

## Case Study: Meta Model of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) as an effective mode of therapy for Moderate Depression

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** The present case study looks at the effectiveness of Meta Model of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) for therapeutic treatment of Clinical Depression. **Method:** The present case-study is a qualitative research on 18 years old teenager, clinically diagnosed with Moderate Depression using Beck's Depression Inventory-II, and received Neuro Linguistic Programming Sessions thrice a week over a duration of 2 months (18 sessions - 60 minutes each). Evaluation was done by comparing the scores of Becks Depression Inventory-II at the time of joining with progress at 2 months of therapeutic treatment. Comparisons were made for Depressed Mood, Loss of interest & Enjoyment, increased fatigability, performance in Work related activities and Social Engagements, and Worries. Techniques of Meta Model were used for delivering therapeutic treatment. **Results:** The BDI-II score recorded at the time of joining was 29 and at the end of 18th session, the scores dipped down to 10. Hence, result evidenced that consistent application and training of techniques of Meta Model (Neuro Linguistic Programming) can be used as an effective treatment of moderate depression.

**Keywords:** Meta Model, Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), Depression

Everything starts in the mind as a thought. Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) reveals the pattern or syntax of how we arrange our thoughts; a combination of what we see, hear, feel, smell and taste. Therefore, there ought to be a way of unpacking, studying and reproducing an improved version of this methodology to achieve whatever results we desire to have. Bandler and Grinder, sort of broke the methodology into simple, understandable pieces (chunks) of information which form the basis of the wonderfully dynamic process of Neuro-Linguistic Programming. It is like reprogramming and rebooting a computer (our mind). (Abraham A, 2014)

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Use of language to communicate is a special case of the use of language to represent. Communication is, in this way of thinking, the representation to others of our representation to ourselves. In other words, we use language to represent our experience – this is a private process. We then use language to represent our representation of our experience – a social process (Bandler. R, Grinder., 1975)

**Meta model** in NLP, is a powerful linguistic pattern used to uncover quality information, a set of questions designed to find the deep structure, the clarification of the meaning in a person's communication without making any assumptions regarding the communication. The purpose of Meta Model is to be meticulous, to ask the kind of questions that will help us find out how somebody's problem works so that we can help alter just the process of problem, and not just everything else in the person's life. It is a tool to get us closer access to someone's real experience that they code into speech. It helps to explore the underlying, full sensory representation (the deep structure) of the thoughts and utterances (the surface structure) made after information had been filtered out by the process of deletion, distortion, and generalization.

Grinder and Bandler observed that in moving from the deep structure to the surface structure, people unconsciously adopted three key processes of Generalization, Distortion and Deletion as they speak. This **GDD effect** enables us all to explain our experiences in words to others without going into long details and risk losing attention. At a deep level of thought we have complete knowledge of what we wish to communicate to someone else and operate at an unconscious level. Yet, to be efficient in our verbal or written communication, we unconsciously delete, generalise or distort our innate thoughts based on our beliefs and values, time available, decisions, strategies and what we want others to hear. What is finally said or written (surface structure) is only a small subset of the original thought, often ambiguous or confusing and may lead to miscommunication (Abraham A, 2014). GDD are known as Meta Milton violations and it is important to challenge them to make any sense and clear obstacle on the path of success and happiness.

*“Using Meta Milton questions, you help the listener bring their behaviour up into consciousness, make it move a little slower, then start slicing away the nonsense” (Abraham A, 2014)*

### **METHODOLOGY**

**Aim:** The present case study looks at the effectiveness of Meta Model of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) for therapeutic treatment of Clinical Depression.

The subject (X) in the present case study is a 18 year old girl, clinically diagnosed with Moderate Depression. Life Coach – NLP Sessions were provided thrice in a week for a duration of two months(18 hours for two months). X failed grade 11 (science – medical stream) which led to the following symptoms:

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1. Depressed mood
2. Negative Thoughts
3. Loss of interest and enjoyment
4. Reduced energy – increased fatigability and diminished activity
5. Reduced concentration and attention
6. Reduced self esteem and self confidence
7. Ideas of guilt and unworthiness
8. Bleak and pessimistic views of the future
9. Disturbed sleep

As the intensity of symptoms increased, X left school and pursued her education through an “open learning school” and family ties became uncordial. She exhibited a strong rejection towards her father and brother as they opposed her decision of resuming her studies from an open learning school, hence, family arguments became an everyday routine. She exhibited a casual and careless attitude towards her studies.

Progress was monitored using Beck’s Depression Inventory and comparisons were made for Depressed Mood, Loss of interest & Enjoyment, increased fatigability, performance in Work related activities and Social Engagements, and Worries in the following format:

Dimension	Question number from BDI-II	Pre-Scores	Post-Scores
Depressed Mood	1, 3, 7, 10,		
Loss of Interest & Enjoyment	11, 12,		
Increased Fatigability	16, 17		
Performance in work related activities and Social Engagements	15		
Worries	20		

The pre – assessment score at BDI-II was 29 indicating Moderate Depression.

