

# Conceptual Research Proposal

## Neural Narrative Reprocessing (NNR)

A Psychological Framework for Narrative-Based Emotional Regulation

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### 1. Theoretical Background

Neural Narrative Reprocessing (NNR) is a psychological framework integrating narrative psychology with emotional regulation mechanisms. The approach is theoretically grounded in two established psychological frameworks:

- **Cognitive Reappraisal Theory** (Gross, 1998), which posits that reinterpreting emotional stimuli can alter affective responses
- **Narrative Identity Theory** (McAdams, 2001), which emphasizes how life stories shape personal identity and psychological well-being

NNR combines these approaches by facilitating narrative restructuring to promote emotional regulation. The method assumes that emotional distress arises not from external events but from the internal stories the brain constructs. Through guided re-authoring of these stories, individuals can update maladaptive emotional patterns, offering a culturally sensitive, nonpharmacological therapeutic alternative for the Arab context.

### 2. Objective and Hypothesis

#### 2.1. Research Objective

To examine the short-term psychological effects of the NNR framework on emotional regulation and anxiety reduction among university students in Qatar.

#### 2.2. Research Hypothesis

*It is hypothesized that participants undergoing the NNR intervention will show a significant reduction in anxiety scores and an increase in emotional regulation compared to baseline.*

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Study Design

Experimental pre-post within-subject study. This pilot intervention will consist of three 60minute sessions focusing on narrative restructuring, emotional regulation, and integration.

#### 3.2. Participants

30–40 undergraduate students recruited from university populations.

#### 3.3. Procedure

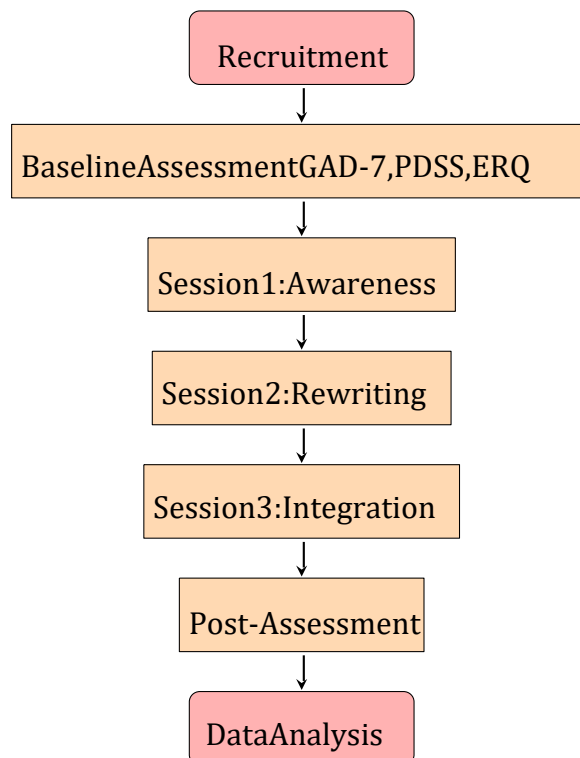


Figure 1: Study Procedure Flowchart

*Figure 1 visually represents the participant journey through the study procedure.*

