnlyMind

          (i)   NOTE: some participants may have misremembered this website name as Read Only Memories

(57)   **Malebots**

    (a) Definition: The participant mentions or references Malebots

(58)   **Patreon**

    (a) Definition: The participant mentions the content creation website Patreon

        (i)   My Patreon for erotic hypnosis is doing really well.

(59)   **Podcasts**

    (a) **Definition:** The participant talks about listening to, finding, sharing, hearing about, or otherwise engaging with a podcast about erotic hypnosis, or a podcast episode about erotic hypnosis.

        (i)   I heard about it first on an erotic hypnosis podcast

        (ii)   This Podcast has sustained my communal engagement

        (iii)   I have networked more broadly because of this podcast in communal engagement

    (b) **NOTE:** Automatically CROSS-CODE into Audio Files

    (c) **Two Hyp Chicks**

        (i)   **Definition:** The podcast mentioned is specifically identified as the "Two Hyp Chicks" podcast

            1.   A friend of mine shared the Two Hyp Chicks podcast with me

            2.   I saw Two Hyp Chicks at a convention as public figures

            3.   I remember this podcast called "two chicks" and they talked about hypnosis a lot.

    (d) **Sex Nerd Sandra**

        (i)   **Definition:** The podcast mentioned is specifically identified as the Sex Nerd Sandra podcast

        (ii)   I heard an episode of Sex Nerd Sandra

        (iii)   I heard about the Sex Nerd Sandra podcast

        (iv)   I listened to this podcast that I think was called Sex nerd-something?

    (e) Hypnokink News

        (i)   **Definition:** The participant mentions or references the podcast Hypnokink News

6) **Hypnosis Conventions**

   a) **Definition:** The participant talks about an in-person or online erotic hypnosis convention or erotic hypnosis convention spaces in general, or talks about hypnosis conventions that are not erotic in nature, such as hypnotherapy conventions.

     i)   I went to my first erotic hypnosis convention and felt amazing.

ii) There are more safety precautions taken at conventions than private munches

iii) There are erotic hypnosis conventions!?

iv) I have never been a fan of the convention scene.

v) Note: The participant does not need to have actually attended the convention to be coded in this category

vi) Note: if it is not clear if an event being describe is a convention, munch, or dungeon space, put it into the erotic hypnosis community parent code.

vii) **Names of Specific Erotic Hypnosis Conventions**

    (1) Definition: The participant mentions the name of a specific erotic hypnosis convention from within this coding category

    (2) EEHU

        (a) **Definition:** The participant specifically identifies EEHU as the convention they are identifying or referencing

            (i) I went to EEHU

            (ii) I heard about EEHU

            (iii) I would never go to EEHU

    (3) WEEHU

        (a) **Definition:** The participant specifically identifies WEEHU as the convention they are identifying or referencing

            (i) I went to WEEHU

            (ii) I heard about WEEHU

            (iii) I would never go to WEEHU

    (4) MEEHU

        (a) **Definition:** The participant specifically identifies MEEHU as the convention they are identifying or referencing

            (i) I went to MEEHU

            (ii) I heard about MEEHU

            (iii) I would never go to MEEHU

    (5) NEEHU

        (a) **Definition:** The participant specifically identifies NEEHU as the convention they are identifying or referencing

            (i) I went to NEEHU

            (ii) I heard about NEEHU

            (iii) I would never go to NEEHU

    (6) Charmed

        (a) **Definition:** The participant specifically identifies Charmed as the convention they are identifying or referencing

            (i) I went to Charmed

            (ii) I heard about Charmed

            (iii) I would never go to Charmed

    (7) Hypnocon

        (a) **Definition:** The participant specifically identifies Hypnocon as the convention they are identifying or referencing

            (i) I went to Hypnocon

           (ii)   I heard about Hypnocon

           (iii)   I would never go to Hypnocon

(8) E-Quake

    (a) **Definition:** The participant specifically identifies E-Quake as the convention they are identifying or referencing

        (i)   I went to E-Quake

        (ii)   I heard about E-Quake

        (iii)   I would never go to E-Quake
                CROSS CODE: With Online Erotic Hypnosis Conventions.

(9) MindQuake

    (a) **Definition:** The participant specifically identifies MindQuake as the convention they are identifying or referencing

        (i)   I went to MindQuake

        (ii)   I heard about MindQuake

        (iii)   I would never go to MindQuake

(10)   DeepMind DarkWood

    (a) **Definition:** The participant specifically identifies DeepMind DarkWood as the convention they are identifying or referencing

        (i)   I went to DeepMind DarkWood

        (ii)   I heard about DeepMind DarkWood

        (iii)   I would never go to DeepMind DarkWood

(11)   SEEHU (Heart of Texas)

    (a) **Definition:** The participant specifically identifies SEEHU as the convention they are identifying or referencing

        (i)   I went to SEEHU

        (ii)   I heard about SEEHU

        (iii)   I would never go to SEEHU

viii)   **Never Been to a Convention**

    (1) Definition: The participant indicates they have never been to an erotic hypnosis convention, even if they plan to do so eventually in the future.

        (a) **NOTE:** any participants coded into "Unaware of erotic hypnosis conventions" will also be automatically coded into this category at the end, so you don't have to code it here manually if they are coded into "unaware of erotic hypnosis conventions until start of interview"

ix)   **Unaware of erotic hypnosis conventions until start of interview**

    (1) Definition: The participant indicates they are unaware during the interview or that they didn't know about erotic hypnosis conventions until hearing about the study, or that they were ignorant that erotic hypnosis conventions exist, or were "a thing"

        (a) **NOTE:** Automatically CROSS-CODE this into "Never Been to a Convention'

x) **Online Erotic Hypnosis Conventions**
    (1) Definition: The participant discusses or references real or hypothetical erotic hypnosis conventions being held online, virtually, or having to switch to an internet-based format instead of in-person.

xi) **Classes, Workshops**
    (1) Definition: The participant talks about classes and workshops for erotic hypnosis either in general, or references a specific class. The class may be in-person or online.
       (a) I learned how to practice this kink through a hypno class
       (b) The way classes are formatted online versus in person I feel are functionally
    (2) Teaching at an erotic hypnosis convention or workshop
       (a) Definition: The Participant relays their experiences and opinions on teaching at hypnocons.
         (i) I will never teach at a hypnocon for reasons A. through D.
         (ii) Teaching at hypnocons is my main form of community engagement. I like to give back

xii) **Convention Consent policy**
    (1) Definition: the participant references an erotic hypnosis convention having an explicit consent policy, requiring a consent test or exam before attending, or other forms of explicit, written, relatively formalized consent enforcement at an erotic hypnosis convention.
       (a) NOTE: Automatically CROSS-CODE all of these codes into "Consent and Safety"

xiii) **Non-erotic hypnosis conventions**
    (1) Definition: The participant talks about hypnosis conventions that aren't focused on eroticism or sexuality, such as professional hypnosis conventions, or conventions for stage hypnotists.

7) **Relationship to other Kinks**
  a) **Definition:** The relationship the practice of Erotic Hypnosis has to other kinks. This may be via individuals who have a multi intersectional kink practice, adjacent activities, or shared spaces.
    i) I saw erotic hypnosis being done in a shared dungeon space, there were also people combining both interests.
    ii) I do both Erotic Hypno and BDSM but usually keep them separate
    iii) I have a tendency to get lost in narratives and stories. Erotic Hypnosis blends this kind of experience into an erotic setting which I enjoy distinctly from erotic literature.
    iv) **NOTE:** CROSS-CODE with specific kink interest they discuss if applicable

8) **Hypnosis-Adjacent activities**

a) Definition: The participant describes an experience or interest the participant considers adjacent to hypnosis. This can range broadly and is subject to a series of different factors.

    i) I have had a long vested interest in meditation practices and trance states stemming from my early life.

    ii) When I was young I really enjoyed just sort of blanking out and intaking repetitive or patterned stimuli. (Auditory, Visual, Tactile, etc.)

b) Yoga

    i) Definition: The participant mentions yoga, or a specific subsect of yoga, such as Bikram practices.

c) ASMR

    i) Definition: The participant mentions ASMR, or autonomous sensory meridian response, a practice in which a person reacts with a pleasurable tingling sensation to images and sounds intended to produce this response.

d) Meditation, Buddhist chanting, Mindfulness

    i) Definition: The participant describes returning the conscious to an emotionally calm and stable state using predetermined techniques of focus training. This may be focus on the body, focus on a subject, focus on the greater world, focus on thoughts, etc. There is likely a high focus on focused transience and the practice may include the repeating of "Mantras" to assist focus.

