

What is ART?

Accelerated Resolution Therapy is an evidence-based therapy that has been shown to accelerate recovery, avoiding the long and difficult work often involved in other therapies. Laney Rosenzweig, a Licensed Marriage, and Family Therapist developed ART in 2008 and says, *"The most difficult aspect of discussing **ART** is the fact that it sounds too good to be true."*

What does ART do?

ART helps people become de-sensitized to past or current distress, without sharing the details of what they are processing unless they want to. Using eye movements, like ones that occur while we dream, ART helps the brain re-process information helping to restructure the storage of distressing information, like memories or images, diminishing their ability to elicit intense physical and emotional reactions. As a result, these images and memories can be recalled as objective facts, observed in a detached manner.

What is ART used for?

ART is used to treat physiological symptoms of anxiety, panic attacks, post-traumatic stress symptoms (such as intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and flashbacks), phobias, identity crises and other traumatic experiences. It also can be used to enhance emotional resources such as confidence and self-esteem.

When is ART appropriate?

If you want to feel different and meet the criteria, then it's an option!

- You can move your eyes from left to right easily without pain or exacerbation of medical conditions such as tics, vertigo, etc.
- You can hold onto a thought and consider the counsellor's instruction.
- You are motivated to change the targeted problem.

ART focuses on resolution of the problem.

Trauma can be a major event, like an accident or unexpected death, or an everyday incident like the loss of a job or friendship, ongoing negative messages or being ignored/neglected by those important to you. Trauma is not about the event itself, but rather how we experience the event, and often involves a sense of helplessness and/or hopelessness. Memories or images of these situations can be encoded in different parts of the brain and become stuck, triggering emotional and physical reactions even after the situation has passed. ART can help resolve both types of trauma, even if you aren't sure of the cause of your distress, your subconscious mind will provide the content. By taking a thorough history the counsellor will determine what ART protocol to use to address a past incident or current and ongoing concern.

How long does ART therapy take?

This depends on several factors including the nature of the problem being treated and your history. In cases of a single episode trauma, one session is often enough. However, ongoing problems like substance abuse, generalized anxiety, OCD, etc. may take more sessions and can be more successful if you are seen twice in the first two weeks. The identified concern is typically resolved in 1-5 sessions.

What is an ART session like?

You will identify a distressing memory, image, phobia, or situation related to your symptoms and only provide the information you are comfortable sharing. You will be asked to visualize a “scene” that represents the problem, this can be the memory of the incident, what you’ve been told about the incident, or a typical day experiencing the problem. In the session, you will use bilateral eye movements and alternate between processing your identified concern and reducing your emotional and physical reactions. Once the emotional intensity reduces you will visualize a positive and adaptive resolution to the concern, this is called the *voluntary image replacement*. As the target concern is processed a new, adaptive memory or story integrates into your existing memory network (*memory reconsolidation*). This integration helps reduce the intensity of the triggered emotional reaction and replace it with feelings like safety, empowerment, and resiliency. Each session concludes with resolution or containment of this issue to ensure you are grounded and stable after the session. Most leave the session with a feeling of resolution regarding their identified concern.

Why bring up a painful memory?

Using a process called “imaginal exposure” ART uses a window of time called the reconsolidation window to change a person’s responses to painful memories or experiences, extinguishing distressing emotional and physical sensations, and replacing them with positive sensations.

Does ART use hypnosis?

No. The use of eye movements helps to re-program information in the brain, and they elicit a calming effect. The client is aware and participates throughout the session.

Why is ART so great?

- ART is non-invasive. People only share what they are processing if they want to, no more unnecessary re-telling of the story!
- ART sessions are directive, straightforward and focused on addressing an individual’s physical and/or emotional responses.
- The process is interactive, with the counsellor guiding the process and your brain supplying the content.
- After an ART session you will be taught eye movements to use on your own.
- It combines multiple therapies and trusted interventions like mindfulness, breathing, visualization, and grounding. It also contains elements of CBT, Exposure Therapy, Gestalt, and Guided Imagery.
- Because it works with the subconscious mind the pressure is off, the subconscious mind supplies the images related to the problem along with the solution. It is always astounding to witness the wisdom of the mind and its ability to heal itself.
- It is fun! The brain’s capacity to identify stuck emotions or images and replace them with positive ones brings lightheartedness to sessions and relief to suffering.

Is ART the same as EMDR?

ART is different from EMDR as ART is more directive and closure-orientated. However, they both use eye movements.