



INTERWEAVE

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Robin Shapiro LICSW has edited and authored many excellent EMDR and Trauma books including her highly acclaimed Solutions books [EMDR Solutions: Pathways to Healing](#) and the follow up, [EMDR Solutions II](#).

Robin created these books so that readers can choose to delve into just a chapter by one expert that may be needed for a specific client or issue. Whether you read her Solutions books cover-to-cover or check out one chapter speaking to a particular technique or client population, you will be adding crucial skills and knowledge to your EMDR toolbox. Her books are essential to EMDR practice and highly recommended for beginners as well as advanced practitioners.

The Two Hand Interweave

In Chapter 6 of *EMDR Solutions: Pathways to Healing*, Robin presents The Two Hand Interweave, an intervention she created herself. She uses the Two Hand Interweave when a client is stuck between two varying positions, ambivalent about choices, negative or positive beliefs, past vs. present view of self or others, to do our not do EMDR therapy and many other



processing stages of EMDR benefit from this therapist interweave.

The Technique

This is an Interweave or clinical intervention for 'nudging' the client's stuck Adaptive Information Processing system so the person's brain can naturally move towards a resolution. The client is asked to place one side of their stuck place or ambivalence in one hand, and the other side in the other hand, letting the client choose which hand holds which side of the ambivalence. Most clients seem to put the more adaptive part of the ambivalence on their more dominant side, right or left. Then the client is told: "Let your mind observe with curiosity. Notice what is in each of your hands, allow it to go back and forth, and when you are ready, tell me what you notice." Use processing speed BLS for one or more sets, asking for what they notice in between each set.

Clients nearly always experience the more positive adaptive side become stronger and the more disturbing negative side decrease. Robin reports in her chapter that 95% of the time, this technique helps clients resolve conflicting feelings, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and somatic symptoms. This mh clinatches our experience using the Two Hand Interweave, making it one very



gestalt two chair technique. Two chairs were used to represent the two conflicting issues or positions, while the client moved back and forth between chairs to resolve the issue. With the two hand interweave, it is done with the right and left hand, and the brain gets a boost through BLS to bring resolution to the client.

APPLICATIONS

Many situations where clients are stuck in ambivalence or have conflicting feelings that become stuck during processing benefit from this therapeutic interweave.

Examples of stuck places or 'splits' include:

- the traumatized child who is 'at fault' vs. the adult who knows s/he was just a child
- not to stay or not to stay—decision making in a job, relationship, etc
- when there is no movement with the NC and PC, placing each in one hand and processing; this can include taking a VoC of the positive belief before and after using it.
- peaceful place either visually or somatically vs. disturbing place in trauma
- physical sensations that will not resolve—ask the best part of keeping/worst part of experiencing



addressing issues, emotions, and so on, such as one part wanting to tell about the trauma and another (protective) part keeping the secret.

- wanting to do EMDR processing to heal but being afraid of the emotions that may arise.

CASE EXAMPLE

An EMDR client became stuck when his spiritual resources went unresponsive in session, exactly where he has been stuck in his spiritual experience in recent years. He had successfully processed for 4-6 sessions before this impasse. Usually clients are stuck now in ways they were stuck in the past, even if they identify it as present only. The AIP model states that the past is present so it is not about now. This client also had adult adverse experiences in his spiritual community that had confused and challenged his spiritual framework, which had been a very strong resource in his life.

He was asked to go back to when he had a good spiritual connection. He could easily access earlier memories that were most positive, feeling it in his emotions and in his body. He called this the "real God". His present spiritual relationship he described as an unresponsive God he named the "confusing God." He placed the 'real God' in his right, dominant hand and



As an experienced EMDR client who had confidence in processing, he did not need further information in

setting up the two hand interweave. Some clients might ask, "What do you want me to do with the two sides?"

If that happens, tell the client to "just notice" or "let the two sides interact." All he required was "notice that" followed by several sets of BLS.

As is often the case, the more positive 'real God' strengthened in power and clarity, while the 'confusing God' went gray and finally disappeared. This resolved disturbance in emotions and body completely as well.

Another adaptation (source unknown, from communication by Susan Deane Miller) of the Two Hand Interweave has the person hold their peaceful place in one hand and the idea of processing trauma in the other. Without BLS, you have them bring their two hands together until the SUDS elevates to a 3. Repeat, each time noting that the hands take a shorter distance to elevate. When the client can hold the two hands together with the SUDS at 3, then you can start BLS processing on the issue.

A STEP FURTHER

In a more recent book *Easy Eao State Interventions:*



ways. When we hosted Robin's workshop by the same name, she demonstrated, to rave reviews, how she creatively, skillfully, and yes, easily integrates this tool

to assist clients with their many mixed, ambivalent feelings about a plethora of issues. Contact her through her website [EMDR Solutions](#) for more information or to bring this amazing workshop to your area. Read Robin Shapiro's books, they are truly all excellent!

Consider attending the January 2021 webinar:

[Defeating Despair: Psychotherapy in Difficult Times](#) that she will be presenting. She will guide us with practice wisdom drawn from many therapeutic approaches, including EMDR. Her goal is to assist us in specific ways to address the most difficult issues of our time with our clients as well as how we can take care of ourselves as therapists. No matter your position on the hot topics of 2020, we can be sure that clients will present on many sides of these issues. Being prepared to address these effectively and managing our own coping and reactivity well is critical for excellent psychotherapy work in this era.

Robin Shapiro's latest book [Doing Psychotherapy: A Trauma and Attachment-informed Approach](#) (2020) continues with her standard of highly readable and informative content. Read Robin's books, access her for consultation on her website www.emdrsolutions.com,



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COMMENTS (1)

Newest First



Liesl 3 years ago · 0 Likes

Hello,

I've recently experienced this two handed interweave with remarkable results and I'm wondering about the unusual magnetic feeling I experienced. I felt like I was holding two repelling magnetics. Can anyone explain this phenomenon?.

Thankyou in advance



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