        (1) Transcendental Meditation - "Quieting" thoughts via repetition of mantras which may be self affirming or value reinforcing.

        (2) Mindfulness - Placing focus on self in the moment/present in order to increase presentness.

        (3) Open Monitoring - Putting focus on the general internal emotional or cognitive state in order to observe and accept the self.

        (4) NOTE: IF they specifically mention it being Buddhist chanting, CROSS-CODE into Buddhism

e) Tantric Sex

    i) Definition: The practice of engaging in yogic or meditatively ritualized sex for the sake of greater unification with a partner or mutual veneration of a deity.

        (1) Practicing tantric sex with my partner has allowed for us to reach new heights of connection which we have been playing with in Erotic Hypno.

        (2) Tantric Sex was something I had received education on before Erotic Hypno.

        (3) I prefer to keep these two practices separate as Erotic Hypno is done on a more casual basis.

        (4) I practice mindfulness as part of my sexual activities with partners.

f) Energy Play/Woo//Occult/ritual magic, Mediums/New Age

    i) Definition: The participant references the occult, ritual magic, energy play, "woo", or some other spiritual or magical practice they consider to be adjacent to hypnosis, sex magic

           (1) I'm a Hellenistic pagan who does ritual magic as part of my hypnosis practice

           (2) I was always very interested in the occult, ever since I was a kid

           (3) I do a lot of energy play in the BDSM world, which feels similar

           (4) NOTE: This may CROSS-CODE into 'Paganism/Neopaganism'

9) Stage Hypnosis

    a) Definition: The participant describes having an experience of attending, being in, or hearing about a stage hypnosis show, or talks about stage hypnosis in general.

        i) I feel like the public's only exposure to hypnosis is via stage shows, which gives hypnosis a bad name

        ii) Stage hypnosis has really sketchy consent practices

        iii) I went to a stage hypnosis show at my college and I was like, "How in the world are they even allowed to do this in public?" because it was such a sexual experience for me.

        iv)   **NOTE:** If the participant is talking about the stage hypnotist, please also CROSS-CODE it into "Stage Hypnotist" under the occupations category.

10) Feelings

    a) Definition: The participant talks about experiencing a feeling or emotion, or the emotions or feelings of others.

        i) I feel like having a good sense of how your partner is feeling is important.

        ii) I always find myself feeling especially strong emotions in trance

        iii) I use trance to explore some of my deepest and most uncomfortable feelings

    b) Negative Feelings

        i) Definition: The participant expresses or references themselves or others feeling negatively, or a specific feeling with a negative valence, such as anger, shame, fear, disappointment, alienation, nervousness, or frustration.

           (1) I felt awful when I realized I was into this kink.

        ii) Drop, Subdrop, Top Drop, Bottom Drop, Dom Drop

           (1) Definition: The participant discusses themselves or others experiencing negative feelings after an erotic hypnosis scene, sometimes requiring aftercare and perceived as being caused by the scene. It may occur immediately after or may occur up to several days after the scene. It may be a feeling of loneliness, sadness, or physical drain as the body and mind work towards coming back to their usual state of being.

               (a) NOTE: This is not the same concept as an abreaction, which takes place during a scene, and is often the result of accidentally triggering a traumatic emotional memory.

    c) Positive Feelings

        i) Definition: The participant expresses or references themselves or others feeling positively, or a specific feeling with a positive valence, such as empowerment, happiness, joy, excitement, positivity, or bliss.

           (1) When I found this community I was overjoyed and felt like I belong.

(2) The way erotic hypnosis has allowed me to access my self /
sexuality is a deeply touching and profound experience of self
intimacy and joy

(3) The experience felt absolutely magical.

11) Personality Traits

    a) Definition: The participant describes a personality trait, or talks about personality
in general. This might refer to their own personalities or the personalities of
others. This might also refer to personality traits in the past or present.

    b) Shy/Insecure

        i) Definition: Participant described or referenced in themselves or others
feelings of shyness, insecurity, self consciousness, or apprehension to
social engagement.

            (1) I can be a shy person so online I could just really express myself

            (2) But it was also a little bit terrifying for me because I'm what I like
to call a forced exhibitionist, so I really enjoy being the center of
attention but only if I'm made to be, because if I choose to be that
it feels too much like, like, because I'm actually quite shy.

            (3) And it took me quite a while because I was always too shy to like,
uh, do it in person.

            (4) So I get self conscious about communicating

    c) Creative

        i) Definition: The participant describes a person as being creative, artist, or
in any other way imaginative.

            (1) I like to think that I'm a creative person so it did give me an outlet.

            (2) I've always been an artistic person so I love making hypno-furry
art

            (3) I feel like erotic hypnosis has made me a more imaginative person.

    d) Empathetic

        i) **Definition:** The participant references the concept of empathy, being an
empath or an empathetic person, of feeling the feelings of others.

    e) Openness, Vulnerability, Open-Mindedness

        i) Definition: The participant talks about the concept of being open-minded,
open with people, or being able to be vulnerable with others

            (1) NOTE: If their vulnerability is related to trusting others, CROSS-
CODE it into Trusting, able to Trust Others

    f) Trusting, able to trust others

        i) Definition: The participant references the trait of being trusting or able to
trust, either as a trait in themselves, or others

    g) Confident

        i) Definition: The participant describes themselves or others as having a
confident personality, ability to perform, as being sexually confident or as
socially outgoing.

            (1) I discovered more about myself and more confidence for sure. I
feel a lot better about myself

> **(2)** I mean I had to get comfortable enough with myself and confident enough to say, you know, and stand up and say this is a thing that I want and you know if people judge me for it, I don't care.
>
> **(3)** So, it seems like sort of both on the personal level about your own sort of confidence by being able to talk about your sexuality

h) **Good Communicator/Communication Skills/Communicative**

-    **i)** **Definition:** The participant describes self or others as being capable with communication; interpersonal skills.

    > **(1)** Erotic Hypno domming has increased my communication skills through engagement with other peoples fantasies.
    >
    > **(2)** **Note:** If the participant is discussing having difficulty or anxiety around communicating with others, code that into "shy" and not here.

i) **Nerdy/Geeky/Gamer/STEM**

-    **i)** **Definition:** The participant talks about people being nerdy, geeky, engaging in gamer culture, involved in scientific, technological, or engineering interests, or playing tabletop roleplaying games

    > **(1)** I would say that yeah there was probably a slight overrepresentation of White people but I also think that it's very common in like a lot of my interests. A lot of geekier kind of stuff.
    >
    > **(2)** I'm like a kind of a nerd, so I was like I would play d&d and stuff and then we would sort of like, take the characters and one of the MPC and go into the bedroom.
    >
    > **(3)** I see it more as like people who are interested in creative challenging kind of nerdy things, they're all like concentric circles of like slightly outside mainstream.

-   **ii)** **NOTE:** If they mention a STEM-related Career, please CROSS-CODE it into "Tech, Computer Programming, Engineering" under Occupations

12) **Hypnosis and Media**

a) **Definition:** The participant mentions portrayals of hypnosis in a media form of any kind, whether it is community produced, general/mass media, or otherwise.

