

COMPLAINT NUMBER	19/075
COMPLAINANT	M Honeychurch
ADVERTISER	Hypnosisworx
ADVERTISEMENT	Hypnosisworx website
DATE OF MEETING	21 March 2019
OUTCOME	Settled

Advertisement: The website advertisement for Hypnosisworx website said: "...Hypnotherapy may be very effective in bringing about a change (Depression and Anxiety)... Hypnosis, combined with a carefully worded therapy, is very effective in alleviating the symptoms of Depression and Anxiety.

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complainant, M Honeychurch, said: The website for Sheryl Murray's Hypnotherapy service (<http://www.hypnosisworx.co.nz/>) makes therapeutic claims:

"Hypnotherapy may be very effective in bringing about a change.
Depression & Anxiety (see below)

...

Sleep issues - Insomnia
Menopause - irritability / sleeplessness & related issues
Unwanted Habits (bed wetting, nail biting, hair pulling, stuttering etc)
Quit Smoking (see below)
Addictions - Alcohol / Drug and other addictions
Weight Loss - Virtual Gastric Band & Individual Plans (see below)
Eating Disorders - children and adults
Sugar Cravings (see below)
Reduce Alcohol intake (see below)

...

Pain Control (surgery, illness, dentistry, chronic pain etc)"

"Hypnosis, combined with a carefully worded therapy, is very effective in alleviating the symptoms of Depression and Anxiety"

None of these claims have been backed up with evidence to support them, and they are claims about the advertiser's ability to treat serious medical conditions - the kinds of conditions that the Medicines Act places restrictions on.

This advert therefore breaches Principle 2 of the ASA's Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code, as these claims appear to not be truthful.

Rule 2(a) has been breached, as these claims have not been substantiated, and likely were not substantiated at the time they were made.

Principle 2 has been breached, as it's socially irresponsible to make claims about being able to treat serious health conditions such as depression, anxiety and addiction.

The relevant provisions were Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code - Principle 2, Rule 2(a).

The Chair noted the Complainants concerns the website advertisement made therapeutic claims which couldn't be substantiated.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser made changes to the website, after receiving the complaint, removing references which were of concern.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in amending the advertisement, the Chair said that it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board. The Chair ruled that the matter was settled.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **Settled**

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 days of receipt of this decision.