Over the duration of 18 sessions (viz., 2 months) following Meta Model techniques of Neuro Linguistic Programming were used:

1. *Simple Deletions*: A Simple Deletion is one with missing or insufficient information. Questions are asked to recover lost information.  
Example:  
Statement: “I am mad”  
Questions asked: “So what are you mad about?”
2. *Unspecified Referential Index*: The person or object to which the statement refers is not clear or unspecified.

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Example:

Comment: “They judged me”

Questions asked: “Who judged you”, “what exactly were they judging”, “when you say ‘they’, who all comes in it” and so on!

3. *Comparative deletions*: A comparison is made and it is unclear as to what is being compared. The sentence will contain words such as: good, better, worst, more, less, most, least.

Example:

Statement: “I am not good in it”

Questions asked: “Whom are you comparing yourself with” or “what situation are you comparing yourself with (the concerned person” and so on!

4. *Nominalizations*: A process turns into a “thing”.

Example:

Comment: “The communication in my family is poor”

Questions asked: “So how do you want the communication to happen”, “how do you want to communicate with other family members” and so on!

5. *Model Operators of Possibility or necessity*: Model operators of necessity include words such as should, shouldn't, must, must not, have to, need to, it is necessary. Model operators of possibility include words such as can, can't, won't, will, may, may not, possible, impossible. the key is to challenge the limitation.

Example:

Statement: “I don't think that is possible”

Questions: “What makes you think this is not possible”, “what do you think will happen if this happens” and so on.

6. *Distortions*: In this case, the speaker claims to know what another person believes, feels, or thinks.

Example:

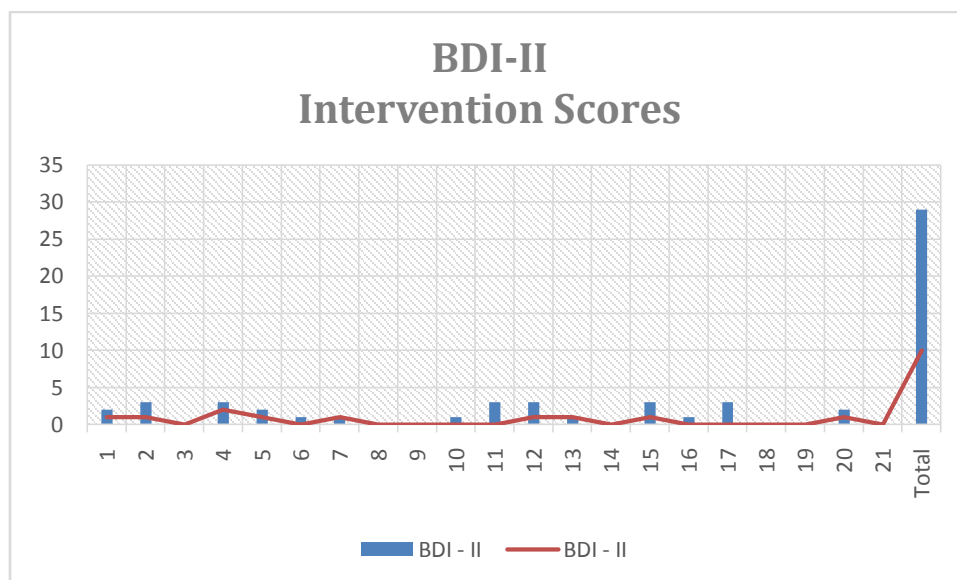
Comment: “My brother can never talk politely with me”

Questions: “How specifically can you be sure that your brother can never talk politely with you”

## RESULTS

The BDI-II score recorded at the time of joining was 29 depicting Moderate Depression and at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> session, the scores dipped down to 10 interpreted as “these ups and downs are considered normal”. Hence, result evidenced that consistent application and training of techniques of Meta Model (Neuro Linguistic Programming) can be used as an effective treatment of moderate depression.

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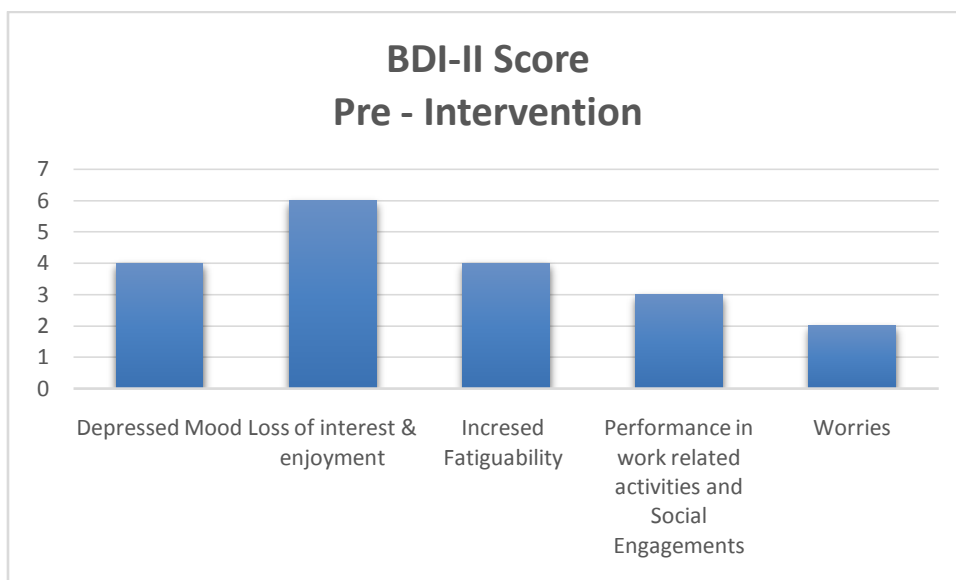
**Table 1 represents a comparative Pre Intervention and Post Intervention scores of Beck’s Depression Inventory.**