-    **i)** I found that when I thought about my intro into erotic hypnosis I recovered many memories from my childhood where cartoon depictions of hypnosis caused emotional arousal
-   **ii)** I derive most of my engagement with Erotic Hypnosis from community based content producers on sites like, DeviantArt.
- **iii)** I love reading hypnotic literature on sites like
- **iv)** I've also been into pop culture that includes hypnosis.
-   **v)** **NOTE:** If they mention a specific type of media, CROSS-CODE it both in whether it is sexually explicit or not sexually explicit, as well as what type of media it is (i.e., TV show, art, written stories, etc.).
- **vi)** **NOTE**: if the media is nerdy form of media, such as sci-fi, fantasy, etc., it will also likely CROSS-CODE into nerdy/geek/STEM

b) **Media Format**

i) **Definition:** The participant either explicitly mentions the format or medium of the piece of media, or the format is discernable by looking it up online

ii) **Gifs**
   (1) **Definition:** the participant mentions Gifs

iii) **Video Games**
   (1) **Definition:** the participant mentions video games, or other forms of playable, interactive digital media, such as a visual novel or flash game

iv) **Online Video**
   (1) **Definition:** the participant mentions seeing a video created for an online format, such as a YouTube video, or video on a porn site.
       (a) **NOTE**: If the video mentioned is clearly a Television show or feature film, code it into Movies/TV shows instead of here.

v) **Movies, TV Shows**
   (1) **Definition:** the participant mentions a movie or television show, whether live action or animated

vi) **Photos, drawings, and static images**
   (1) **Definition:** the participant references photographs, manipulated photographs, images that don't move and/or static drawings in the con
   (2) of talking about erotic hypnosis.

vii) **Hentai**
   (1) **Definition:** the participant mentions hentai, or animated Japanese pornography
   (2) **NOTE:** Automatically CROSS-CODE into Nerdy/Geeky/STEM

viii) **Comic Books, graphic novels**
   (1) **Definition:** the participant mentions graphic novels, comic books, or other primarily visual print media
   (2) **Manga**
       (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions Japanese comic books, Japanese Graphic novels, or Manga.

ix) **Written Media and Written Texts**
   (1) **Definition:** The participant references a book, erotica, erotic fiction, fanfiction, short story, or any other form of written text in the context of erotic hypnosis media, such as "Mindplay" or the "Mindplay Study guide", or some other Instructional Book regarding how to perform or erotic hypnosis or hypnosis in general.
       (a) **NOTE:** Participants may mention "Wiseguy's book" or Mark Wiseman, in reference to the Mindplay Study Guide.
       (b) NOTE: Comic books and graphic novels are not included in this category.

x) **Mp3 files, Audio files**

(1) **Definition:** the participant mentions mp3 files, audio files, or generally references erotic hypnosis "files".

    xi)   **Erotic Hypnosis Scripts, Scripts**

(1) **Definition:** the participant mentions an induction script (a set of words intended to be spoken in order to take someone into a trance state) for erotic hypnosis induction, such as downloaded from a website or found in a book.

        (a) "I usually downloaded text scripts and just read those"

        (b) NOTE: If the person indicates they downloaded the script from a specific website, such as Warpmymind, please also CROSS-CODE into that specific Website's code.

c) **Sexual Content Level of Media**

    i)   **Definition:** The participant indicates or does not indicate that the media they are discussing contains sexually explicit material or not.

    ii)   **Sexually Explicit Media, Pornography**

(1) **Definition:** The participant mentions Pornography and/or media which directly shows sexual content identifiably without ambiguity or mild suggestion.

        (a) My favorite website features jock like men being hypnotized in heavily sexualized contexts.

        (b) The Porn that got me into erotic hypnosis was really sexualized but now I prefer to use non sexually explicit media as I have become ac

    iii)   **Non-Sexually Explicit Media**

(1) **Definition:** Media which does not show content which would be interpreted as sexual by a vanilla person, even if it is subjectively experienced as sexual or sexually arousing by an erotic hypnosis fetishist.

        (a) The jungle book had a scene which I latched onto as a child with an interest in its hypnotic elements but no sexual elements, but it made me realize how impressional my mind could be. I remember finding this experience enjoyable.

        (b) There was this show I saw on TV where they hypnotized a bunch of superheroes.

(2) Childhood Media

        (a) **Definition:** The participant mentions a form of media specifically made for children or younger adolescents, even if they may have watched it as an adult.

            (i)   "I remember when I was - it was probably, you know, when I was 6 or 7- I would see it on like the *Transformers or* on Nick at Nite, I'd see it on *Get Smart*, of course *The Jungle Book* and *Robin Hood,* those had those images in it. I remember it would just like, just grab my attention, it was just really weird."

(ii) "Um, Scooby Doo. [Laughs] Yeah, uh, it was a cartoon episode of Scooby Doo, I can't recall it specifically but there was definitely Scooby Doo, there was Teen Titans - I was a *very* big Teen Titans fan - there was an episode about that...So I would say cartoons, for sure."

(iii) **NOTE:** Do not code pornography into this category, even if the participant saw pornography when they were a child.

    iv) **Sexually Ambiguous Media**

        (1) **Definition:** The participant references content that might be sexually explicit, or might not be, as it is ambiguous or difficult to define.

13) **Disclosure of Erotic Hypnosis Interests, Coming Out**

  a) **Definition:** Participant discloses erotic hypnosis fetish interest to others.

    i) I told my partner early on in our relationship that I was into Erotic Hypnosis

    ii) I identified myself in a broader online community as an Erotic Hypnosis fetishist

    iii) I have told my close friends who are not into Erotic Hypnosis as a fetish interest about my interest in Erotic Hypnosis

  b) **Not coming out, but not anticipating negative consequences**

    i) **Definition:** The participant talks about choosing not to come out or choosing to conceal their erotic hypnosis interests, but indicates they do so even though they don't anticipate experiencing negative consequences

    ii) **NOTE:** This might be domain-specific, such as a participant that says they haven't come out to their family even though their family won't care (which is coded in here) even if they do worry about their boss finding out.

        (1) They're used to me doing weird shit. They would probably blow it off. You know, I'm close to 50 years old at this point. I'm not going to become an upstanding respectable citizen. You know. That dream is over. So, as long as [name of interviewee] stays out of prison, we're happy. You know.

        (2) Honestly, I don't think they would really care much

        (3) I just think it's a private thing, so I don't plan to tell anyone.

        (4) Well, my sister wouldn't care, even though my parents would probably freak out (First half of this should be coded in this category).

  c) **Not coming out, and anticipating negative consequences**

    i) **Definition:** The participant talks about choosing not to come out, because they fear negative consequences for doing so

        (1) I worry I could lose my job.

        (2) I think my family would disown me.

        (3) People would think I'm a weirdo or a freak.

  d) **First Person Told about Erotic Hypnosis Interests**

     i)   **Definition:** Participant talks about the first person they disclosed their erotic hypnosis fetish interests to.

        (1) NOTE: CROSS-CODE who the person is in the later category for disclosure reactions.

        (2) "...she's the first person I told in-in real space and that I was interested in this thing..."

        (3) "I think the first person who was not into hypnosis is my--would have been my boyfriend"

e) Non-Intended Disclosure, being outed accidentally or without consent

     i)   **Definition:** The participant talks about an occurrence of coming out about interest in erotic hypnosis without the intention of disclosing interest.

        (1) "But then um somebody on that board was writing for a paper and they kinda outed me in the paper?"

        (2) "They saw my name on an online event listing for teachers of erotic hypnosis"

f) Reactions to Disclosure from Non Erotic Hypnosis-Affiliated People

     i)   **Definition:** The participant describes real or imagined reactions from an individual not involved in the erotic hypnosis community or erotic hypnosis fetishism to disclosure of interest

        (1) "When I told my partner she was a bit shocked because she's very vanilla…"

        (2) "My parents didn't understand my interest"

        (3) Target of Disclosure

            (a) Definition: The participant identified a real or imagined person to whom a person has disclosed or are imagining disclosing to.

