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The Impact of Neuro-Linguistic Programming on critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and purposeful decision-making in young adults with borderline personality and anxiety disorders: A Case Study

Dr. Laura Ion

Associate Member within American Psychological Association, Graduate Member within the British Psychological Society, Romania

Abstract

The present case study examines the impact of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) on critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and purposeful decision-making in two female undergraduate students diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (BPD) and anxiety disorder. Participant A.D. (19 years old), diagnosed with BPD and currently engaged in cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) as a primary intervention, and Participant M.P. (20 years old), diagnosed with an anxiety disorder with prior CBT experience, required and participated in a structured NLP intervention implemented as a complementary approach.

The NLP intervention was conducted for a period of 10 weeks, consisting of one weekly session lasting one hour. The NLP techniques used, included Anchoring, Reframing, Future Pacing and the Meta Model for linguistic and cognitive restructuring. The results were assessed using qualitative methods, semi-structured interviews with the purpose to explore changes in reflective thinking, emotional regulation, and purposeful decision-making.

A thematic analysis of participant responses was performed and that revealed significant improvements in cognitive flexibility, including increased ability to challenge using on target questions automatic thoughts, developing metacognition ability and reduce cognitive distortions. Participants also demonstrated enhanced emotional awareness and self-regulation, and a higher capacity for intentional, purposeful decision-making in both academic and social contexts. Clinically, relevant changes were observed in the specific areas, including reduced avoidance and procrastinated behaviors, improved tolerance of anxiety-provoking situations or events, and decreased reactivity to maladaptive thought patterns leading self-harm and withdrawal.

These findings suggest that NLP, particularly through the application of the Meta Model, Reframing, Anchoring and Future Pacing, may serve as a valuable adjunctive intervention for



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enhancing cognitive-emotional functioning and purposeful decision-making in young adults with BPD and anxiety disorders. Further research with larger samples as well as quantitative methods for assessing the outcomes is recommended to establish the efficacy and generalizability of these results.

Keywords: Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Borderline Personality Disorder, Anxiety Disorder, Critical Thinking, Emotional Intelligence, Decision-Making