

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Management of Guilt through Timeline Therapy under Hypnosis

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ABSTRACT

Guilt is a negative emotion that is responsible for devastating psychological well-being. Managing guilt is always helpful for the better psychological well-being of humans. The current study aimed to check the effectiveness of Timeline Therapy for guilt management under hypnosis. This research will also be aimed at enhancing the psychological well-being of individuals living with guilty emotion. For this purpose, one group pretest - posttest, an experimental research design was used. A total of 20 participants living with guilt issues were recruited by using the Guilt and Shame Experience Scale (GSES), and mental health issues were assessed through Depression and Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21). An intervention plan was developed which included Timeline Therapy. Three sessions of Timeline Therapy were conducted for each participant. The paired sample t-test was run to compare the pre- and post-assessment scores of the participants after applied the "Timeline Therapy" session. The result of the study showed the highly significant positive effect of Timeline Therapy for the management of guilt. Based on the present study results, it concluded that Timeline Therapy was highly effective for the management of guilt. It was a brief and time-limited intervention plan and less costly that is very helpful in managing guilt.

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Introduction

Guilt is a powerful and pervasive emotion that can shape human behavior, influence decision-making, and affect psychological well-being. Unlike shame, which targets the global self ("I am bad"), guilt is more action-oriented and arises from the perception of having done something wrong ("I did something bad"). While guilt can motivate individuals toward reparative actions, excessive or unresolved guilt is associated with depression, anxiety, and impaired functioning (Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

Rational and Irrational Guilt: Rational guilt arises when an individual recognizes that they've violated their own moral or ethical norms, leading to passions of guilt and a desire to make amends. This type of guilt is considered healthy because it reflects an mindfulness of one's conduct and their impact on others, promoting responsible

gets and particular growth. Irrational guilt, on the other hand, occurs when an individual feels shamefaced despite not having done anything wrong or when the perceived wrongdoing is inflated. This form of guilt is frequently linked to anxiety or depressive diseases, where a person may take inordinate responsibility for events beyond their control.

Negative Emotions: Negative emotions are emotions which include Anxiety, anger, hopelessness, fear, boredom, shame, guilt, embarrassment, and sadness are different types of negative emotions. It's individualistically the effect of these emotions on individual learning and development.(Rowe & Fitness, 2018) Negative emotions affect our mental processes and narrow our minds and create hindrances in achieving goals; negative emotions also affect an individual ability. It is observed that disappointment and

anxiety are the most common negative emotions in students and teachers.(Anttila et al., 2017)

Guilt: When any individual disobeys and crosses a boundary violence in general societal rules and cultural norms when individual feel guilt. The internal mechanism of guilt is that the individual should be obeying the societal rules and cultural norms, otherwise the individual considers his/herself will be punished. Individuals who suffer from guilt issues may think obsessively regarding their.(Potter-Efron, 1988)

Guilt has both cognitive (i.e., thinking, feelings) and affective (i.e., different emotions), component, guilt is a complex part of the construct, so, guilt involves in imagined and real, moral transgression, and contributes to negative consequences which individual beliefs about their action. Individuals with guilt may feel their sense of responsibility, feelings of remorse and psychological pain are an indication of guilt experience. In guilt individuals are motivated to repair the damage they have caused and to avoid comparable moral transgressions in the future.(Luck & Luck-Sikorski, 2020)

Types of Guilt: Guilt may show in many names and forms, and it is so complex situations may like survivor guilt, sex guilt even recovery guilt, recover guilt felt when an individual has gone to recovery from any severe mental illness. Rational and irrational guilt. In the rational guilt which individuals cannot act as properly in their current environment and their emerging as an act inappropriately. Irrational guilt also called neurotic guilt which any distortion, damage, and exaggeration of an individual's behavior, lead toward more or needless guilt. Alcoholic guilt also is a form of irrational guilt in which behavior does not rally wrong because craving and could not have been avoided. (Benjamin, 2002)

Guilt is not the only risk for a period of the past, it's the way to create insecurity and anxiety as high risk for current and future humans' lives. Guilt, nostalgia or regret, a greater risk for severe mental disorders ever it resolved. So, management

of guilt is highly important for individuals' lives who suffer from guilt issues.(Curtis & Patrick, 2014)

Management of Guilt: Researches proved that for the management of guilt individuals make a range of coping strategies for relieving their stressful situation and try to overcome the negative condition they face. There exist many ways to coping the guilt, which includes CBT and others eight coping strategies, seeking social support, confrontative coping, behavioral disagreement, mental disagreement self-control, positive reappraisal.(Lee-Wingate & Corfman, 2010). An individual takes different psychotherapy for a period of one to two years for the management of their guilt. The therapist may try to manage their guilt for their batter future.(Schaefer & Wheeler, 2004) These all coping strategies includes CBT have time taking and much costly and require many therapy sessions for the recovery, but we are use Timeline Therapy under hypnosis that are less time taking and cheapest, also Timeline Therapy required minimum sessions for recovery.