                (i) NOTE: If the identified person is the first person they actually told, CROSS-CODE into First Person Told about Erotic Hypnosis Interests category

            (b) Telling a Family Member

                (i) Definition: The participant identified a real or imagined person to whom a person has disclosed or are imagining disclosing to as a member of their family, such as their sibling, parent, or child.

            (c) Telling a Coworker

                (i) Definition: The participant identified a real or imagined person to whom a person has disclosed or are imagining disclosing to as a member of their workplace, such as a boss, supervisor, coworker, or subordinate

            (d) Telling a Romantic, Sexual Partner

                (i) Definition: The participant identified a real or imagined person to whom a person has disclosed or are imagining disclosing to as a real or imagined sexual or romantic partner.

1. NOTE: This also includes persons the participant would like to have as a romantic or sexual partner, even if they are not currently in a romantic or sexual relationship with the person.
2. I would certainly tell any girlfriend I had about my interest.

(e) **Telling a Friend**
   (i) **Definition:** The participant identified a real or imagined person to whom ta person has disclosed or are imagining disclosing to as a friend, acquaintance, or other platonic companion.

(4) Valence of Disclosure
(a) **The participant indicates or fails to indicate the emotional valence of the reaction to the real or imagined disclosure**
   (i) **NOTE:** If the participant indicates a positive or negative disclosure, CROSS-CODE it automatically into positive and negative feelings.

(b) **Positive Reactions to Disclosure**
   (i) **Definition: the participant describes a** non erotic hypnosis oriented person has had or would have a supportive or good reaction to the participant's or another's disclosure of EH interest
      1. "My friend was happy to hear about my erotic hypnosis play and asked a me a bunch of questions about it"
      2. "When my partner found out about my interest they were excited and wanted to learn more about it"
      3. I imagine she'd find it awesome.

(c) **Negative Reactions to Disclosure**
   (i) **Definition:** Participant received or would imagine receiving unsupportive, bad, negative response to disclosure of interest in erotic hypnosis
      1. "My parents were very against my friend's practice/interest"
      2. "I have received a lot of judgment from friends and family"
      3. "I think they would disown me."

(d) **Bafflement, Confusion, Unfamiliarity, Neutrality, Non-Reaction to Disclosure**
   (i) **Definition:** The participant describes being met with or imagining being met with an ambivalent confusion, or a neutral lack of understanding after

disclosure of erotic hypnosis interest to someone not involved in the erotic hypnosis community

1. I think they'd be really confused.
2. They probably wouldn't care and just be like "you do you"
3. "My family didn't really understand at first what erotic hypnosis is or why I would be into it"
4. **NOTE:** this category is for non-negative, and non-positive reasons. If the person doesn't understand it and also reacts negatively, code it into the negative reactions to disclosure category and not here.

14) **Romantic, Sexual and Play Relationships**
   a) **Definition: The** participant mentions a past or present romantic, play partner or sexual relationship.
      i) "My partner and I explored a bit of EH play together"
      ii) "I moved out to this area so I could live with my boyfriend"
      iii) "My wife and I came to this event together"
   b) **Romantic, Sexual, Play Relationships With People Who Aren't Into Hypnosis**
      i) **Definition:** Participant mentions being in a current, past, or imagined future relationship with someone who does not practice erotic hypnosis
         (1) "I was with my partner but they did not want to try erotic hypnosis so I left the relationship"
         (2) "I didn't mention my interest so overtly and up front. And so then later on I would sort of like casually bringing it up to them and maybe hope they might be interested. And then maybe they were, maybe they weren't in. You know that typically does not go that well"
         (3) "For the longest time I was in a relationship where they did not enjoy erotic hypnosis and that was really hard because I was willing to try new things"
   c) **Romantic, Sexual, Play Relationships With People Who Are Into Hypnosis**
      i) **Definition:** Participant mentions being in a current, past, or imagined future relationship with someone who is into erotic hypnosis
         (1) "The constant threat of demonetization, of shunning, the lack of understanding of how hypnosis works from the greater community, the lack of understanding of how hypnosis works from the practitioners I think is a major issue."
         (2) "I knew that I couldn't practice as a hypnotist or hypnotherapist I didn't pursue the hypnotherapy certification.. Ummm I just was satisfied with my certification as a master hypnotist"
         (3) "It's helpful to be married to your hypnotist"
   d) **Relationship Abuse**

i) **Definition:** Participant mentions being in a current, past, or imagined future relationship with an abusive partner, or talks about relationship abuse in general
        (1) "I go from being the person who talked them out of a bad relationship from an abusive master to new master"
        (2) "That, one hypnosis does not inherently mean not having consent. People are manipulated and put into abusive relationships regardless of whether hypnosis is involved or not."
        (3) "But I've been latched - in trance in that - that it just was - it was scary. So then he got - eventually I'd come out of it and go on, but I felt abused. It was an abusive situation"
        (4) **NOTE:** This may also be coded into several consent-related categories as appropriate.
15) **Origins, Motivations, Appeal, and Benefits of Erotic Hypnosis**
    a) **Definition:** Participant mentions positive effects of participating in hypnosis, a person's motivations for engaging in hypnosis, why they find hypnosis appealing or the story of where their interest in hypnosis originated.
        i) "I do it in a very controlled, safe, sane and consensual fashion so I think it's been very positive for me"
        ii) "Erotic hypnosis has helped me become the person that I am today"
    b) **Hypnosis Improves Communication**
        i) **Definition:** The participant identifies a motivation or benefit of erotic hypnosis being that they have improved their ability to communicate with others, such as partners, coworkers, or in general..
    c) **Hypnosis Makes Unpleasant Tasks Tolerable**
        i) **Definition:** The participant identifies a motivation or benefit of erotic hypnosis being that they can experience pleasure, or a lack of discomfort when engaging in tasks that would otherwise be unpleasant. This may include being hypnotized to do household chores, exercise, or do work.
            (1) I love being turned into a Stepford Wife because it makes doing the dishes seem sexy and fun.
    d) **Incomprehension**
        i) **Definition:** The participant expresses a sense of being mystified, oblivious, unwitting, or confused about their excitement, attraction, and/or arousal by a particular fetish interest that is not understood to be a fetish interest *per se* at the time. It might be a single sudden moment of experience or series of experiences that is later clarified as kinky but not thought of as kinky at the time.
            (1) I felt something when I saw hypnosis for the first time as a kid, but didn't understand it
            (2) It wasn't sexual, but it was this feeling of excitement that I didn't understand as a kink at the time
            (3) It was confusing, but attracted me, I didn't know what it was
            (4) I didn't have a label or name for these experiences
    e) **Experiencing Physically Impossible Desires**

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i)   **Definition:** Participant mentions their interest in erotic hypnosis originating or being motivated by a desire to experience something physically impossible, such as defying the laws of physics or involving mythical creatures
   - **(1)** Wanting to experience an alien abduction via hypnosis
   - **(2)** People using hypnosis to make it feel like arms are melting off.
   - **(3)** I want to become a robot, and hypnosis is the only way to make that desire feel real.

f) Experiencing Ethically Impossible Desires
   i)   **Definition:** Participant mentions their interest in erotic hypnosis originating or being motivated by a desire to experience something that is immoral, but wanting to do so in a way that isn't immoral
   - **(1)** Hypnosis is a way for me to feel like I'm violating someone's consent without actually doing so.
   - **(2)** I want to have sex with straight guys, but they wouldn't let me do it, so hypnosis became a fantasy about being able to do it without harming them, because I could make them not remember.

g) Power Play, Control
   i)   **Definition:** Participant mentions use of play that involves differential power dynamics in a BDSM, kink, or erotic hypnosis scene, or engagement with or manipulation of feelings of control
   - **(1)** "I think uhh, for example within the Latino community, Latinx community I guess, um, it would be issues dealing with um, A) being gay in the first place, uhh, the idea of power play, especially introducing a scene how it's separate from reality."
   - **(2)** "So you can achieve lots of control or uh, power play or other things with hypnosis and sometimes I do it with hypnosis, and sometimes they do it without hypnosis. It depends a lot of the other person who is involved."

