

NLP for Sports Psychology Consultants

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If you work in the field of sports psychology, you are already practicing some NLP. More than any other field, sports psychology focuses on how the mind and body function as one integrated system. NLP is based on exactly the same integration of physiology, sensory experience, and mind and the same focus on how changing any one element of experience changes performance. Here are five areas where NLP offers practical new ways for sports psychology consultants to do their best work.

1. **Congruency:** the idea that we function best when fully engaged with just one thing is common to NLP and Sports Psychology. NLP offers many techniques for getting people into their bodies and fully engaged, through their physiology and their senses, with just one thing.
2. **Clear blocks to congruency.** How do you lead clients past a bad performance or a limiting belief? NLP provides a unique set of tools for changing past (negative) learning so that people are able to use the past as a resource - not a ball and chain that keeps them stuck.
3. **Induce healthy confusion.** To get to a new level of performance, it is necessary to shake up established patterns and change what is working so that even more effective patterns can be developed. In many ways, it is harder to move from good to great than it is to move from bad to good. NLP provides coaches, mentors and psychologists with new ways to interrupt patterns to allow for new achievements.
4. **Identify and transfer resources into new areas.** Excellence requires that people continually acquire new strengths. It's possible to learn from others; it is even faster and more effective when we learn from our own success in other areas. NLP includes practices that allow people to learn from themselves: to pay attention to what is working and what has worked for them in some areas of their lives and to transfer those qualities, skills or capabilities into new areas of achievement.
5. **Change the stories that people tell themselves.** The internal voice is a powerful director: it strategizes, motivates and tells us what is possible and what is beyond our reach. NLP pays special attention to notice when the voice is useful, when it should be silenced, and what stories it should tell to promote full engagement and optimal performance.

As a sports psychology consultant, you are already working in all these areas. You are already influencing coaches, trainers and athletes to create optimal states for achieving their goals. You have considerable flexibility in using the integration of mind/body to clear up blocks and move people toward success. Like the athletes you influence, you have a system in place that supports the results you are getting now.

Like those athletes, you need to continually challenge your own presuppositions and to mindfully alter what is already working so that you can take your own work to the next level. NLP will both support what you are already doing well and introduce enough new ways of thinking and working to usefully open your work to new possibilities.