

Lynne Moser, LCSW  
**EMDR Informed Consent**

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a form of therapy that utilizes bilateral stimulation (BLS) usually in the form of eye movements, tapping or auditory tones in order to accelerate the brain's capacity to process and heal a troubling memory, thought, feeling, or phobia. BLS stimulates the same eye movements that occur during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. BLS causes two parts of the brain to work in conjunction in order to reintegrate a memory. Some clients can experience relief or positive effects in just a few sessions and others need more. EMDR is effective in treating trauma-related symptoms, whether the traumatic event occurred many years ago or recently.

Research has demonstrated that EMDR is effective for the treatment of post-traumatic stress, phobias, panic attacks, anxiety disorders, stress, sexual and physical abuse, disturbing memories, complicated grief and chronic pain.

The benefits of EMDR treatment include the following:

1. The memory or event is remembered, but the painful emotion and physical sensations, disturbing images and thoughts are no longer present.
2. EMDR helps the brain reintegrate the memory or event and store it more comfortably in the brain. The client's own brain reintegrates the memory or event and starts to heal.

The possible risks of EMDR treatment include the following:

1. Reprocessing a memory or event may bring up associated memories. This is normal and those memories can also be reprocessed.
2. During EMDR, you may experience physical sensations and retrieve images, emotions, and sounds associated with the memory or event.
3. Reprocessing of the memory or event normally continues after the end of the formal therapy session. Other memories, flashbacks, feelings, and sensations may occur. You may have dreams associated with the memory. Frequently, the brain is able to process these additional memories without help, but continued processing can also be helpful.

As with any other therapeutic approach, reprocessing traumatic memories can be uncomfortable; that means some people won't like or be able to tolerate EMDR treatment well. Others may need more preparation, offered by the therapist, before processing traumatic events using EMDR.

1. There is no adverse effect for interrupting EMDR therapy; therefore, you can discontinue treatment at any time.
2. Alternative therapeutic approaches may include individual or group therapy, medication, or a different therapy modality on an individual basis.

The client must

1. Be able to tolerate high levels of emotional disturbance, have the ability to reprocess associated memories resulting from EMDR therapy, and to use self-control and relaxation techniques such as Calm Place, and Container.
2. Disclose to me and consult with your physician before EMDR therapy if you have a history of eye problems, heart disease, elevated blood pressure, or are at risk for or have a history of stroke, heart attack, seizure or other medical conditions that may put you at medical risk. Pregnant women should consult with their physician. Due to the stress related to reprocessing some traumatic event events, postponing may be appropriate in some cases.
3. Before participating in EMDR, please share all aspects of upcoming legal court cases in which testimony may be required. You may need to postpone EMDR treatment if you are the victim of, or witness to, a crime that is being prosecuted; the traumatic material process using EMDR may feed, blur or disappear and your testimony may be challenged.
4. Consult with your medical doctor before receiving EMDR treatment combined with medication. Some medications may reduce the effectiveness of EMDR; for example, benzodiazepines may reduce effectiveness; regression may occur after ceasing antidepressants.
5. EMDR is contraindicated with recent crack cocaine users and long-term amphetamine users.
6. Please share any diagnoses of dissociative disorders and any past treatment. EMDR may trigger these symptoms but may also be helpful in attempting to resolve them.

*I understand the possible outcomes of EMDR listed above and that I can end EMDR therapy at any time. I agree to participate in EMDR therapy and I assume any risks involved in such participation.*

**Name (printed)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_