h) Transition from Non-erotic Hypnosis
   i)   **Definition:** Participant mentions the discovery of erotic interest in hypnosis through previous experience with non-erotic hypnosis.
   - **(1)** "I had a long process leading up to where - when I first did erotic hypnosis. So there - there's a story behind that. But I - I matched - all of a sudden I matched regular hypnosis which I was doing for pain management and - which is why I did it, with BDSM stuff that I had been - had stumbled across."
   - **(2)** "So that's how I got into the hypnosis and the main reason I did it was to try to deal with pain in an alternative format and it largely worked. It was really successful. So I did that until I stumbled - until I put 2 and 2 together and went off into the ABH world."

i) Transition from Interest in other Kinks
   a)   **Definition:** The participant mentions having previously been involved in the BDSM community or activities or other kink related communities or activities, before engaging with the erotic hypnosis community.

i) "I was interested in uhh BDSM-related things, my whole life since childhood. Of course, I didn't know what it is and how it's called. So my BDSM interests, like, were before awakening of my physical sexuality like, in puberty. Uhh, and uh, I started actively participating in 2014.

j) **Introduced by partner**
  i) **Definition:** Participant mentions first entry into erotic hypnosis is initiated by experience or suggestion from partner, or the participant introducing their partner to erotic hypnosis.
    (1) "[Sam]: How did your partner introduce it to you? [Participant]: Um, basically she just told me, we were pretty open about everything, and we were a kinky couple so, oh you just helped me... by the way, I'm into hypnosis and then she shared stories and stuff with me and it fascinated, fascinated me pretty much from the start."

k) **Stressful Expectations of Intelligence**
  i) **Definition:** The participant talks about the pressures of being smart, high IQ, being highly educated, or having to have their mind working, and points to erotic hypnosis as a break from that

l) **Altered States of Consciousness**
  i) **Definition:** The participant talks about their motivation for erotic hypnosis as being explicitly to experience or induce in others, altered states of consciousness. I.e. head space & sub space.

m) **Media-based origins**
  i) **Definition:** The participant details the origins and/or motivations behind their erotic hypnosis interest as tracing back to a media exposure or media engagement experience, such as seeing a TV show, movie, or comic book that featured hypnosis.
    (1) **NOTE:** CROSS-CODE into the relevant media codes for the specific media it was

n) **Dreamed About Hypnosis**
  i) **Definition:** The participant's origins or motivations for engaging in erotic hypnosis originated in a dream, while they were literally asleep.

o) **Healing From Trauma**
  i) **Definition:** participant mentions how hypnosis has helped them get over their previous trauma
    (1) "I feel like half the trans people I meet are like: want to bond over our traumas or kinks or our traumas from our kinks? So I've had conversations like this a bunch. This felt like a normal, dinner table conversation [Laughter]"
    (2) "I feel that the more one explores, sort of um, alternate, or other states of mind, in hypnosis, um, the more you're, removing the trauma of having one identity, and opening up to having more than one identity"

- **(3)** "I've dealt with a lot of, a lot more trauma in a very positive setting through erotic hypnosis than I have in a, in a formal, uh, hypnotherapy setting
- **(4) NOTE:** This will also likely be CROSS-CODED into PTSD, Trauma

p) **Hypnosis is thrilling**
- i) **Definition:** the participant mentions experiences of excitement, arousal, fun, thrill or pleasure from participating in erotic hypnosis
  - **(1)** some of the thrill is to overcome your um, resistance to things"
  - **(2)** "absolutely exhilarating. A thrill"
  - **(3)** "sort of the thrill to see someone take my fantasy and go further with it"

q) **Hypnosis Benefits Sleep**
- i) **Definition:** participant mentions use of hypnosis as a beneficial tool for improving sleep quality, duration, or helping with sleep problems
  - **(1)** "Uh, I listen to files at night that aren't hot they're just, like, this'll help you sleep, uh, calm down from the day and it's great."
  - **(2) NOTE:** This may also be CROSS-CODED into insomnia, as appropriate.

r) **Hypnosis Helps Manage Physical Illnesses and Disabilities**
- i) **Definition:** The participant indicates that erotic hypnosis has been helpful to themselves or others in reducing, managing or curing symptoms of physical illnesses or physical disabilities, or conceptualizes it as a treatment for physical illnesses or physical disabilities
  - **(1)** "it actually was to assist somebody who was sick… and help them with, you know, lessening the . . . side effects of the treatment. You know, so they wouldn't be as nauseated. They could sleep more easily. That kind of thing."
  - **(2)** "...I have somebody that does hypnosis as therapy, like they're certified. And they've used it for their partner to help with their pain and they offered to help me when I went for like an IUD."
  - **(3)** NOTE: Please also CROSS-CODE into the appropriate disability category

s) **Hypnosis Helps Manage Mental Illnesses, Mental Disorders, and Stress**
- i) **Definition:** The participant indicates that erotic hypnosis has been helpful to themselves or others in reducing, managing or curing symptoms of mental illnesses or conceptualizes it as a treatment for mental disorders, or as a form of stress relief.
  - **(1)** "I've been depressed basically as long as I can remember and it's been pretty severe. I'm not actively suicidal. I was a lot in my early twenties especially. Experiencing something like ego-death through hypnosis can be, it's not therapy, but therapeutic."
  - **(2)** "Social anxiety kinda melts away. So I feel really safe in the hypnosis environment."
  - **(3)** It helps me focus, because I have ADHD.

(4) NOTE: If the participant mentions a specific mental disorder, please also CROSS-CODE it into the category for that disorder under mental disorders and disabilities, otherwise, CROSS-CODE it into the general category for mental disorders.

    t) **Hypnosis Increases Focus**
        i) **Definition:** The participant indicates that their involvement with hypnosis is helpful for improving cognitive functioning related to focus and attention.
            (1) NOTE: If related to ADD, ADHD, or Traumatic Brain Injury, CROSS-CODE into the specific categories for that disorder under mental disorders

    u) **Hypnosis Increases Self-confidence**
        i) **Definition:** The participant indicates that their involvement with hypnosis is helpful in improving self-confidence or self-assuredness.
            (1) NOTE: This should also likely be CROSS-CODED into Personality Trait category of Confident

    v) **Hypnosis Improves Capacity to Trust Others**
        i) **Definition:** participant mentions how participation in hypnosis has helped them improve their sense of faith in others or reduce their suspicion of others' ill intent
            (1) I felt like I couldn't really trust other people until I learned to trust others through hypnosis
            (2) Hypnosis is giving your brain to other people, so it has really improved my ability to trust

    w) **Hypnosis Improves Knowledge and Insight About the Self**
        i) **Definition:** The participant describes knowing themselves better, gaining greater psychological insight, or exploring themselves, as a result of their engagement with hypnosis.

