

What is Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy?

EMDR therapy is an effective talking therapy for a wide range of mental health difficulties. Based on the adaptive information processing (AIP) model, it works by helping your brain process memories that are 'stuck' in the memory network. This removes their emotional charge and alleviates distress. EMDR therapy is provided by qualified mental health practitioners who have taken additional training.

What are the essentials of EMDR therapy?

Treat the root causes



'Unprocessed' memories are thought to be at the core of people's difficulties. EMDR therapy follows a structured approach to transform traumatic memories into more adaptive, healthier resolutions.

Use bilateral stimulation as a catalyst for healing



Alternating bilateral stimulation (BLS), such as eye movements, tapping, or auditory tones, helps to activate your brain's natural healing mechanism, so that you can process disturbing memories.

Past, Present, Future



EMDR can target past traumatic events, current triggers and situations, and imagined *future* situations that cause distress and anxiety. It helps the past feel like the past rather than something that's still happening now.

What will I do in EMDR therapy?

Get an overview of your difficulties



Your therapist will take a full history of your experiences and how they affect you now.

Learn to stay grounded



EMDR begins by 'installing' a safe and calming state. You may also work to strengthen positive or adaptive experiences to help manage distress during processing.

Process without going into detail



EMDR doesn't need you to describe traumatic experiences in great detail or complete homework. The process works by activating the brain's natural healing mechanism.

Recall memories alongside BLS



Your therapist will guide you to focus on a distressing memory along with any associated negative beliefs, emotions and bodily sensations. You simply "notice what comes up."

Complete longer or intensive sessions



Sessions may be longer than traditional therapy and you may need fewer sessions overall. EMDR can also be delivered intensively (with multiple sessions or longer sessions over a short period) to treat traumas more efficiently.

Just notice what happens



After a session, you may feel tired or sleep more as your brain continues processing. Your therapist may ask you to note any new thoughts, emotions, or memories that arise between sessions.

What can I expect from my EMDR therapist?

Your EMDR therapist will:

- Be trained by an accredited EMDRIA or EMDR Europe-recognized trainer.
- Be capable of handling all types of trauma and help you feel contained during sessions.
- Guide you through a structured process (assessment, preparation, processing, and closure).
- Help you understand your difficulties through a trauma-informed lens and explain how EMDR can help.
- Apply alternating BLS to activate your brain's healing system.
- Allow time at the end of each session to process and reflect on what arose.