Timeline Therapy: Timeline Therapy has greatly evolved in hypnosis and Timeline Therapy is a powerful therapeutic intervention and reliable procedure for change the individual's pattern of negative beliefs and facilitate reducing the painful negative emotions associated with past and future memories. Timeline Therapy some time also called a brief therapy, practical techniques produce extended long-term transformation learning and replace memories quicker with minimum discomfort to the individual. (James, 2017)

One of the researchers reported that the result of TLT in managing the negative emotions anger is 0.01 significant and maximum participant's anger is removed successfully and managed and remove their all-past anger within twenty minutes.(Bin Ahmad, 2011) As in Timeline Therapy client have to go into his subconscious mind, this can only do through hypnosis. Therefore, with hypnosis and NLP techniques, Timeline Therapy worked best in managing guilt.

Method

Research Design: The present study was based on an experimental research design. This study followed one group pre-rating and post-rating, ABA experimental research design. In the first stage “A”, pre rating of guilt and mental health issues was taken from the participant, then in the second stage “B”, Timeline Therapy intervention was used with the participants, and in the last stage “A”, post rating was taken from the participants to observe the effectiveness of the intervention. Individuals with the problem of guilt were selected to examine the effect of Timeline Therapy for the management of guilt. Pre-rating of guilt was taken, Time Line Therapy was done, and post-rating and feedback were taken from the participants.

Sample: The sample consisted of (N=20) 12 females and 8 were males out of 35 individuals having guilt. Total 35 individuals were assessed as volunteers for this study but 20 individuals assess to living with guilt than these 20 participants recruited for current research. Non-probability techniques, purposive sampling technique was used in the study. Participants were selected according to the inclusion criteria of the study.

The adults who have guilt were included in the study. Those individuals were selected who were willing to take part in the research. Individuals with any other severe psychological disorder, other physical disability, and chronic diseases were excluded from the study.

Assessment Measures: Before application of the intervention following measures were used to measure the guilt of participants. Depression, Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). To measure mental health and emotional disturbance of participants.(Brown et al., 1997)Guilt and Shame Experience Scale (GSES; Maliňáková et al., 2019). To measure the level and intensity of guilt of the participants.

Introducing Timeline Therapy: Timeline Therapy is one of the most unique and powerful

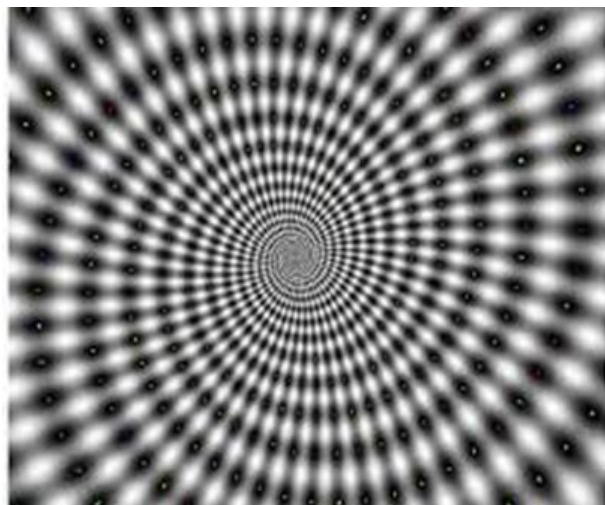
techniques which help in personal change. It also helps in eliminating negative emotions linked with past events. Timeline Therapy helps us to focus on what we learn from the past and how to use it as a resource for the future. Timeline Therapy is a very brief therapy and the results of therapy are long-lasting and the most important is that its causes minimum discomfort to the clients (Woodsmall & James, 2017).