16) **Hypnosis and Kink Play Behavior**
    a) **Definition:** codes within this category reference particular kinds of hypnosis and/or other kinky play behavior.
        i) **NOTE:** a participant who engages in a behavior in this category but has nothing to do with hypnosis should still be coded into their relevant category here.

    b) **Gear (Leather, Rubber, Latex, Costumes, Lingerie, Spandex, Sunglasses, Uniforms, Collars, Shoes, Clothing)**
        i) **Definition:** The participant mentions articles of clothing or clothing materials which are fetishized or eroticized by themselves or others.
            (1) "That was more along the lines of my interest in, uh, other kinks like rubber"

    c) **Fractionation**
        i) **Definition:** The participant mentions being fractionated, or being induced in and out of trance repeatedly to deepen the state of trance.

    d) **Never Done Erotic Hypnosis With Another**
        i) **Definition:** The participant talks mentions having never done erotic hypnosis with another person at all at the time of the interview

- **(1)** Sam: So you haven't actually done erotic hypnosis yet? No.
- **(2)** NOTE: If the participant has dommed erotic hypnosis but never gone under themselves, or has gone under themselves but has never hypnotized anyone, do NOT put it into this category.
- **(3)** CROSS-CODE: automatically goes into "Never done online"

e) **Non-Erotic Hypnosis**
   i) **Definition:** The participant talks about hypnosis for non-erotic purposes or as an explicitly non-erotic experience.
   - **(1)** I had an experience where I was hypnotized on stage as a participant from the audience and they made me do such silly things

f) **Group Hypnosis**
   i) **Definition:** The participant talks about the practice of doing hypnosis in a group with interaction between more than 2 people, such as one hypnotist hypnotizing several people, an erotic hypnosis chatroom in which someone puts up a spiral image to take anyone who stumbles into the chatroom into trance, or multiple hypnotists simultaneously trying to take down one subject.
   - **(1)** NOTE: Merely parallel hypnosis involving individual sets of 2 people does not count. For example, If, in a class, the instructor asks people to "pair off" to practice an induction, that would not count as group hypnosis, since there's no interaction between more than 2 people.

g) **Humiliation, dehumanization, objectification, degradation,**
   i) **Definition:** The participant talks about activities involving lowering a person's status, such as treating them as an object, turning them into an object or piece of furniture, degrading or insulting them, humiliating or embarrassing them, whether privately or publicly, and/or labeling or treating them as a sub-human or non-human entity**.**
   - **(1)** **NOTE:** usually participants will use one of the four words in the title of this code to indicate this is the nature of these activities.

h) **Abreaction**
   i) **Definition:** The participant specifically mentions an abreaction, or describes a sudden outpouring of emotion or unexpected reaction to trance, often caused by triggering a traumatic memory or experience.
   - **(1)** Umm - there's talking about hypnosis - and there's talking - er, there's working through people's abreactions via text. Uhh but frequently in order to do an effective trance uhh you have to have a lot better monitoring capabilities- in fact I think that's why there were so many abreactions in the early days.

i) **First Time Engaging With Erotic Hypnosis**
   i) **Definition:** The participant talks about the first time they experienced or partook in hypnosis play behavior, from any role
   - **(1)** "I think the very first time I tried it was face-to-face. Somebody told me, you wanna hang around and do hypnosis and such and was open minded enough"

-       **(2)** I'm not sure when the exact first time was. I think I may have been just talking with a friend over the phone like I'm talking with you
-   ii) **First time being hypnotized**
  - **(1) Definition:** The participant describes the first time they were ever successfully hypnotized.
- iii) **First time hypnotizing another**
  - **(1) Definition:** the participant describes the first time they ever successfully hypnotized another person**.**
- iv) **Expectations and anticipations about what hypnosis would be like**
  - **(1) Definition:** The participant discusses their expectations, imaginings or preconceptions about what hypnosis would be like before they actually engaged in hypnosis themselves (either as a subject or a tist)
    - **(a)** I thought it would be like in the movies, but I realized it was totally different.
-   v) **Earliest Memory of Interest in Erotic Hypnosis**
  - **(1) Definition:** The participant discusses the first time they realized they were into erotic hypnosis, and not just hypnosis in general.
    - **(a) NOTE:** If a participant tells the story of knowing they were into hypnosis, but not realizing it was erotic for them, it does not go here, but instead goes into. Earliest Memory of Interest in Hypnosis
- vi) **Earliest Memory of Interest in Hypnosis, Non-Erotic**
  - **(1) Definition:** The participant discusses the first time they realized they were into hypnosis, and indicates it was a non-erotic feeling or was a feeling that wasn't recognized as erotic at the time.
    - **(a) NOTE:** If a participant tells the story of knowing they were into erotic hypnosis, it doesn't go here, but goes into. Earliest Memory of Interest in Erotic Hypnosis.
- j) **In-Person Hypnosis**
  - i) **Definition:** The participant talks about participating in hypnosis play behavior while in person, rather than online.
    - **(1)** I went to his house and he took me under
    - **(2)** I can't believe that this whole hypnosis scene took place at a restaurant.
    - **(3)** When we got to the conference, he asked me if he could take me under, and I enthusiastically said yes.
- k) **Online Hypnosis, Phone Hypnosis**
  - i) **Definition:** The participant talks about participating in hypnosis play in an online context, such as via video chat, webcam, or a text-based chatroom, or via a phone call.
    - **(1)** I sometimes try to [stutters] with people online through there and stuff and then um through Skype sometimes there's a few uh hypno groups on there
    - **(2)** I do partake in it online, and I guess that's...that's valid. But I don't feel like I'm...I'm as immersed as I could be

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(3) I was looking like for people to do hypnosis online, and then I came across Sleepy Chat.

(4) Lately I have been just been doing it online, especially because after the COVID thing I never really met anyone.

ii) **Only done Online**

(1) Definition: The participant indicates they have only participated in erotic hypnosis and/or the erotic hypnosis community online, and have not participated in any form of erotic hypnosis or erotic hypnosis community in-person.

(a) I've only ever done it on skype

iii) **Never Done online:**

(1) Definition: the participant indicates they have never done erotic hypnosis online (such as via webcam or text)

(a) I do not do online hypnosis.

(b) I only do hypnosis in person with people.

l) **Objectification, doll play, freezing, statuefication, time stop**

i) **Definition:** The participant discusses playing with themes involving turning a person into an object, stopping them in time, freezing a person in place, turning them into a doll or action figure, a mannequin or statute.

(1) NOTE: May also CROSS-CODE into transformation play, if about becoming a specific kind of person or object, as opposed to just freezing people

(2) NOTE: Will always CROSS-CODE into bondage if it's specifically about them being unable to attempt to move

m) **Technology, VR, Voice Changing, Robots, Androids, Cyborgs, and other Tech-Focused erotic hypnosis**

i) **Definition:** The participant talks about technology-focused topics in the context of erotic hypnosis, such as using Virtual Reality goggles, voice modulators or voice manipulation, turning someone into a robot, android, or cyborg.

(1) NOTE: If this involves turning someone or being turned into a robot, machine, or cyborg, please also CROSS-CODE it into transformation play.

n) **Bondage play**

i) **Definition:** The participant discusses playing with themes involving being bound, chained, strapped down, and/or unable to move.

(1) NOTE: May also CROSS-CODE into freezing if it is specifically about them being unable to attempt to move, rather than about feeling chained up.

o) **Medical Play, Medical Fetishism,**

i) **Definition:** The participant discusses playing with themes involving medicine, surgery, nurses, doctors, hospitals, or the use of medical devices.

(1) NOTE: discussing the use of a speculum sometimes falls into this category and sometimes doesn't, so please rely on context clues.

p) **Pain, Torture play, Sadomasochism**

- i) **Definition:** The participant discusses playing with themes involving pain, physical suffering, torture, and/or sadomasochism
- q) **Furry**
  - i) **Definition:** The participant talks about furries, the furry community, or any other furry-related topic, in the context of erotic hypnosis.
    - (1) "It was like my early 20s when I was still figuring out a lot of shit and like, I don't know. I had been a teenage edge-lord. I was hating on furries. That sort of thing. Like, ok this is weird. What kind of loser would be into it? Then I realized that kind of loser was me [Laughter]. I have since I have mellowed the fuck out on a lot of stuff including furries. They pay porn artists really well. God bless that community."
    - (2) I'm a part of the furry community.
    - (3) I use erotic hypnosis to get my furry fantasies satisfied, by being turned into my fursona.
- r) **Worst Erotic Hypnosis Experience**
  - i) **Definition:** The participant talks about the worst erotic hypnosis experience they've had and/or what made it the worst experience.
    - (1) I think like in the sense that I thought they would have agency, I should not have, uh, you know just assumed they have agency. And… and that was probably the worst experience I had with it.
    - (2) Like migraine level, burning in my head pain. So he decided to test and try that out with his partner on me, and I failed, and it was the worst experience of my life.
- s) **Amnesia Play, Memory Play**
  - i) **Definition:** The participant talks about hypnosis play which may be centered around memory or amnesia play, perhaps where they are unable to remember what happened while having been hypnotized.
    - (1) I told them that when they awoke from this state, they wouldn't have any recollection of it.
    - (2) I've been able to have amnesia in a lot of sessions with my owner is uh, a massive wall in my erotic hypnosis experiences. Because it's a level of trust that I never experienced so, like, how come I don't remember a word that you said just a few seconds ago? [Laughs].
    - (3) ...but she's been having more and more spontaneous amnesia during trance which has been like really, really hot for me
- t) **Barriers and Reservations to Play**
  - i) **Definition:** The participant talks about any barriers or reservations they may have when it comes to how they feel about or participating in hypnosis play.
    - (1) Um, I'm slightly hesitant to play with those who are almost too willing.
    - (2) But because you may not be aware of it at the beginning and because I have my own mental challenges, I'm a bit hesitant.

