



How to choose an NLP Training that is right for you?

Choice is better than no choice – except when you are presented with too many choices and have no idea what's most important! Many guides are now available to help you make this choice, but do remember there is no such thing as a totally unbiased view...

First, get clear about what it is you are looking for and what you need. What do you want to get out of training in NLP? What do you hope it will enable you to do? It's quite an investment of your time and money. Here are some quick questions to get you thinking and help you make the right decision.

1. How long does an NLP training need to be?

International requirements for the NLP Practitioner Certification usually stipulate 120 hours. Ideally this means attendance at a training lasting 18-20 days. However, many 'accelerated' or 'fast track' styles of training now offer sets of CD's and videos to cover the theory, so that the training time can be shortened accordingly. It's worth pointing out that it is exceedingly difficult to learn NLP from books, CD's and videos alone.

Because NLP is experiential, it is best learned in situations where expert feedback can be given throughout the learning process. Otherwise, present behaviours will remain unchallenged and unchanged, so less insights and less expertise will be gained. What to choose depends on what you want to do with your NLP training. If you want to gain magical expertise and be able to make amazing changes happen for others, go for the longer, more thorough training. If you just want a taster of skills and techniques, the shorter trainings will do.

Of course, other factors must be considered too. What about the quality of the tuition itself, as well as the structure of the training? How much is expected for you to do on your own? Are you highly motivated and good at self study? Would you fair better in an easy learning environment? People can pass through any training without acquiring any expertise. But it's harder to get away with that in smaller groups on longer trainings.

How much practice time will the training allow? How much coaching or assistance will be available during the learning process? Is note taking allowed?

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Does the training simply present NLP technology and leave you to work out how to use it? Or will you come out understanding the relevance and how to put it into practice immediately?

2. What value will a full certification in NLP give me?

Please note that the NLP Certification does not constitute a license to be a skilled therapist. It merely certifies that you have satisfactorily demonstrated knowledge of the NLP skills to the degree that you can now practice them. Having said that, NLP certification is now well known and respected in many professional work situations. The real value may be found in the insights you acquire, the tools you master to help you in all areas of life. Most schools honour each other's certifications, so you will also become a member of the international NLP community.

Beware of trainings that bestow several different certifications in a very short space of time. This is just a marketing ploy for those who are ignorant of the meaning of certification. It's great for those who collect certificates to decorate their walls. Unfortunately, you can now meet people who have acquired certificates all the way to NLP trainer level but who lack any demonstrable skills.

A worthwhile NLP Certification should be more than just a certificate of attendance handed out to all participants. Agreed requirements usually include an outside examiner's assessment of skill level demonstrating practical abilities, a written exam as well as on-going assessment throughout the training.

3. How do I choose the best trainer for my needs?

If at all possible, meet the trainer, attend an introductory event, or watch video footage to get a sense of their style. Is this someone you could trust? Check out a few different trainers, speak to them and compare their approaches.

There are so many NLP trainers available now, choose with care. The best trainers probably have lots of training experience as well as depth of background to draw on. They should be people who use NLP outside of the training room. Because it is now possible to become a 'Certified NLP Trainer' in a matter of weeks, you may wish to check out their background in order to avoid those who are teaching what they haven't yet assimilated themselves. How long have they been actively involved in NLP? When, where and how long did they train?

Would you hire a plumber or a car mechanic that had just finished doing a study at home course for a quick qualification? NLP works with your mind on a deep

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and profound level. Be careful who you allow to influence your thinking and feeling. Make sure it's someone you can trust.

Does the trainer have experience in the field in which you have interest? Does their approach seem compatible? What on-going training, research or study do they do? What have they published? Do they just teach or do they empower? Are they egotistical entertainers or do they care whether you learn or not? Do they take an interest in you, or just want you as a customer?

4. What should I expect to pay and what makes the difference?

Beware of companies that do not advertise their prices up front, but aim to grab you for marketing opportunities. Prices vary enormously depending on the expertise of the trainer, and how posh the venue might be. Curiously, the costs for the accelerated trainings are often higher even though the training time is less. Is this justified by having the CD's? Be sure to check whether or not there is an extra fee for full certification, as some schools add an additional fee.

Also do they offer a money back guarantee? If you arrive at your training and discover you don't like it, or the way you are treated, or the venue is depressing, ensure that you can get a refund in the first few days.

What you need to weigh up is whether price or quality is more important, with regard to who you choose as a trainer. Buying a cheap training on special offer that is conveniently short will not be equal in quality to the longer, more expensive courses. You need to find out what you are paying for. What does the training include? A manual is standard. Some trainings use video, outdoor activities, guest trainers and speakers.

You will find NLP practitioner trainings range from throw away prices as low as £900 to beyond £4800. Trainings held in expensive venues with business style extras, will be pricey. Trainings outside of London or in other countries may be less expensive. However, travel and accommodation for far away trainings must be taken into consideration. What will be a worthwhile investment of your time and money? Have you checked to see if your employer will support your learning?

5. How does the size of the training group affect quality?

Training groups vary in size from very tiny: 3 – to very large: 3000. The larger the seminar, the more likely it will be delivered in a lecture style, which usually means little practice time and much less real learning. The larger the group, the easier it is for people to hide and miss out on valuable learning. Also the larger

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the group, the bigger the need for superb organization and high quality assistants.

Do you feel more comfortable in large or small groups? Large groups can be intimidating. You may hesitate to ask questions or share observations. But they offer a wider selection of people to meet. Small groups offer more intimacy, trust and community. Your skills will develop more because you won't be able to avoid those you don't naturally feel comfortable with. How much contact do you want from the trainer? How much do you like being stretched? A general rule of thumb is that the larger the training the less rigorous the learning.

6. What about assistants and other resources?

Assistants can form an important part of the training by giving structured feedback and hands-on coaching. Ideally they should demonstrate a high level of knowledge and skill and be a good example of NLP. Find out what level of NLP experience they have, and what ratio of assistants to participants to expect. On larger trainings, the quality of the assistant team and the general organization are critical to the quality of your experience on the training. Other resources might include access to practice groups, web based support, newsletters, discounts on products, etc.

7. Where can I go for objective information about NLP?

Most NLP information tends to be biased towards one style, approach or philosophy. Here are some UK organizations to check out.

ANLP www.anlp.org

The Professional Guild of NLP www.theprofessionalguild.com

BBNLP www.bbnlp.com