There are different steps in Timeline Therapy for managing guilt. The first step is; elicitation of timeline, the second step is; discovering the root cause of the problem, and the last step is; deleting guilt. As literature tells the Timeline Therapy process requires the subject to go to the hypnotic stage so, they can make changes in their subconscious mind. This stage can be only achieved through hypnosis. So, Timeline Therapy was used with hypnosis to get the valuable output. The researcher informed the participants about the nature of the intervention plan which they are going to experience in the session. The researcher explained the importance to the participants that this intervention plan is very effective. The further researcher informed to participants that this intervention plan has a minimum side effect and she ensured them that they have no possible harm by this intervention technique.

Suggestibility Test: The process of suggestibility is not produced by hypnosis, but merely increased by it, and many persons exhibit a higher degree of suggestibility outside the hypnotic state than others.(Phillips, 2009) The suggestibility test was used to find out the participants' modalities that physical, emotional, and somnambulism because every human has their modality for learning.

Hypnosis Induction: Hypnosis helps to relax and become calm. Hypnosis is a state where an individual is more focused and concentrated. It helps in reaching the participant's unconscious mind in which participants are highly responsive to suggestions.(Elkins, 2013) Eye fascination a hypnotic picture was used to reach the participant's

unconscious mind and bring the participant in a state, where he /she be more responsive to suggestions, ask participant to focused on center of the picture for few seconds and they were suggested not to blink the eyes and to close the eyes if they feel tired and also suggest to that do not speak and just give the signal with index. For hypnosis induction, the eye fascination technique was used by the Kappasonian model of hypnosis.(Kappas, 1987)



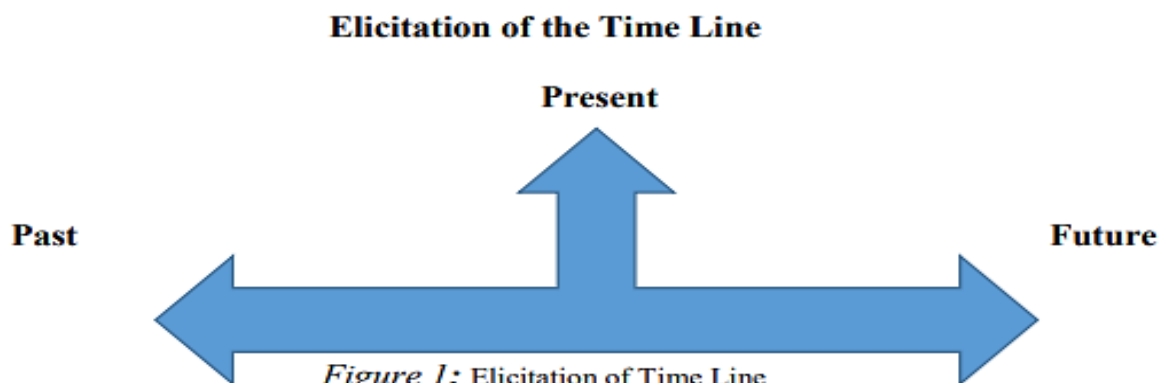
Application of Therapy: The prerequisites of therapy were followed which were: separate room, easy chair, and noise-free environment. Participants were selected according to inclusion-exclusion criteria. At the start of the session, informed consent was taken by the participants, and confidentiality was ensured to them that their information will keep confidential. After these participants were asked to fill the demographic form.

The first step of the therapy was to explain the whole procedure of the therapy to the participants and asked the participant to fill the questionnaire of Guilt and Shame Experience Scale (GSES) Maliňáková et al. (2019), to find the level of guilt of the participants and also fill the Depression, Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21), (Lovibond, S.H. & Lovibond) scale to find the level of mental health of the participants.

The second step of the therapy was hypnosis induction through the eye fascination technique. After hypnosis induction Time Line therapy was applied to the participants according to the procedure which is explained above. Then circle therapy was used to decrease the level of guilt of the participants.

3.4.5 Feedback and post rating. Feedback and post rating of Guilt and Shame Experience Scale (GSES) Maliňáková et al. (2019), and Depression, Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21), (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) was taken in follow up session after two days of therapy (Woodsmall & James, 2017).

Elicitation of Timeline Therapy: In the Timeline Therapy process, participants were first asked to elicit the Timeline of their life as a lifeline by pointing the direction that where is their past, present, and future and instructions were, to reduce your specific negative emotion, and researcher draws the timeline on the paper according to directions given by the participants for their understanding (Image 1).