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(3) I get a little hesitant with it mostly because I understand there's a metaphor to tell people whenever it comes to any type of extreme hypnosis, it's like sticking your hand in a basket full of scalpels to get the lollipop at the center

u) Text-based hypnosis

    i) Definition: The participant references engaging in hypnosis play or hypnosis roleplay via text, such as texting on a cell phone or text chatting via an app or browser or web forum.

v) Transformation Play

    i) Definition: The participant references playing with themes involving transformation, such as being turned or turning others into a Robot, himbo, bimbo, vampire, pet play, animal play, pup play, dumb jock or other type of being.

        (1) NOTE: If the participant mentions transformation involving gender, such as bimbofication, himbofication, or dumb jock transformations, CROSS-CODE it into the gender play category

        (2) NOTE: If the participant mentions transformation into an animal (i.e. pup) CROSS-CODE it into humiliation, dehumanization, objectification, and degradation

w) Types of Inductions

    i) Definition: The participant mentions a particular type of induction, and/or compares and contrasts between induction methods.

        (1) I used an Elman induction

        (2) I hate progressive muscle relaxation inductions.

        (3) I used an eye-fixation Induction, where I stare at their eyes and avoid blinking to make them feel a sense of eye-heaviness.

        (4) I like to do pattern-interrupt inductions

        (5) I like to rely on hypnotic spirals or other visual stimuli to take someone under

        (6) I prefer kinesthetic inductions

        (7) I rely binaurals to people under

        (8) With overly analytical subjects, confusion inductions work best.

        (9) The seven-plus-or-minus-two induction is a favorite of mine.

        (10) I tend to do fractionation with my subjects, involving bringing them in and out of trance over and over again to deepen their level of trance.

        (11) Instant handshake inductions are common

        (12) Narrative visualization inductions work well with creative people.

        (13) Ericksonian, covert and conversational inductions are becoming more common.

    ii) NOTE: If they talk about using a script, then also CROSS-CODE into "induction scripts"

x) Self-hypnosis

i)   **Definition:** The participant talks about hypnosis play in which they hypnotize themselves, rather than being hypnotized by or hypnotizing another person.
(1) I was looking for hypnosis resources to do, self hypnosis for pain management,
(2) I start to like read up on self hypnosis guided meditation Zen and Tantra
(3) Gooninator is a… in my experience, a self hypnosis thing. I type out the things I want to pop up and get some pictures that I would like

17) **Drugs and Mind-altering Substances**
a) **Definition:** The participant mentions, makes and analogy to, or compares and contrasts with drugs or other mind-altering substances, such as ecstasy, alcohol, or hallucinogens.
i)   **NOTE:** If their reference to drugs is about consent also CROSS-CODE into consent.

18) **Managing family life, parenting actual children**
a) **Definition:** The participant mentions thoughts, emotions, or behaviors related to the participant or others managing family life or caring for children, such as caring for an elderly relative, struggling to attend events because of parenting responsibilities, or wondering if their child will turn out to be kinky as well.
i)   NOTE: If the participant is specifically talking about coming out to family, reactions from family to their erotic hypnosis interests, or any other experiences related to disclosure.

19) **Hypnotic Skill**
a) **Definition:** The participant discusses levels of hypnotic skill, the skills involved in hypnosis, or other processes related to education and hypnosis.
b) **Learning to do hypnosis**
i)   **Definition:** The participant discusses methods used to learn to do hypnosis, the acquisition of hypnotic skill, or practicing hypnosis to improve one's skill as a hypnotist and/or subject.
ii) mentoring, being mentored, or mentoring others to improve hypnotic skill.
c) **Skilled Hypnotist or Subject**
i)   **Definition:** Participant describes themselves or others as being talented, experienced and proficient with hypnosis, or otherwise demonstrating knowledge and/or ability related to hypnosis.
(1) So I found somebody - it was actually two people, jackpot really. Two really great hypnotists that - that I can - that I work with and that I feel really comfortable with.
(2) He has such a good voice for taking people under.
d) **Unskilled, New or Novice Hypnotist or Subject**
i)   **Definition:** Participant describes themselves or others as being a novice, untalented, inexperienced or unskilled hypnotist.
(1) Because like, there are two kinds of bad hypnotists that I really dislike, and are really bad. One is the bad hypnotist that only wants

to fap. ... but the other issue is like the people who are really good hypnotists and want to do shit stuff.

    e) Failing to Go Under or Take Someone Under Hypnosis
        i)   Definition: The participant discusses attempting to go under hypnosis themselves or attempting to take someone else under hypnosis, but failing to do so, or doing so unsuccessfully.

20) Reality or Validity of Hypnosis
    a) Definition: The participant talks about whether hypnosis real or not, the nature of what hypnosis is (i.e., an altered state, etc.), or speculates about whether what they have experienced was really hypnosis or not.
    b) NOTE: If the participant is talking about people or society in general doubting hypnosis exists, also CROSS-CODE into societal stigma
    c) Placebo-like validity
        i)   Definition: Participant describes hypnosis as effective only if you believe in it or want to be hypnotized, or makes a reference or analogy to the placebo effect.
    d) Faking being under
        i)   Definition: participant discusses a hypnosis subject feigning being under control of their tist
                (1) I worry about it a lot, because I'm the 'tist, and especially online, because I'm sure there are guys faking it, you know.
                (2) "he came up in the server a couple weeks later and was like, "All I get is fakers." And people were like, "What do you mean?" And he was like, uh, "Fake women, say — uh, faking trance.""

21) Stigma
    a) Definition: participant mentions the judgement of erotic hypnosis as stigmatized, evaluated, judged harshly, "taboo", morally wrong, disgusting, a sin, or mentally disordered.
        **i)   **"A lot of these things are taboo as you know…because of it being taboo it also is exciting."
        **ii)   **"...there's also the idea within the fetish community they explore boundaries and look at things that are taboo and forbidden topics"
        **iii)   **" I felt like I was doing something that I really shouldn't because I didn't really wanna tell anyone about my interests. I felt like it was very taboo. Uh, especially with, uh, the way that I was raised. I felt like it was so horribly evil to tell anyone"
        iv)   NOTE: If this is about differences in stigma between countries, CROSS-CODE it into the national categories it is appropriate for.
    b) Self-pathologization
        i)   Definition: The participant describes either in the past or currently stigmatizing themselves, conceptualizing their erotic hypnosis interest as a disorder, disease, sin, addiction, or other form of self-pathologization
    c) Broad societal stigma
        i)   Definition: The participant describes general stigma towards erotic hypnosis from society at large, or in general, rather than from a specific identifiable source.

