SESSION 1 - COACHING/THERAPY

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Claire McDermott	Feasibility study for a community based intervention for individuals with severe CFS/ME
Thora Rain	Amygdala hijack

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Guy Whitmore	A pilot study to explore the impact of the Swish Pattern on self-efficacy when driving
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The Role of NLP Coaching in Recovery from Substance Misuse Disorders

Author: Rabiya McKeverne

In Dr. Gray's view, it is useful to view addiction as over-learnt and over-valued behaviour (2005). Behaviours related to addiction are considered to satiate a deeper positive intention (Bandler and Grinder, 1975). From the conception of NLP, Bandler and Grinder reasoned that if an ultimate set of (new) criteria can be established, an opportunity exists to 'out-framing' a problem thereby resolving it (Bandler and Grinder, 1979).

The Stage Model of Change coincides with the NLP view: *wanting* the new health behaviour is far more important than *not wanting* the problem behaviour (Prochaska, 1994). This original NLP premise - 'out-framing' problem behaviour in substance misuse disorders was the inspiration of the Brooklyn Program (Gray, 2008) which to date, is the only formal study based on applied NLP in addiction therapy.

Within the Brooklyn Program, a twelve weeks, group-program, Dr Gray elegantly applied three NLP techniques; the *well-formed outcome frame, anchoring* and *sub-modality techniques*. Results were very positive: 30% of participants where abstinent one year following the end of treatment. Additionally, participants reported positive affect, self-efficacy and general satisfaction.

Other NLP techniques frequently discussed for addiction treatment include C*ompulsion blow-out* to resolve cravings (Andreas & Andreas, 1989); the *six - step reframe* (Bandler & Grinder, 1982) which enlists the unconscious mind to dialogue with the 'part' responsible for the problematic (drug-using) behaviour, so as to generate more useful alternatives that acknowledge the original positive intent of this behaviour. The evolved version of *six-step reframe*, *core transformations* (Andreas and Andreas, 1994), has the added benefit of enabling the individual to experience a deep sense of self.

The author proposed that by training a number of key-workers to NLP practitioner level, many more techniques than those described above, would be at the practitioner's disposal. This study sought to examine 1:1 NLP coaching with each client. It aimed to determine if NLP had a positive impact on the recovery of addicts **and** to explore *how* NLP coaching contributed to recovery. Undertaking research in a real world setting, a group of 15 participants (each using a variety of different substances at different stages of recovery) were exposed to a *quasi*-experimental conditions: participants underwent a pre-test of comprehensive quantitative measures (to derive baseline), then NLP-coaching and subsequent post-testing.

Self-esteem, anxiety and depression and overall health showed a statistically significant difference ($P \leq 0.05$) in pre- and post NLP-coaching scores. Most participants showed a decrease in drug use and an increase in control over use. Qualitative data was collected from focus group sessions and post reflective journals of NLP practitioners alongside semi-structured interviews with six of the 15 participants. These qualitative data were subject to a grounded theory analysis. The categories that *emerged* from the data were **'practitioner's competence'** influencing the following dimensions of motivation: **'envisioning future'**, **'utility of NLP in everyday context'** and **'deep sense of self.'** These dimensions serve to **'increase self-efficacy'** which was akin to a "core" category for its importance to all other categories.

Quantitatively, all constructs' trends supported qualitative findings - results from quantitative constructs were integrated with these key categories to view how they contribute to self-efficacy for this client group. The qualitative findings for 'utility of NLP in everyday context', 'envisioning future' and improved 'self-efficacy' indicates that NLP techniques (as opposed to coaching per se) are assisting change. Moreover, because of self-efficacy improvements in particular, one can conclude that NLP-coaching could be particularly useful for relapse-prevention and maintenance. These findings are consistent with widely recognised model of relapse process by Martlatt et al, (1985) and I-Change Model (2012) which both emphasize the role of self-efficacy in maintaining behavioural change. Additional research with a larger sample and control group is warranted.

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Feasibility study for a community based intervention for individuals with severe CFS/ME.

Clare McDermott, Sarah Frossell, Dr Selwyn Richards, Prof George Lewith, Prof Paul Little, Prof Diane Cox, Dr Geraldine Leydon, Dr Caroline Eyles.

Background

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME (CFS/ME) is characterised by debilitating fatigue, pain and other symptoms. Severe CFS/ME can lead to patients becoming housebound or bedbound.[1] There is little published research on this patient group.

Method

Design Feasibility and acceptability study of a community based intervention for adults with severe CFS/ME, with qualitative and quantitative evaluation. Design based on the Medical Research Council Guidelines for evaluating complex interventions.[2]

Setting: Domiciliary care delivered by multi-disciplinary teams based at specialist NHS CFS/ME services.

