

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/276
COMPLAINANT	M Honeychurch
ADVERTISER	Brett Codlin Counselling
ADVERTISEMENT	Brett Codlin Counselling, Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	11 October 2017
OUTCOME	Settled

Advertisement: The website for Brett Codlin Counselling, www.nlpcounselling.co.nz, advertises a NeuroLinguistic Programming system to assist with a range of mental and physical health conditions.

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complainant, M Honeychurch, said: Brett Codlin offers NeuroLinguistic Programming (NLP) as a treatment for many physical and mental health conditions, including addiction, anxiety, asthma, depression, eating disorders, pain relief (including healing from cancer) and PTSD.

These claims are therapeutic, and appear to be in breach of the ASA's Therapeutic and Health code. Rule 1(b) is breached, as the last statement in the above list gives the impression that NLP is effective in all cases, and that it is unfailing - the claim of being able to treat "any problem" sounds very unlikely.

Rule 1(c) is breached, as the claims above portray the unrealistic outcome that NLP are likely to help with these health conditions.

Principle 2 is breached, as these claims are likely to mislead people into seeking NLP as a treatment for addiction, anxiety, asthma, depression, eating disorders, pain relief, cancer or PTSD.

Rule 2(a) is breached as these claims have not been backed up by good quality evidence. Most of the claims on this page reference the "NLP Practitioners Manual", which is not a good source of independent evidence to back up the claims that have been made. the British Psychological Society sums the lack of evidence for NLP nicely:

"It's true that a minority of psychologists are trained in neurolinguistic programming (NLP) and advocate its use, but it is a serious error to think that NLP is grounded in scientific findings in either psychology or neuroscience. In fact the system which is usually marketed a way of achieving greater personal success was developed by two self-help gurus in the 1970s who simply made up their own psychological principles after watching psychotherapists working with their clients. NLP is full of false claims that sound scientific-ish"

<https://digest.bps.org.uk/2016/07/29/10-of-the-most-widely-believed-myths-in-psychology/>

Rule 2(f) has been breached as testimonials have been used

These testimonials have not been shown to be genuine or typical, and are likely to be misleading to consumers.

Finally, the entire "Virtual Gastric Band" page is pretty abysmal:

<http://www.nlpcounselling.co.nz/virtualgastricband.html>

The claims made on that page breach Principle 1 (irresponsible claims), Rule 1(a) (no mandatory warnings), Rule 1(b) ("a remarkable weight loss programme"), Rule 1(c) (preying

on vulnerable people), Principle 2 (the claims are not truthful, and are likely to deceive), Rule 2(a) (the claims have not been substantiated), Rule 2(c) .

The relevant provisions were Therapeutic Services Advertising Code - Principle 1; Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code - Principle 1, Principle 2, Rule 1(a), Rule 1(b), Rule 1(c), Rule 2(a), Rule 2(c);

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern that the Advertiser's website contained unsubstantiated claims about the benefits of Neurolinguistic Programming (NPL), which were misleading.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had made changes to the website, removing or amending references which were of concern. The advertiser also showed the testimonials were genuine and typical.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in amending the website, the Chair said that it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board. The Chair ruled that the matter was settled.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **Settled**