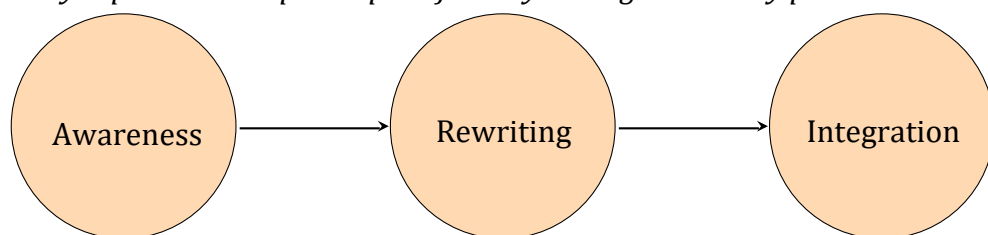


Figure 2: NNR Intervention Flow: Three-phase therapeutic process

## 4. Research Instruments

Table 1: Detailed Description of Research Measures

Instrument	Purpose	Scoring	Selection Rationale
<b>GAD-7</b>	Measure generalized anxiety severity	7 items, 0-3 scale. Total: 0-21	Gold standard for anxiety screening. Official source: <a href="https://www.phqscreeners.com">https://www.phqscreeners.com</a>
<b>PDSS</b>	Assess panic disorder severity	7 items, 0-4 scale. Total: 0-28	Specifically measures panic symptoms
<b>ERQ</b>	Evaluate emotion regulation strategies	10 items, 1-7 scale. Two subscales	Measures cognitive reappraisal and suppression. Source: Gross & John (2003)
<b>Calmness Scale</b>	Measure subjective tranquility	1-10 point scale	Developed by the research team to measure subjective tranquility after each session. This shortscale was developed by the research team to track immediate postsession relaxation levels.

### 4.1. Instrument Translation

All research instruments will undergo standardized forward-backward translation process with cultural adaptation for Arabic-speaking populations. Arabic versions of all instruments are provided as separate files.

## 5. Data Handling & Confidentiality

- Data will be stored on encrypted research storage systems accessible only to the research team.
- No personally identifiable information will be collected or shared
- Participants can withdraw anytime without consequence or penalty
- Data retention period: 5 years after study completion
- Only aggregated, anonymized results will be published

## **6. Ethical Considerations**

### **6.1. Informed Consent Process**

All participants will receive and sign detailed bilingual consent forms (Arabic/English) including:

- Study purpose and procedures
- Voluntary participation and right to withdraw without consequence
- Potential risks and benefits (minimal risk design)
- Confidentiality assurances
- Contact information for researchers and IRB

### **6.2. Ethical Safeguards**

- Non-invasive, psychological intervention only
- Emergency protocol for emotional distress
- Referral to QU Counseling Center if needed
- Cultural sensitivity in all procedures

## **7. Expected Impact**

### **7.1. Scientific Impact**

- Provides a foundation for clinical psychology students to explore narrative-based therapies in Arabic populations
- Validation of NNR framework in Arab cultural context
- Contribution to narrative therapy and emotional regulation research
- Advances understanding of cognitive reappraisal mechanisms

### **7.2. Practical Impact**

- Low-cost anxiety intervention for university settings
- Reduced stigma through non-pharmacological approach
- Potential integration into QU mental health services
- Culturally adapted therapeutic tools for Arab populations

## 8. Limitations and Future Directions

Results will rely primarily on self-reported measures and short-term outcomes. Future studies may include physiological indicators (e.g., Heart Rate Variability) for deeper validation of the NNR framework's mechanisms, longer follow-up periods, and randomized controlled designs with active control groups.

## 9. Project Duration

Total duration: 6 weeks

- Week 1–2: Instrument translation and ethical review preparation
- Week 3–4: Participant recruitment and baseline assessment
- Week 5: NNR intervention sessions (3 sessions per participant)
- Week 6: Post-assessment and data analysis

## 10. Ethical Review Statement

This document represents a conceptual research proposal awaiting ethical review before implementation.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Bilingual Consent Form Note

*. Bilingual consent forms (Arabic/English) have been prepared for potential future empirical studies of the NNR framework.*

*Arabic-translated instruments and consent forms are attached as separate supplementary materials.*

### Appendix B: Calmness Scale

Rate your calmness after the session:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not calm at all					Extremely calm				

## Appendix C: Narrative Prompt Examples

- "Describe a moment when you felt trapped by your own thoughts."
- "Rewrite that event as if your calm self was present."
- "What new meaning can you attach to that experience?"
- "How would you narrate this story from a perspective of strength?"
- "What resources did you discover in yourself during this challenge?"

## Supplementary Materials

### Participant Tracking Form

<b>Participant ID:</b>	_____		
<b>Session 1 Date:</b>	_____	<b>CalmnessScore:</b>	_____
<b>Session 2 Date:</b>	_____	<b>CalmnessScore:</b>	_____
<b>Session 3 Date:</b>	_____	<b>CalmnessScore:</b>	_____
<b>Notes:</b>	_____ _____ _____		

### Session Completion Checklist

Task	Completed	Date
Informed Consent Obtained		—
Baseline Assessment (GAD-7, PDSS, ERQ)		—
Session 1: Awareness		—
Session 2: Rewriting		—
Session 3: Integration		—
Post-Assessment Completed		—
Data Entry Verified		—

## References

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