



What is EMDR?

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing

EMDR is a technique that enables people to heal from the symptoms and emotional distress that are the result of disturbing life experiences. EMDR therapy shows that the mind can in fact heal from psychological trauma much as the body recovers from physical trauma. Using the detailed protocols and procedures learned in EMDR therapy training sessions, clinicians help clients activate their natural healing processes.

When you have a cut, your body works to close the wound. If a lingering object or repeated injury irritates the wound, it festers and causes pain. Once the block is removed, healing resumes. EMDR therapy engages a similar sequence of events. The brain's information processing system naturally moves toward mental health. If the system is blocked or imbalanced by the impact of a disturbing event, the emotional wound festers and can cause intense suffering. Removing the block allows healing to resume. Using the detailed protocols and procedures in EMDR sessions, your brain can activate the natural healing processes. The goal of EMDR is to unlock the healing part of your brain so that you can gain insight on distressing situations, resolve the distress and potentially choose how you want to change your behaviors.

EMDR therapy is an eight-phase treatment. Eye movements (or other bilateral stimulation) are used during *one part* of the session. After we determine together which memory to target first, questions are asked to prepare you to hold different aspects of that event in mind and to use your eyes to track movement back and forth. As this happens, internal associations come up and you begin to process the memory and disturbing feelings. The meaning of painful events can then be transformed on an emotional level.

For example, a rape victim shifts from feeling horror and self-disgust to holding the firm belief that, "I survived it and I am strong."

Unlike talk therapy, the insights clients gain in EMDR therapy are not through the offering of interpretation, but from your own accelerated intellectual and emotional processes that become activated. Wounds are not just closed, they are transformed. A natural outcome is that thoughts, feelings and behavioral changes create emotional health and resolution—all without speaking in detail or doing homework used in other therapies.

TREATMENT DESCRIPTION

EMDR combines different elements of therapy to maximize treatment effects. It involves attention to three time periods: the past, present, and future. Focus is given to past disturbing memories and related events, as well as current situations that cause distress, and to developing the skills and beliefs needed for positive future actions. EMDR addresses these items using an eight-phase treatment approach.

It is important to note that you will be offered tools and opportunities to exercise control over the process and tools to support the most challenging steps, including the option of slowing down or even stopping the current phase at any time.



The phases below occur at various rates and we will move among and through them as needed. The order and process is not necessarily linear.

Phase 1:

History Taking. We will assess your readiness and develop a treatment plan. In this phase, we begin to identify possible targets for EMDR processing. These include distressing memories and current situations that cause emotional distress. Other targets may include related incidents in the past. This information becomes useful as you move through the phases and we place emphasis on the development of specific skills and behaviors that will assist you in future situations.

Phase 2:

During the second phase of treatment, we will make sure that you have several different ways of handling emotional distress that may come up. We will choose from a variety of imagery and stress reduction techniques you can use during and between sessions. A goal of EMDR therapy is to produce rapid and effective change while you maintain equilibrium during and between sessions.

Phases 3-6:

In phases three to six, a target is identified and processed. You will be asked questions that explore:

- A visual image related to the memory or situation
- A negative belief connected to the situation
- Related emotions and body sensations.

You will also identify a preferred positive belief. This part of the process relies on your clear and honest feedback. The type and length of these sets is different for each client. At this point, you are asked to just notice whatever spontaneously happens.

After each set of dual attention stimulus (DAS), you will be asked to notice whatever thought, feeling, image, memory, or sensation comes to mind. These repeated sets with directed focused attention occur several times throughout the session. If you become distressed or have difficulty, we will work together with the use of established procedures to help you get back on track.

When you are able to find that there is no distress related to the targeted memory, you will be asked to think of the preferred positive belief that was identified at the beginning of the session. At this time, you may adjust the positive belief, which we will focus on during additional sets of DAS.

Phase 7:

During each session, we will close with a review the session and your reactions, including creating a current state that allows you to be as comfortable as possible as it comes to an end.

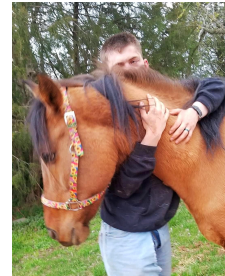
Phase 8:

Phase eight includes examining the progress made thus far and the plan for moving forward.

EMDR VARIATIONS

EMDR – Recent Event Protocol

This is a form of EMDR that is used when the difficult experience occurred within approximately the last 90 days. Using EMDR for a recent event can prevent the brain from getting “stuck.” The process is very similar, however there are variations to certain phases.



Equine Assisted – EMDR (EA-EMDR)

An Equine Assisted EMDR Protocol incorporates the skills of an Equine Specialist and an EMDR Clinician. This may be done with one professional who has been trained in both areas or two separate professionals. Trained and qualified professionals will support you in engaging with horses as part of the healing process.

The Equine Specialist has completed in-depth training in order to be familiar with the phases of EMDR and how the horses can be involved in each phase. The Equine Specialist and the EMDR therapist collaborate to bring you an experience that can be greatly enriched by including the horses as co-facilitators.

As with any EMDR protocol, you will have choices regarding how you would like to connect with the horses. You may simply observe them or, when invited, you may choose to actively interact with them. For the safety of all parties, both human and equine, you will be required to follow all directions given by the Equine Specialist.

EA-EMDR is likely to include both on-site or “arena” meetings with the horses and office appointments with either the EMDR therapist or both professionals.