Participants

20 patients diagnosed with CFS/ME [Centers for Disease Control (1994) criteria] [3], who are severely affected [Cox & Findley (1998) criteria].[4]

Intervention :

Recovery strategies based on the Neuro-Linguistic Programming concept of 'modelling success', adapted for use in severe CFS/ME through in-depth Patient and Public Involvement development work conducted over two years. The intervention includes a range of NLP techniques, delivered through audio-recordings, direct therapist contact and social contact via peer recovery support group.

One year active intervention + one year support and follow-up.

Primary measure

Clinical Global Impression of Change

Secondary outcome measures include

- Electronic activity and sleep measurement
- Patient reported outcome measures on fatigue, pain, physical function, anxiety, depression, self-efficacy and quality of life.
- Therapist completed outcome measures on physical function.

RESULTS

This study is currently recruiting patients in Dorset and Oxford. Results will be available in 2016.

The study is funded by the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) and has been peer reviewed by the National School of Primary Care Research.

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Amygdala Hijack – getting the brain back online

Thora Rain

Purpose

To demonstrate how the use of a First Aid Kit for Feelings supports NLP work and how understanding the current interdisciplinary context in areas of psychology, psychiatry and neuroscience informs and enhances that work.

Background

When in a heightened state of fear or pain clients disconnect from their resourceful self, Daniel Goleman refers to this as Amygdala hijack[1]. Action becomes limited to the flight, fight or freeze response, which can be destructive. John Leach observes '…during a threatening situation working memory does not work; or at least it does not work as well as one would hope'[2]. In that moment, anchoring[3] a single response enables them to regain access to their more resourceful self.

The anchor is simple: fear/anxiety/pain triggers reaching for the First Aid Kit for Feelings. Rapidly deepening understanding of how neurology works, in particular the role of the amygdala and related neural structures, sheds light on how this highjacking of cognitive functions of the reptilian and limbic system happens[4],[5]. The First Aid Kit creates the bridge to what gets the rest of the brain back online.

Design/methodology/approach

The conceptual framework for the First Aid Kit for Feelings is informed by contemporary thinking and research in areas of: survival psychology[6], attachment theory[7], mentalisation[8], neuroscience and NLP[9],[10]. The paper draws on over two thousand hours of clinical work.

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Researching towards a trans-disciplinarian approach to embodying conscious choice and awakening self-authorship in the client.

Mark Shraga

Researching strategic processes for developing conscious choice within the client and testing for examples of heightened experiences of actualization emerging and anchoring over the course of six 'Neuro-Somatic' Coaching (NSC) sessions.

An emergent methodology, NSC is an embodied approach utilizing exercises targeted at the conscious/cognitive with NLP and The Alexander Technique for the somatic/unconscious, along with elements of Aikido, and Symbolic Modeling.

Recording where this approach is effective and where it can be developed in a journal of the coaching process, applying Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to the researchers own written experiences and metaphors relating to the clients' journeys; reflections on clients shall be coded in different colors.

The researcher will identify any patterns, themes and shifts in significance emerging from the participant's journals over course of the coaching sessions. Distinctions made in the Subject/Object Interview process developed by Lahey, L et al, (1988) will serve as a frame for highlighting significant shifts in the participants potential journey to Self Authorship or beyond.

A quantitative experiment will operate alongside the qualitative analysis, acting as an indicative positivist test of the research aims, based on the six experimental group participants that shall receive coaching and six control group 'non coaching' participants who will be filmed giving their presentations to an audience of 13 people from 2 sides: frontal to count head down and from the side to assess posture.

One presentation shall be given before the coaching sessions and one after the sessions are completed. Instances of the presenters' head being down are counted during the presentation, and for how long the head is down during each instance of it being down. The audience shall have a questionnaire gauging their experience of each presentation. The control group will be observed in the same way.

The researcher hypothesizes that the independent variable i.e. the instances of head down, and duration of head down, will decrease after the coaching sessions during the second presentation. Correlation is expected with the dependant variable i.e. audience experience, having improved when contrasted against results from the first presentation. The researcher predicts that whilst there should not be significant differences between the control group (CG) and the experimental group (EG) at the 1st data point, the 2nd data point should show a significant difference in the data observed from the EG when contrasted with the data from the CG as per the general hypothesis of decreased head down in EG at data point 2 and increased positivity in audience response in EG at data point 2 with no significant shift in CG, or perhaps a decrease in CG from data point 1.

