

What Can I Expect in an EMDR Treatment Session?

EMDR processing doesn't begin in your first session. First, your therapist will obtain background and together you will set goals. You can expect an EMDR therapy session to consist of the follow steps:

1. Build Skills for Safety

First, your EMDR therapist will help you develop safety and resiliency skills. This ensures you can feel safe and grounded throughout the process.

2. Identify a Specific Problem Focus

Next, you'll identify a specific problem as the focus of your session. This could be related to grief, stress, anger, disturbing memories or experiences, post-traumatic stress, etc.

3. Explore the Impact of the Trauma

You will then explore thoughts, beliefs, feelings and uncomfortable physical sensations you've developed as a result of that experience. For example, feeling on edge, self-esteem issues, images you hold in your mind, or beliefs such as "I'm worthless".

4. Visit the Specific Traumatic Memory in a New Way

Your EMDR therapist will gently guide you to visit the specific traumatic memory, this time experiencing it in a new way. **You don't need to discuss anything specifically, just notice what is present including any body sensations.**

5. Stimulate Both Sides of Your Brain Through Eye Movement, Touch, Light or Sensation

At the same time, your therapist will facilitate movement of your eyes right and left. Other right-left forms of stimulation may also be used. Such as holding buzzers that alternate vibrating in your right and left hands, tapping on your right and left leg or using a light bar. (This is referred to as "bilateral stimulation.") This has your brain processing two things at once – the movement and the experience you just identified.

6. Continue this Process Until the Problem is Less Disturbing & Positive Beliefs are Formed

This process continues until the memory or specific problem becomes less disturbing and is associated with positive thoughts and beliefs about one's self.

By combining the memory with the stimulation, **the body is able to process and release the trauma stored in your body and develop new, positive beliefs.**

Most people experience a great reduction in the level of disturbance of the problem or traumatic events. EMDR is most effective when used in conjunction with traditional therapy