Timeline for Guilt Management: The researcher asked to participant that imagine a line is drawn in front of them, which has four positions, position one, position two, position three, and position four same as a lifeline, if you imagine the line, then tell me with your finger sign. Participant imagined the line, So, then ask the participant to imagine that you are in the present state and try to float at your position number#1. position#1 is that where you are near about guilt is hidden when you reached position #1, then tell me with the signal gesture, and the researcher was give the anchor according to the participant's suggestible modality (client has reached at position #1), now float to position #2, where you are near to your guilt, (client was reached at position #2), now float to position #4, (it was an actual event state), when you have entered at position#4 then signal me with a finger(gesture), here participant feel guilt and feel extra as more as they can feel... signal (participant was uplift his index finger). The researcher was asked again and again to the participant that feels more and more guilt, the participant was at the peak level of guilt now, here researcher was give him anchoring and suggestion, and asked the participant what you had learned from this event as this learning would allow you to let go of the emotions easily and effortlessly, you learned the value of integrity. Now you are guilt-free and move to position 3, which was fifteen minutes before the event took, and ask the participant that when you have reached position #3, signal me (signal) and asked the participant where the guilt, there was no guilt and, there was no worry and no guilt here. Then participants were

asked to float down into the event position 4 and check on whether guilt was there or not. It was not there. Researcher was asked to participate to float on positions #2, and 1, where there was no guilt, the emotion of the guilt was replaced, and the learning was saved. In the end, count down and allow him to open his eyes. 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, open eyes.

Break the State: It is a sudden change in the setting of movement or speaking that changes a person's state quickly. It is very important as it serves to an individual quickly left their state behind and enter into a neutral state. This helps to reduce the residue from one state to another. It acts similar to the connection and a stepping stone. Breaking state is useful when we need to stop. It is also used to build repetition as an NLP intervention, wherever participants will learn by frequently getting into and out of a state (Shalini & Vanitha, 2019).

When the participant opens his/her eyes when quickly talk in a fresh mood instead of her problem solving, and never ask him regarding his problem and its relief, instead of this, the researcher must have done the talking another topic which has not related so far with the participant problems, afterward, the participant shows relief from her problems. For example, asked the participant, do you feel the smell of roasted meat? With salad and rice. In this way, the researcher can divert the attention of participants so that relapse chances can be reduced.

Counselling: In the counseling session, the researcher would like to give some tips to

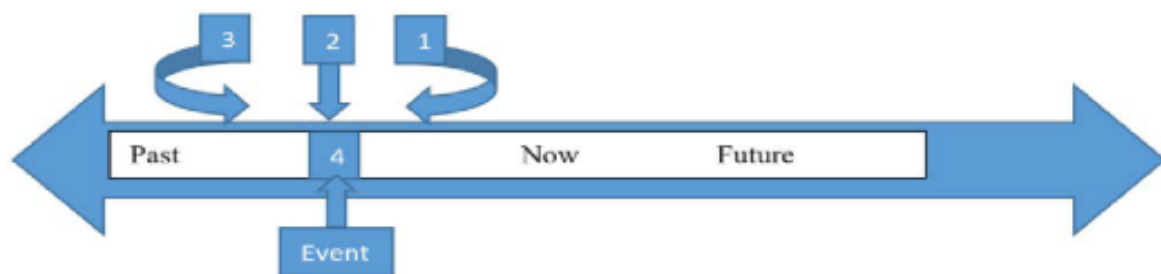


Figure 2: Time line for Guilt Management.

participants.

- Take exercise daily.
- Eat a healthy and balanced diet with 8 glasses of water,
- Take a sleep of 8 hours.
- Try to participate in religious activities, and help the participant, so that his contribution to the social setup can decrease his/her sense of guilt.

Thank you for Themselves: Suggest to the participants thanks themselves for achieving their desired state.

Session Details: This intervention method included 3 sessions for each participant and these sessions were done systematically with participants who had guilt issues. The same procedure was followed in all the sessions. The prerequisites were a separate room, an easy chair, and a noise-free environment. Participants of the study were selected on the inclusion criteria and according to the willingness of the participants. The time for each session was 40 minutes. The session was started with the general discussion in which the researcher describes the goals of the study and ensured confidentiality to participants further explained to them that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time at any stage, and they will not be pressurized and harm to be the part of the study. And complete therapy process was explained to the participants. After the informed consent, the participants' suggestibility was tested through the suggestibility test, then a demographic form was filled by the participants.

