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The Supervision of NLP Therapists

WHY DISCUSS SUPERVISION?

In the early days of NLP, Bandler and Grinder studied the patterns of top therapists and refined them. From these and other sources they built “an elegant model which can be used for effective communication, personal change, accelerated learning and, of course, greater enjoyment of life” (O’Connor and Seymour 1990). Bandler and Grinder did not intend to start a new school of therapy. NLP can be used by people in any occupation and by therapists from many different theoretical backgrounds. However, as time goes on, more and more therapists want to use NLP as their main approach and become “NLP Therapists”. In some countries it has been possible for someone qualified in NLP to set up as such, while in others all psychotherapists come under some form of national legal requirement for training or licensing. Even in countries with fewer legal restrictions, a number of factors can produce pressure towards improving qualification training and creating some kind of an accreditation system (see for example Schütz 1994, Lawley 1994).

These factors vary from country to country but may include the following:

- NLP therapists want to be able to give each other mutual support and to know that others using the NLP label are operating to similar standards.
- Members of the public and the media are increasingly asking questions about therapists’ competence and about abuse of patients.

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- The medical profession appreciates that increasing numbers of people are choosing alternative therapies for good reasons. Consequently it is desirable to have recognized standards and regulation for these alternatives to drugs and physical treatment.
- Some governments want to respond to these pressures by legislation; others, like the United Kingdom, prefer voluntary regulation.

In the UK the route to official recognition which has been chosen by the ANLP is via the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP). James Lawley's article in July 1994 issue of *NLP World* describes the background of this organization, the establishment of the Psychotherapy and Counselling Section (PCS) and ANLP's achievement in gaining recognition for NLP psychotherapists.

The ANLP Psychotherapy and Counselling Section is in the process of finalizing its draft Code of Practice for supervision of NLP psychotherapists (ANLP PCS 1994a) It is following UKCP and international practice in considering that supervision, in the sense of clinical consultation, is and should be part of recognized ethical practice for psychotherapists. Yet public debate about the nature and practice of NLP supervision began to take place in the UK only after the draft was published, and practitioners attending the PCS Annual General Meeting in 1994 expressed their disquiet about some of the proposed regulations.

It is helpful, therefore, that *Rapport* and *Métaphore* have opened their columns to contributions on this subject (Beckett 1994, Turner 1994, 1995). I hope that extending this discussion into *NLP World* will widen the frame of reference still further.