Neuro Linguistic Programming helped X. to reach to her own solutions by encouraging her to find ways of overcoming her present challenges. Meta Model techniques, helped X understand that the way one views the world affects how one operates in the world, and that it is necessary to change the thoughts and behaviour patterns that have not proven beneficial in the past and that only serve to block one’s healing and success. Following was evidently observed in X by the end of 18<sup>th</sup> session of consistent use of NLP Sessions:

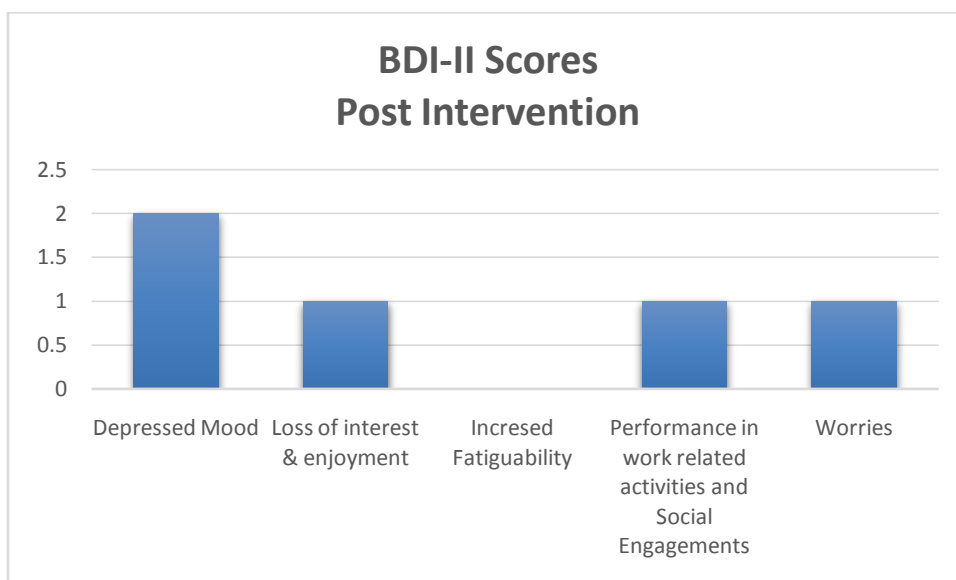
1. Better mood
2. Limited Negative Thoughts
3. Initiated interest in various activities and showed a sense of enjoyment in them
4. Increased energy – reduced fatigability and increased participation in activities
5. Increased concentration and attention
6. Reduced self esteem and self confidence
7. No Ideas of guilt or unworthiness
8. Started exhibiting a positive approach towards future
9. Normal & Regular sleep
10. X started accepting her father’s and brother’s presence in her surrounding, hence a remarkable decrease in family disagreements was evident,
11. She became sincere towards her studies,
12. Started interacting with other people in her social surroundings.

Comparisons were made for Depressed Mood, Loss of interest & Enjoyment, increased fatigability, performance in Work related activities and Social Engagements, and Worries by categorizing the question or item type in Beck’s Depression Inventory.

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**Table 2: Pre-Intervention Scores depicting Depressed Mood, Loss of Interest and Enjoyment, Increased Fatiguability, Performance in work related activities and social engagements and worries.**



**Table 3: Post-Intervention Scores depicting Depressed Mood, Loss of Interest and Enjoyment, Increased Fatiguability, Performance in work related activities and social engagements and worries.**

Results elicits that Meta Model of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) as an effective mode of psychotherapy for treating Moderate Depression.

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### CONCLUSION

Words have power stronger than a nuclear weapon. When these words are used bluntly they become a reason of unpleasant experiences. It is investigator's analogy that only through the art of meaningful communication or dialogue even the greatest suffering can be surpassed. "People respond to events based on their internal pictures, sounds and feelings. They also collect these experiences into groups or categories that are labelled with words. The Meta Model is a method for helping someone go from the information – poor word maps back to the specific sensory-based experiences they are based on. Is it here in the information-rich specific experiences that useful changes can be made that will result in changes in behaviour." Thus, using simple strategies like simple deletion, distortion and so on have majorly contributed in meaningful changes and regulation in depressed mood hence uplifting her life state.

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### *Conflict of Interest*

The authors colorfully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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