Then the participants were asked to fill the questionnaire of Guilt and Shame Experience Scale (GSES) Maliňáková et al. (2019), to find the level of guilt of the participants and also fill the Depression, Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21), (Lovibond, S.H. & Lovibond) scale to find the level of mental health issues of the participants, and asked participants that they can ask for help if they had any confusion in any item of the questionnaire researcher will explain it for you.

The next step was to create hypnosis induction through the eye fascination technique, in which participants were shown a picture and asked to focus on this. And the purpose of this technique is to distract participants and take them into a deep hypnotic trance. Then Time Line therapy was applied to the participants according to the procedure which is explained above. In the second and third sessions, the same therapy process was followed for guilt management of the participants and then the post rating and feedback from the participants was taken after the third session. The feedback of the session was positive as participants reported that their guilt level was decreased and they feel very relaxed and calm after therapy.

Ethical Consideration: Ethics were followed in all steps of the research. Prior permission for the use of questionnaires was acquired by respective authors. First, written permission was taken from the institute for data collection. The informed consent was got to the participants before administering the questionnaires. Anonymity and confidentiality of participants will be ensured. Right to withdraw from the research without seeking any permission from researchers or providing any prior explanations. Participants in this study were voluntary; all participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time at any stage. No physical and psychological pressure was given to the participants.

Results

The current study pre-assessment and post-assessment periods on guilt and mental health issues indicated significant mean differences on guilt with $t(19) = 20.6$. Results show that the mean score on guilt in pre-assessment period ($M=25.1$, $SD = 3.0$) subsequently decreased in the post-assessment period ($M = 10.3$, $SD = 1.2$). Moreover, the finding indicated significant mean differences in mental health issues with $t(19) = 7.6$. Results show that the mean score on mental health issues in pre-Assessment period ($M=19.6$, $SD = 7.1$) subsequently decreased in the post-

Assessment period ($M = 9.8$, $SD = 3.0$). Two sets of scores were significantly differences (** $p > .05$).

Table 1 showed, significant deference between pre and post rating on guilt after Timeline Therapy session

Table 1 showed the relationship between guilt and mental health, and revealed that mental health issues significantly correlated with guilt.

Table 1: Correlation between guilt and mental health (N=20)

Variables	DASS	GSES
DASS	---	.459*
GSES	--	--
<i>M</i>	19.65	25.15
<i>SD</i>	7.17	3.09

Note: *M*= mean, *SD*= Standard Deviation, DASS=Mental Health Issues, GSES= Guilt

Table 2 significantly revealed that pre and post effect of the timeline therapy with mean on DASS M = (pre 19.6 and post 7.1) and mean on GSES M = (pre 25.1 and post 3.0) with $p = .001$ which indicates the highly significant effect of the timeline therapy on guilt management.

Table 2: Paired sample t-test to compare the participants guilt and mental health before and after Timeline Therapy sessions. (N=20)

Variables	Pre-Assessment		Post-Assessment		<i>t</i> (19)	<i>P</i>	Cohens'd
	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D</i>			
DASS	19.6	7.1	9.8	3.0	7.6	.001	1.7
GSES	25.1	3.0	10.3	1.2	20.6	.001	6.4

Note: $p < .001$ ***, *M*=Mean, *SD*=Standard Deviation,

Discussion

This study was aimed at the management of guilt through Timeline Therapy under hypnosis. There are many therapeutic interventions to manage guilt, but these intervention programs are long-lasting, more costly, and time-consuming, and sometimes cause other issues. So, Timeline Therapy is more effective in managing guilt and other negative emotions, and this is a brief intervention plan and has minimum negative effects on individuals, is less costly, and less time-consuming. The main result of this research showed significant results for managing guilt

through Timeline Therapy. As previous researches supported that hypnosis techniques are effective in managing guilt, but no sufficient research has been done on guilt management through Timeline Therapy. A study was Performed a case report of dyspepsia as a Somatic Expression of guilt in which a 58-year-old woman established fatal, severe symptoms of epigastric pain, heartburn, and regurgitation that had continued for 2 years. She blamed herself and think negatively about her son's death and acknowledged the need for self-punishment. Brief treatment with metaphors and hypnosis resulted in the complete resolution of her symptoms, which did not recur during a 12-year follow-up period.(Zimmerman, 2001)

The current study reveals that the significant difference in guilt scores after introducing Timeline Therapy on adults and findings of Paired sample t-test suggested that Timeline Therapy significantly works in reducing guilt emotion in adults. And also, results have suggested the difference in guilt between pre and post-assessment.so, Timeline Therapy is more effective in managing guilt and other negative

emotions. As previous research reported, through Timeline Therapy in managing the negative emotions anger is 0.01 significant and maximum participant's anger are removed successfully and managed. NLP and TLT both techniques are responsible for replacing their anger and negative memories both techniques work effectively within. (Bin Ahmad, 2011) So, the current study reveals that Timeline Therapy is more effective in managing guilt and other negative emotions.