The final results of the qualitative research and the quantitative research will be reviewed for indications of direction for further research towards a trans-disciplinarian approach, that can provide systemic-holistic strategies beyond the existing disciplines themselves, towards embodying conscious choice and awakening Self Authorship in the client.

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A pilot study to explore the impact of the Swish Pattern on self-efficacy when driving
Guy Whitmore

Purpose

This pilot study worked with a group of six individuals to test the hypothesis that the Swish Pattern intervention may be able to influence self-efficacy in motorists when driving.

Reason

Little research exists on drivers who suffer anxiety, however it is a common issue suffered by many drivers. Anecdotally the media has reported that a survey carried out in Spain in 2011 found that one third of licence holders were scared of driving in given situations (Daily Telegraph, January 16, 2013).

This pilot investigated the possibility that the Swish Pattern may be used to enhance drivers' sense of self-efficacy. The construct of perceived self-efficacy reflects an optimistic self belief (Schwarzer 1992), which is the belief that one can perform novel or difficult tasks, or cope with adversity – key factors in creating safe, confident drivers.

Swish pattern

The swish pattern is a neuro-linguistic linguistic programming technique designed to promote rapid, sensory-based change that refocuses people's negatively focussed thinking (Andreas 1986; Bandler 1985).

It has been used successfully to resolve explosive violence (Masters et alia 1991) and anxiety conditions (Andreas and Andreas 1992). In 1991, Masters, Rawlins, Rawlins and Weidner reported: “metaphorically the swish directionality the brain towards a desired self-image using both conscious and unconscious resources”.

The main benefit of the Swish Pattern is it enables people to deal with the unforeseen issues of the future as well as the concern at hand (Andreas & Andreas, 1989).

Research was carried out by Gerald A Juhnke, Kenneth M Coll, Michael F Sunich and Ronda R Kent into the effectiveness of using the swish pattern as part of the counselling process for couples who survive a family member's suicide or para-suicide (Using a Modified Neuro-linguistic Programming Swish Pattern With Couple Para-suicide and Suicide Survivors, 2008).

The authors concluded that the swish pattern could be “especially helpful” in helping the survivors where they were open to guided visualisation. However added they would not use the pattern where clients presented severe psychopathology such as major depression or panic attacks.

Pilot methodology

Two groups were used in the trial: one group which underwent a swish pattern intervention to help motorists deal with anxiety while driving, and another 'control group' who underwent NLP, that did not include the Swish Pattern.

Each of the participants had two sessions. Before the sessions begin they were assessed using the Generalised Self Efficacy Scale – GSE - (Schwarzer & Jerusalem 1995). Participants were then assessed again after they had undergone both of their sessions, and a month after the second session.

Design

As stated above, assessments were carried out using the Generalised Self Efficacy Scale – GSE – (Schwarzer & Jerusalem 1995).

This is a ten item scale using a four point Likert scale ranging from (1) to not true at all to (4) which is exactly true.

The scale has been used world-wide and its strength is that it can be used in a broad range of applications. Luszczynska et al (2005) reported the GSE had high reliability, stability and construct validity.

As the GSE is a general measure, it is necessary to add items to cover the particular content of the survey, as described by Schwarzer and Fuchs, 1996. Therefore, for this pilot, the wording of the GSE will be tailored so that it is specific to driving related self-efficacy.

While this will mean it is not a validated GSE, the GSE is general measure and has been tailored in the past measure specific contents, such as the Health-Specific self efficacy Scales (Schwarzer & Renner 2000), the amended GSE will be a robust measure for the pilot.

Interviews were held alongside participants taking the GSE test, to give a more detailed understanding of the impacts of NLP, and in particular, the Swish Pattern on driving related issues, as well as an understanding of how easily those participants who used the technique found it.

Participants

Those involved in the study were drivers who see themselves as having low levels of control when behind the wheel, low self belief and a negative perception of ability in challenging or difficult situations.

Individuals were recruited via adverts in the local media, and by working with local driving instructors. As far as possible, those in the group had similar backgrounds (age, gender and ethnicity).

All of the participants were interviewed prior to the pilot, to screen for severe depression or panic attacks, and ensure they are open to guided visualisation. Anyone with severe depression or panic attacks will not be included in the pilot.

Results

The differences in the score pre intervention and post intervention for those who received NLP, and the differences in these scores to those of the control group, was used to point to whether the swish pattern helped develop a belief of self-efficacy. This could also suggest the need for a larger study into swish pattern and self efficacy.

A null hypothesis would show there is no impact caused by the swish pattern intervention on driver's feeling of self efficacy.

