Dr Richard Shawyer is a certified NLP practitioner, Time Line Therapy™ practitioner and hypnotherapist. NLP is used to help our patients experience a greater wholeness and well-being in their lives. We use it to help people find effective solutions to a diverse range of problems. As a result, our patients are able to: overcome smoking habits; achieve weight goals; control problem drinking; overcome drug addictions; get rid of life long phobias; find relief from anxiety, depression, panic attacks, OCD, obsessive behaviours, nightmares or post traumatic stress disorder; control anger; improve their self-esteem and confidence; resolve grief; stop bad habits; and many other positive outcomes besides.

The application of NLP involves a very individualized approach. The process will generally involve between 3 and 8 hours of personalised one-on-one therapy as a series of one hour sessions which includes a detailed history to clarify the desired outcomes, tasks to be completed at home and individual NLP procedures to enable you to achieve those outcomes. Due to the way Medicare funds long appointments we are unable to bulk bill this service. So patients who wish to achieve wholeness and well-being in this way will be asked to pay a single co-payment covering the whole therapy before beginning treatment.

A Brief Introduction To NLP

"You can't experience delicious food by just reading a menu and you can't experience NLP by reading about it. It is a huge domain, and cannot be fully described in a few paragraphs. So this description will only give you a taste.

If someone was good at skiing and you wanted to ski like them, what would you do? You could find out what they did that made them a good skier and then do the things they did. If you could compare what they did with what a bad skier did then you would know what to do and what not to do, you would have a good model of skiing.

You could do the same for driving skills, selling skills, in fact just about any skills. This process of finding out what someone does, and then passing on those skills to someone else, is called modelling, and NLP is a very accurate way of modelling.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming, usually shortened to NLP, explores the relationships between how we think (neuro), how we communicate (linguistic) and our patterns of behaviour and emotion (programmes). Neuro-Linguistic Programming Using language in a systematic and pre-determined fashion to achieved a planned result or outcome.

The challenge in explaining what NLP is, is that it is a whole field of study and not one single thing. It is both an epistemology, in that it studies how we know what we know and a

methodology for creating practical descriptions of how we function as human beings. The purpose of NLP is to study, describe and transfer models of human excellence. (Modelling).

It was originally developed as a modelling technique developed by Richard Bandler and Frank Pucelik in the early 1970s. The core of NLP is ‘modelling’ – which is the practice of recognising someone’s excellence, finding out how they achieve that excellence, then working at replicating those results for yourself. NLP came out of studying the excellence of a number of effective psychotherapists including reputedly the world’s greatest hypnotherapist Milton Erickson, Fritz Perls, Frank Farrelly and Virginia Satir (see History of NLP).

Exercises To Change Behaviour

It uses a very effective set of exercises to help people change their behaviour (with applications as diverse as helping someone rid themselves of a phobia to acquiring skills in using computers).

Above all NLP is concerned with how people do things, not why they do them. If someone is having difficulty learning a computer the NLP approach is "what are they doing, specifically, to make it difficult to learn?" rather than "why aren't they learning?" If they have a phobia, NLP is not interested in why they have a phobia – only how they do the phobia, in order to find a way so that they are no longer able to do it. The result of this is to define the structure of their behaviour (eg they see a spider, a voice says oh no a spider, and then they panic) which allows them to change the structure and get a better result (they see a spider, a voice says it is only a little harmless spider, and they think no more about it).

These exercises involve different visual and language exercises to help an individual change the structure of their experience.

People who are having problems speaking in public often go through a sequence of mental actions (each individual may go through a different sequence but each individual is consistent):

1. see the audience
2. imagine them staring at me
3. hear them criticising me
4. feel tense and have butterflies in the stomach
5. call this sensation "fear"

NLP has many exercises to help the individual re-write this little script, so that it might then go:

1. see the audience
2. imagine them smiling at me
3. hear them giving me words of encouragement
4. feel tense and have butterflies in the stomach
5. call this sensation "excitement"

Provided that this sequence is appropriate to the needs and beliefs of the individual it is likely to have a much more resourceful result than running the first script.

Other NLP exercises can help change limiting beliefs (from "I can't" to "I can"), stop the cycle of negative emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, and hurt from past experience affecting feelings and behaviour in the present and future, change future expectations (from "this interview is going to be horrible" to "this interview might be challenging"), remove phobias or other problem behaviours and so on.