The present study found that there was a positive significant relationship between guilt and mental health issues that the significant difference

in mental health scores. So, guilt is a high risk for mental health, if the level of guilt become severe the mental health issue also increases, that will be the high risk for human well-being. As previous research proved that guilt is not the only risk for a period of the past, it's the way to create insecurity and anxiety as high risk for current and future humans' lives. Guilt which may consequence engages of the event of the past. Guilt, nostalgia or regret, and a heady mixture of melancholy, a greater risk for severe mental disorders ever it resolved. So, management of guilt was highly important for individuals' lives who suffer from guilt issues. (Curtis & Patrick, 2014)

As previous study reported, The Focuses of Timeline Therapy is learning what an individual can learn from those painful experiences and what planning, learning as a source for future mental wellbeing. Timeline Therapy some time also called a brief therapy, practical techniques produce extended long-term transformation learning and replace memories quicker with minimum discomfort to the individual. (James, 2017) And another study reported that coaching can benefit from the application of transformative learning theory and that individual can also learn more effectively through the coaching process. (Sammut, 2014)

Another study revealed that the emotions of guilt and shame play a significant role in socialization, and families function as mechanisms of social control, and maintain the individual's sense of personal identity. Information derived from ethnographic interviews with Taiwanese informants is used to draw inferences about these constructions. Cross-cultural comparison of guilt and shame in both American and Chinese cultures were offered. (Bedford, 2004)

Recommendations

- More population should be included from different cities and provinces to maximize the external validity of research,

- sample size should be larger than the generalization of the research.
- Multi-method approaches should be used for the likelihood of common method variance should have been reduced.

Conclusion

Based on the present study results, it concluded that Timeline Therapy was highly effective for the management of guilt. It was a brief and time-limited intervention plan and less costly that was very helpful in managing guilt with the minimum level of discomfort to the participants.

Limitations

While examining these results numerous limitations considered. The following limitations of the present study that should be kept in mind when considering the result:

- Study was limited to only one city of Pakistan.
- Primarily, the variables of present study were not manipulated in large sample quantitative design, and the conclusions of the current study are on small sample size.
- In the current study, it uses hypnosis, so the learning modality varies individual to individual, some of individuals who have auditory digital modality are not easy to induce hypnosis.
- Hypnosis works on the subconscious mind but some people who do not imagine things easily are so hard to float on past on subconscious mind.
- Hypnosis induction has some limitations such as time, place and food etc.

Implication of the Current Research

- This study helped to manage guilt through timeline therapy under hypnosis and highlighted the effect of guilt on

individuals 'life which can reduce mental health issues.

- The present research was an important effort to advance the literature on management of guilt so, this study also helps future researchers to find the effectiveness of Timeline therapy and for other psychological issues.
- It will also help us to manage the negative emotions.
- It will help us to manage the guilt within the less cost and minimum time limit.
- This study also guides and motivates people to go for brief therapies as compared to traditional therapies.
- The current study highlights the effectiveness of hypnosis, that how hypnosis and its techniques help individuals to make changes in their life.
- Current research highlights the effectiveness of Timeline therapy (TLT), one of the most important and useful techniques of Neuro Linguistic Programming for managing guilt.
- This intervention plan has no side effects, culturally and ethically acceptable. So, this research will provide a basis to manage guilt through timeline therapy under hypnosis.
- This research will give rise to the other researchers to work on such unique ideas.
- In the field of mental health Psychoeducation seems to be a promising intervention, increasing control and belief in the effectiveness of treatment, and reducing negative emotions about the disorder if one of the objectives of psychoeducation is to improve individuals' health perception. The findings of the study provide new explanations for understanding the effectiveness of psychoeducation.
- Furthermore, if there are enough evidence for a mechanism of guilt, psychologists

may actually have a lifesaving role in performing guilt management.

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