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'Neuro-Coaching' – A Facilitative Approach to 'Aha!' Experiences and Neuroplastic Change?

Angus I McLeod

Continuing studies and co-work in the areas of facilitative coaching and neuro-science are producing hopeful signs of linkages between certain coaching skills and neurological states that may create neuroplastic change in the brain. Evidence here, at the very least, shows that certain coaching-skills create observable changes in the coachee. A model for the significance of these changes is presented.

Rapport

Mirror-neurons in the brain are stimulated when we are in rapport. These neurons trigger the release of the hormone (and neuro-modulator) ocytocin. Oxytocin improves trust (Kosfeld et al., 2005). Hence, rapport in the coaching relationship further increases trust (due to oxytocin release). Ocytocin also suppresses the fear-anxiety centre (the amygdala) and starts biochemical changes that lead to 'socially reinforced learning and empathy' (Hurlemann et al, 2010). In effect, rapport may be an ideal psychological state for learning.

As NLP facilitative coaching is predicated upon rapport, reported research suggests that we may see a significant change in coachee-states, including trust and empathy. We can also expect that rapport may be improved by graceful mirroring activities (matching) by the coach. Provided the coaching journey has consistent, repeated experiences, with positive outcomes, the coachee should have increasing trust in the coach (McLeod 2007).

Traditional practitioner-based measures of coaching best-practice are based upon observable skills of the coach as used by the author, the ICF., AC., Michael Hall and others. However, the efficacy of facilitative coaching may best be measured by actual change in the coachee? Our research team have observed two extremes of coachee-attention,viz:

1. Highly external focus on the coach and coaching space and,

2. Highly internal processing/experiencing states, or actual trance.

A Model of Observables of Coachee States

The author has set out four arbitrary levels of state based upon actual observables in coachee behavior. These behavioural characteristics may be useful for facilitative coaches in order to map and follow the needs of the coachee. The four levels of state proposed (McLeod, 2011) are:

1. Intellectualizing Spontaneously

2. Intellectual Accessing

3. Deeper Level Processing – Self-reflective experiencing

4. Deeper Level Processing with pauses of more than 2 seconds (sometimes many minutes).

In research, we have already established forty coaching skills that are very effective in moving a coachee into Levels 3 & 4 and a sub-set of these forty skills that are very useful in maintaining these deeper learning states.

Typical outcomes that follow episodes at Level 4 include: new meaning, new understanding and high energy & motivation. In more extreme cases, highly significant 'Aha!' moments may result from these deeper levels of experiencing and learning; a coachee may become very animated, gratified (smiling & self-confident) and obviously excited.

In some people such experiences lead to immediate and sustainable success over the longer

term. In another person, a period of convincing (via test and re-test) may be needed, before the learning is embedded and sustainable.

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Developing and Validating a Questionnaire to assess brain preferences (head, heart and gut) in decision making: mBraining in practice

Dr Suzanne Henwood
Grant Soosalu

This paper outlines the processes in designing and validating a questionnaire which will be used by coaches to assess brain preferences to guide the coaching process.

Background

mBraining is a new field, which has arisen out of neuroscience findings, is supported by research in embodied cognition and has been supplemented by Action Research through 2010-2013 which accepts that there are now three identified 'brains' or complex adaptive neural networks in the body which each have their own primary function. mBraining promotes a coaching approach (mBIT Coaching) which facilitates access to, communication with, and alignment of the three brains to enable more effective practice in a range of areas.

Methodology

A survey was designed on survey monkey, which has then undergone various forms of validity testing from content and face validity to construct and factor analysis. The initial survey had 54 core items, resulting in 300 responders being required for construct and factor analysis.

Statistics

Principal Component Factor Analysis was used to assess the factors and items.

Results

The first line analysis has shown that there are 6 factors which will be included in the final survey (two factors from each brain).

Conclusion

The survey has successfully demonstrated 6 core factors, enabling the number of assessment items to be reduced in size, and offering confidence that the instrument can effectively demonstrate preferences across the three brains within the context of decision making.

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Creating evidence based practice in NLP courses

Dr Graham Dexter and Dr Janice Dexter

To be certified as competent in most `technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988), such as coaching, teaching, mentoring (Stober, D & Grant, A., 2006), students must demonstrate competence with real live people outside of a classroom. We wanted to explore the role of training in `licensed to practise' NLP to produce evidence rather than belief based practice (Sackett et al, 1996). We decided to research the effectiveness of a Master Practitioner course more rigorously than through assessment and exit questionnaire.