NLP-related techniques are pragmatically-based – modelling things that work already – rather than on hypotheses and theories about what "ought" to work. To put it another way, the NLP-related techniques are primarily based on codified models of behaviour that successful people naturally use to achieve their outstanding results in various situations and contexts as observed by the modeller(s). NLP modelling is about "What has worked for someone and might work for others". The resultant applications have enabled many people to make positive changes in their lives in a large of variety of contexts. It is not however a panacea. There is no assumption in regard to NLP-related techniques that every technique will work every time in every situation. This of course makes it incredibly hard to measure in ways apart from the anecdotal evidence of thousands of contented clients how have seen their emotional and behavioural problems disappear by the application of NLP techniques. This partly explains the paucity of scientific studies on NLP to date.

The History Of NLP

Here' is a brief and unofficial history of what is now called NLP put together by Master NLP Practitioner Mark Anthony:

In 1972 a young man named Richard Bandler enrolled at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Richard majored in mathematics and computer science but changed to study his other interest - behavioural science.

Richard ran various workshops and study groups on Gestalt Therapy and other forms of therapy. In his fourth year he had the chance to present his own seminar as part of his degree course and this was supervised by John Grinder (pronounced 'Grinnder') who was working to become a

professor. Grinder was a linguist who had studied the work of Noam Chomsky on the theory of linguistics.

Bandler and Grinder continued to work together on their shared interest in Gestalt Therapy. What was to become NLP grew out of the extrovert personalities of these two men. Their aim was simply to find out what worked, what skills and techniques would help someone overcome a problem. The idea of the sympathetic therapist was dropped in favour of the "if it works, use it - if it doesn't work, try something else" approach.

Bandler continued to run his increasingly popular workshops on therapies and then started working with Grinder to model his (Bandlers') own skills. Their work on modelling (see Modelling A Style in the NLP In Training section) covered Fritz Perls, the originator of Gestalt Therapy and Vaginia Satir the renowned family therapist.

The models they developed of Perls' and Satirs' work lead to the idea of parts. Many people will use phrases such as "part of me agrees with you and part of me disagrees", these 'parts' can be a useful phenomena and tool to work with in therapy (and later in training, coaching and so on).

A group of people formed around Bandler and Grinder and together they explored new techniques and new skills and started to develop a collection of approaches and models, a collection still without a name. This collection was drawn from their playing with techniques from all sorts of disciplines, finding what worked and what didn't work.

One of the models they developed was called the Meta Model. They would role play having a problem and the person playing the role of the therapist would practice specific question forms to discover the structure of the persons 'problem'.

The Meta Model became such a powerful and useful tool for helping people solve problems that it was written up and published around the end of 1974 in the first "NLP" book The Structure Of Magic. The idea behind the title was that highly effective communicators seem to be able to almost work magic, the book describes the specifics of what they did to create that magic, it looked at the 'structure' of the magic.

The group continued to work with other approaches, asking interesting questions, such as "when someone says 'I see what you mean' are the actually making pictures?" Thus a structural correlation was uncovered between the language someone used and what they were thinking.

It was around this time that the term Neuro-Linguistic Programming was thought up. (I still haven't found a definitive explanation as to who thought up the name and how they thought of it - although there have been all sorts of interesting stories!)

A neighbour of Bandler and Grinder was the English philosopher Gregory Bateson. He suggested that they study the world renowned hypnotherapist Milton H Erickson. So Bandler and Grinder modelled Erickson, they thought about how he used metaphors and stories to induce trance and to help people remove life long phobias and overcome the effects of trauma.

This lead to the development of the Milton Model, now a key component of NLP, the method of using language to influence people. By now NLP comprised the language patterns of the Meta Model, therapeutic change techniques, modelling skills, the trance methods of the Milton Model and others.

Bandler and Grinder continued to run NLP workshops and other members of the group continued to apply NLP in new areas. Robert Dilts applied NLP to the area of health, David Gordon developed the use of metaphor as a specific and teachable language skill, Tad James developed the use of the TimeLine™.

From these workshops another book was written - Frogs Into Princes was the first NLP book for the layman. It described in non-technical language the skills and uses of NLP.

NLP has continued to evolve ever since and is now practised in nearly every country in the world. It is applied to sales, training, coaching, therapy, management and virtually every endeavour which requires effective communication (which is to say virtually every human endeavour).