The Effect of Integrated-Neuro-Linguistic Programming as Supplementary Intervention for Individuals with Depressive Symptoms

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Introduction: Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), developed by Bandler and Grinder, is a globally recognized therapeutic approach used for emotional healing, though its clinical efficacy in treating depression remains debated. Despite high depression rates among young adults in the Philippines, particularly in Western Visayas, local research on NLP is scarce. Addressing this gap, this study investigates the effectiveness of Integrated-NLP (I-NLP) as a supplementary intervention for depressive symptoms among female clients in a highly urbanized city in Central Philippines, aiming to provide essential baseline data for the local mental health landscape.

Methodology: Utilizing an A-B Single Case–Multiple-Subject Comparative Design, this study examined the impact of an Integrated-NLP intervention on depressive symptoms across baseline, treatment, and post-intervention phases. The participants were three purposively selected, unmedicated females (ages 20–30) with trauma histories: Liza (29), diagnosed with Persistent Depressive Disorder rooted in childhood trauma; Ana (21), suffering from low self-worth due to a toxic home environment; and Fe (27), presenting with Major Depressive Disorder and a history of abuse and self-harm.

Results: The Integrated-NLP intervention effectively reduced depressive symptoms across all seven psychological factors in the three female participants, with notable individual variations underscoring the need for personalized approaches. The greatest improvements were seen in negative self-concept and expectations, while all six negative automatic thought factors decreased by over 50%. These results highlight the impact of cognitive dysfunction in depression and the effectiveness of I-NLP, particularly hypnotherapy and Timeline Therapy® in addressing negative emotions and limiting beliefs.

Conclusion: This study found that Integrated Neuro-Linguistic Programming (I-NLP) effectively reduced depressive symptoms in three female participants. Improvements were seen in negative thought patterns, self-esteem, and personal maladjustment. I-NLP supported cognitive restructuring, emotional regulation, and empowerment. The consistent results suggest its potential as a viable, client-centered therapy, especially for women. Integrating hypnotherapy and Timeline Therapy® proved helpful in addressing deep-seated emotions and limiting beliefs, highlighting I-NLP's value as a complementary intervention.

Practical Value: This study highlights Integrated-NLP as a promising intervention for depression, showing significant reductions in symptoms, especially in negative self-concept and automatic thoughts. Techniques like hypnotherapy and Timeline Therapy® proved effective in addressing cognitive dysfunction and negative emotions. Individual response differences emphasize the value of combining standardized and personalized approaches, offering useful insights for mental health practitioners aiming to improve depression treatment.

Directions for Future Research: Given the limited Philippine-based research on NLP in clinical settings, this pilot study offers a preliminary exploration of its potential. While not conclusive, it points to future research directions, including longitudinal studies, broader clinical applications, increased awareness within psychology, and exploring NLP for other mental health issues like anxiety and trauma. Refining the Integrated-NLP approach with personalized techniques may further enhance its effectiveness.

Keywords: neuro-linguistic programming; depressive symptoms, supplementary intervention, single case experimental, Philippines

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