

Neuro Linguistic Programming as a Treatment Option for Eating Disorders

© Dr Peta Stapleton and Terri Sheldon 2008

The Lakeside Rooms, Suite 9 North Building,
34-36 Glenferrie Dr, Robina QLD 4226.

Tel 07 55 620 466. Web: www.slimminds.com

Therapy and treatment involving the subconscious mind has been shown to result in permanent and painless change. Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) has mostly been promoted in the motivational markets and business world, but is now being used clinically. It utilises the subconscious mind to create change. Research suggests that the subconscious constitutes 90% of our ability and the conscious mind only 10%.

In NLP the unconscious mind represents those physiological and cognitive processes that occur outside of conscious awareness. Physiological processes include respiration, hormonal response etc. Some examples of unconscious cognitive processes include dreaming, ideomotor responses, and learned unconscious competences such as letter recognition, word recognition, and grammar processing involved in the skill of reading.

NLP is a new field, and is focused on our patterns of behaviour. Patterns include not only our observable actions in the world, but also our thinking processes and the organisation of our states of mind. This includes our emotions and how we use our attention with our senses. Neuro-Linguistic Programmers are interested in how *highly skilled people do what they do*. Notice the attention to "how" rather than "why". It is not focused on removing symptoms alone; but rather on assisting someone to achieve excellence.

In relation to eating disorders, NLP is focused on assisting a sufferer to not only heal from disordered eating thoughts and behaviours but to achieve a state of excellence in that healing. This means that they don't just remove the symptoms and teach a sufferer how to 'cope' around food/body image, but rather they would teach a sufferer how to function as a non-disordered eating person would around food/body image. When the subconscious mind is engaged, recovery occurs at a deeper level and recovery at this level results in new behaviours that a sufferer *does not have to think about*. The new behaviours and emotions occur naturally, as though the eating disorder was never there.

Further Reading:

Bandler, R., Grinder, J., (1979). *Frogs into Princes*. Moab, Utah: Real People Press.

Bandler, R. Andreas, C., Andreas, S. (Ed's). (1985). *Using Your Brain for a Change; Neuro-Linguistic Programming*. Moab, Utah: Real People Press.

Dr Peta Stapleton and Terri Sheldon are two well known Australian psychologists with 35 years of combined clinical experience. They have developed the SlimMinds Program that teaches the latest effective psychological techniques to break out of that YoYo failure cycle that so often occurs with traditional weight loss programs. See www.slimminds.com