d) Stigma From Credit Card Companies
   i) Definition: Participant mentions experience in which credit card companies have imposed barriers out of judgement for erotic hypnosis.
      (1) "Credit card companies didn't want to support anything- I think it was 'non-consensual'? or you know, 'abusive'?"
      (2) "it's because the credit card companies like won't, you know,-- aren't okay with that content and everything"
      (3) "I kind of assume it had to do with credit card processors and how they really do not like such content, um, which I don't fully understand."

e) Stigma From BDSM Community
   i) Definition: Participant mentions experiencing stigma from the greater BDSM community concerning the practice of erotic hypnosis.
      (1) "in the streaming, people from the BDSM community has—have a lot of prejudice around hypnosis."
      (2) "it feels like very single time the kink community as whole becomes more accepting of erotic hypnosis, somebody somewhere comes out that they've been abusing somebody or that they've been doing these awful things and not only is it awful that those things are happening in the first place, but it causes that damage to the reputation of erotic hypnosis"

f) Employment Stigma
   i) Definition: Participant references job loss, employment discrimination, or being stigmatized or having to conceal at the workplace due to stigma around erotic hypnosis.
      (1) NOTE: This will also likely be CROSS-CODED into Job Loss under Occupations as well.

g) Religious Stigma around hypnosis
   i) **Definition:** participant mentions existence or stigma from religious institutions concerning the practice of erotic hypnosis
      (1) "I think my parents would definitely be in the it's the source of all evil part my parents are pretty religious so I think that that would definitely be a hard conversation if they found out cause when you look at things like religion the concept of mind control is not too far off and this is something that some people in those communities happen to believe"
      (2) NOTE: CROSS-CODE with religious stigma under religion

h) Family Stigma
   i) **Definition:** participant shares an experience in which one's family holds negative or stigmatized attitudes concerning erotic hypnosis
      (1) "My parents are so conservative they don't really understand so many things in the real world. So, this is, this is just like one small thing in the entire pile of things that they really don't understand"

i) Rejecting, Resisting, or Challenging Stigma

      i)   **Definition:** The participant talks about overcoming stigma, challenging it, or resisting it in some way, such as talking about accepting oneself as a hypnokinkster or not caring what others think about their kink interests.

22) **Covid, Covid-19**
    a)   **Definition:** The participant mentions covid, covid-19, quarantine, or mentions the pandemic
      i)   Covid-19 has actually been great for the erotic hypnosis community.

23) **Non-hypnosis-related Sex**
    a)   **Societally Conventional Sex, Vanilla, Anal, Oral, Handjob**
      i)   **Definition:** The participant describes vanilla sex, vanilla people, or sex behaviors that are deemed as conventional within their cultural context, such as oral sex, anal sex, or vaginal sex unless there's some other very strong kink context present
          (1) So, when I heard that it was like [stutters] there's a doctor talking about vanilla sex saying exactly kinky hypno kinksters do [both giggle] so I would say that the orgasm is on the brain.
    b)   **Kinky, or fetishistic sex, without erotic hypnosis**
      i)   **Definition:** the participant mentions sexual intercourse performed without the supplementation of erotic hypnosis content/materials, but with the presence of kink or fetish or BDSM activities or materials.
          (1) "Other than my necktie— suit and tie fetish—it was sex to me and that was the sort of what I thought about when masturbating or um looking at pictures of men in suits and ties— which I had a whole box full. Um, and so that to me was sex.

24) **Hypnosis as Primary Kink vs Tool to Explore**
    a)   **Definition:** The participant discusses (likely in response to the direct community-submitted question asked to all except gay men in the sample) whether erotic hypnosis is a participant's primary kink or whether erotic hypnosis is used to augment or experiment with existing kinks.
      i)   "rubber is something that I'm interested in, so if I were to meet up with someone who had a similar kink...well the hypnosis, it [would be] an absolute joy for both of us."
      ii)   I'm primarily into BDSM. In fact I don't do anything with erotic hypno that isn't related to BDSM.
    b)   **Hypnosis is Primarily a Tool for Exploring Other Kinks**
      i)   **Definition:** The participant indicates the erotic hypnosis is, for them, primarily a tool for exploring other kink interests.
    c)   **Hypnosis is Primary Kink**
      i)   **Definition:** The participant indicates the erotic hypnosis is, for them, their primary, or only, fetish or kink interest.
    d)   **Both/Neither a Tool nor a Primary Kink**
      i)   **Definition:** The participant provides a more complicated or nuanced answer indicating that it is both or neither a primary kink, and/nor a tool for other kinks, such as the idea that erotic hypnosis is a multi-modal kink.

25) **Response to Question of How has the Interview Been**

a) **Definition:** The participant responds directly to the question of how the experience of this interview has been (First question in final portion of the interview)
   i) It's been great. Um, being able to talk about everything. I am really curious to see how things turn out.
   ii) Yeah, it's interesting. Kinda fun to think about my history.
   iii) It's been wonderful to open up and talk about things that normally wouldn't do even among our fellow hypnotists because there's casual conversation and there's a formal interview where you're asking questions and probing and different things that just wouldn't come up in the back and forth

26) **Best Erotic Hypnosis Experience**
   a) **Definition:** The participant describes their best experience or most satisfying experience with erotic hypnosis, often in response to the explicit question probing for their best experience.
   i) NOTE: If the participant discusses a very positive experience because they feel they can't choose a best experience, code any experiences they include in response to the question about their best experience here, even if there is more than one.

27) **Message for the World**
   a) **Definition:** The participant responds directly to the question of what message they would want to send to the whole world (the second to last question in most of the interviews
   i) Sam: If you could send out one message to the whole world for them to know about erotic hypnosis what would you want them to know? Participant: Umm, I don't know, it's very generic but just be the idea that it's just a very natural state and its basically similar to meditation and it's really not anything magical or fantastical.
   ii) It's real but it's not as real as you think.
   iii) I would tell them to find out how fun it can be and what you can do with BDSM and hypnosis.
   iv) **NOTE:** Sam started asking this question after doing about ⅓ of the interviews, so it might not be present in early interviews

28) **Answer To Question Has Participant Changed as a Person Since Discovering Erotic Hypnosis**
   a) **Definition:** The participant responds that they have changed as a person to the question of whether they have changed as a person since discovering erotic hypnosis, or spontaneously expresses that they have changed as a result of erotic hypnosis
   i) "I'm over the fear of success, especially at the gym, and in relationships too- including fetish and hypnotism. I'm more willing to try anything, you know, especially fetish and hypnosis. Um, because it's-it's building- I've had good experiences, and then a little more kinky- still a good experience- and then it just keeps opening the next door, you know."
   ii) "...there's a lot of growth there, you know I mean, I think I started out when I was like, 18 and now I'm 31, so there's like the normal progression

of like maturity. And as I said like I think I take less risks now but I think the risks I take are more considered and more kind of well negotiated. I think having been part of an in person hypnosis community is like one of the best things that ever happened because it really was... I might actually cry at this part, the first time I came to MindQuake."

  iii) "I've gotten a lot more outgoing, I would say. I meet up with a lot of people. I go out for dinner, events, parties. Before I never went to bars and stuff and now I go to munches."

  iv) CROSS-CODE with confidence if it's about confidence etc.

29) **Fetish Clang**

 a) **Definition:** The participant references a bundle of startling, confusing, alienating, distracting, and/or strange experiences associated with being a sexual fetishist in the presence of one's specific fetish interest while in a non-sexual context, often in the presence of children, non-fetishists, or in a context not intended to be fetishistic

  i) I saw a stage hypnosis show at the local county and I felt so weird. I couldn't believe they were doing this in front of kids.

  ii) I was so freaked out knowing I was going to have to show Incredibles 2 to kids one day.

  iii) I was like, how are they even doing this in public? This feels like such a sexual thing to me, but no one else saw it that way.

30) **Answer to if Hypnosis has Caused any Problems or Challenges**

 a) **Definition:** The participant indicates their answer to the question of whether they have experienced any problems or challenges as a result of their interest in hypnosis.