We constructed a pilot study measuring self-reported personal construct changes relating to the main elements of the course (Kelly, 1955) and reflexive comments from delegates two months after the course. Alongside execution of a modelling project in a context of significant value to them, innovatively, 'live' clients engaged in the assessed `breakthrough session'. These clients were interviewed immediately following the session, and followed up two months later.

The results suggest that significant construct change occurred in consistent areas regarding the value of NLP and skill levels; that some constructs relating to particular elements remain stable; that being assessed in *live* practice produces higher levels of commitment and competence from delegates than working within the group: and that sustained change for clients can occur from one 'NLP breakthrough session'.

We tentatively suggest that the innovative methodology enriched our delegates' experience and demonstrated their ability to work to ethical standards of competence with members of the public, creating theoretically informed contributions to the emergent body of knowledge of NLP as evidence rather than belief based.

Method

We adopted `new paradigm' principles (Reason & Rowan, 1981) to research a Master Practitioner NLP Course, in the spirit of human inquiry. Our broad methodology generated grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), suiting the exploratory nature of the research, and the notion of epistemology. We chose our *methods* to create a bricolage, an `emergent construction', to shed light on the research question (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991).

Specifically:

1. Delegate assessment pre and post course personal construct grids (Kelly,1955). Kelly's constructivist principles are appropriate to measure changes in the notion of structured internal maps.
2. Tutor *and* peer assessment of a live `breakthrough' session at the end of the course, using consistent assessment criteria. The presence of two assessors provides further triangulation (Denzin, 1970) to support plausible outcomes: an added benefit may be that peers learn more about their own standards and performance through being involved in reflective assessment (Cranton, 2006)
3. Feedback from `live' clients, immediately and two months later.
4. Reflexive comments from Master Practitioners 8 weeks after completion.

Findings

1. All delegates changed in constructs of confidence and usefulness of NLP approaches.
2. Tutor and peer assessment aligned with client assessment of impact.
3. The inclusion of `live' clients' gave delegates `reasoned motivation' (Knowles, 1990) to work considerably harder than they report they would otherwise have done.
4. Change for the clients was sustainable.

Discussion

Our findings suggest questions and possibilities about how we might develop NLP *training* to a more *educative* model which supports transformational learning (Cranton, 2006) and evidences competence *outside* the learning environment. They also suggest limitations and next phase of investigation.

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The Impact of adopting a Stress Reduction Technique and Mental Imagery Skills on the Self-efficacy in learning of adults with poor literacy. June 2013

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The purpose of the research project was to establish what impact, if any, learning both a stress reduction technique and mental imagery skills would have on the self-efficacy in learning of adults with poor literacy skills.

The underpinning theories were derived from the concepts of self-efficacy, as defined in social cognitivism, and role of working and long term memory from Information Processing learning theories, meta-cognition and NLP. Previous research on mental imagery and its role in education and the effect of stress on attention, learning, memory and recall were also used to support the hypothesis as well as the research on the NLP Spelling Strategy. The literature review was derived from the education, neuroscience, psychology of learning and social science arenas.

The mixed method qualitative research project was carried out with a small sample of six volunteers who were at that time attending an adult literacy service and were specifically looking to improve their spelling. The objective was to measure any external changes in spelling performance and also investigate any changes in their internal perceptions of themselves as learners using a self-assessment questionnaire which was administered at the start and then again at the end of the project. A semi-structured interview was also used in conjunction with the questionnaire to flesh out the data with more depth and meaning.

The participants were taught how to reduce stress levels when learning using the grounding technique as described in EnergeticNLP© (developed by Art Giser) and how to develop and control their mental imagery skills according the methods in the Empowering Learning (developed by Olive Hickmott). The participants attended a two hour class once a week for four weeks.

The findings from the research indicated that:

- *Metacognition*: having an understanding of the mind and how it processes and stores information gave the students greater awareness of their own internal learning strategies and where they needed to change them to be more affective.
- *Stress reduction*: using the grounding technique students were able to remain calmer and more focused when learning.
- *Mental imagery*: prior to the course the participants had either never or only rarely used mental imagery for spelling. Following the course they had developed their mental imagery skills sufficiently to spell more successfully.
- *Literacy skills*: although not directly addressed the participants felt that other skills such as reading and writing had improved.
- *Confidence in learning*: all participants felt that they now knew that they could learn as they knew more about how to learn.
- *General self-efficacy*: for some of the participants the growth in confidence in learning transferred in an increase in general confidence and self-efficacy across contexts.

The limitations of the research was the sample size and the lack of existing benchmarks of the literacy levels and a lack of any form of external assessments used to measure improvements in literacy levels by the adult literacy organisation.

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