



## WHAT IS THE ACTUAL EMDR SESSION LIKE?

During EMDR, the therapist works with the client to identify a specific problem as the focus of the treatment session.

The client calls to mind the disturbing issue or event, what was seen, felt, heard, thought, etc., and what thoughts and beliefs are currently held about that event. The therapist facilitates the directional movement of the eyes or other dual attention stimulation of the brain, while the client focuses on the disturbing material, and the client just notices whatever comes to mind without making any effort to control direction or content. Each person will process information uniquely, based on personal experiences and values. Sets of eye movements are continued until the memory becomes less disturbing and is associated with positive thoughts and beliefs about one's self; for example, "I did the best I could." During EMDR, the client may experience intense emotions, but by the end of the session, most people report a great reduction in the level of disturbance.

## EMDR CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

*"I was a member of the Canadian Army for over 20 years. I suffered from OSI (operational stress injury), depression, and the loss of my daughter and wife killed by a drunk driver. For over a year of treatment and work on my part I have finally found some peace of mind. My anger and depression has lowered to a manageable level. Today, I see the light at the end of the tunnel. I know that EMDR treatment is by far the best I ever received in the mental health field, and the great thing is no medication." -G.C.*

*"A few years ago I underwent EMDR therapy. I was skeptical, like many, of course. At this point in time, however, I see that it saved my marriage, my sanity and my relationship with my children. I was suffering from PTSD after experiencing much loss and never even realized that's what stood in the way of a positive and healthy life. It's a wonderful treatment and more people should be informed about it. I was lucky to come across EMDR by accident." -J.M.*

*"This is to let you know how EMDR has changed my little girl. We started therapy and have had 8 sessions so far. She is 6 years old and has had severe symptoms of PTSD from being abused. Although regular therapy had been a little help, her progress was slow and arduous. Now, through EMDR my daughter seems happier, and her "fits" (aggressive rages) have been significantly reduced. I could not wait to tell you how much we think this therapy has helped our daughter." -R.A.*

## WHAT KIND OF PROBLEMS CAN EMDR TREAT?

Scientific research has established EMDR as effective for post traumatic stress. However, clinicians also have reported success using EMDR in the treatment of the following conditions:

- ▼ Personality Disorders
- ▼ Panic Attacks
- ▼ Complicated Grief
- ▼ Dissociative Disorders
- ▼ Body Dysmorphic Disorders
- ▼ Disturbing Memories
- ▼ Phobias
- ▼ Eating Disorders
- ▼ Performance Anxiety
- ▼ Stress Reduction
- ▼ Addictions
- ▼ Sexual and/or Physical Abuse
- ▼ Pain Disorders

## HOW LONG DOES EMDR TAKE?

One or more sessions are required for the therapist to understand the nature of the problem and to decide whether EMDR is an appropriate treatment. The therapist will also discuss EMDR more fully and provide an opportunity to answer questions about the method. Once the therapist and client have agreed that EMDR is appropriate for a specific problem, the actual EMDR therapy may begin.

A typical EMDR session lasts from 60 - 90 minutes. The type of problem, life circumstances and the amount of previous trauma will determine how many treatment sessions are necessary. EMDR may be used within a standard "talking" therapy, as an adjunctive therapy with a separate therapist, or as a treatment all by itself.

## DOES EMDR REALLY WORK?

Approximately 20 controlled studies have investigated the effects of EMDR. These studies have consistently found that EMDR effectively decreases/eliminates the symptoms of post traumatic stress for the majority of clients. Clients often report improvement in other associated symptoms such as anxiety. The current treatment guidelines of the American Psychiatric Association and the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies designate EMDR as an effective treatment for post traumatic stress. EMDR was also found effective by the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense, the United Kingdom Department of Health, the Israeli National Council for Mental Health and many other international health agencies. The national registry (NREPP) of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), cites EMDR as evidence based practice for the treatment of PTSD, anxiety and depression symptoms. Research has also shown that EMDR can be an efficient and rapid treatment.

## HOW DOES EMDR WORK?

No one knows how any form of psychotherapy works neurobiologically or in the brain. However, we do know that when a person is very upset, their brain cannot process information as it does ordinarily. One moment becomes "frozen in time," and remembering a trauma may feel as bad as going through it the first time because the images, sounds, smells and feelings haven't changed. Such memories have a lasting negative effect that interferes with the way a person sees the world and the way they relate to other people.



**EMDR  
CAN BE  
THOUGHT  
OF AS A  
PHYSIOLOGICALLY  
BASED THERAPY  
THAT HELPS  
A PERSON SEE  
DISTURBING  
MATERIAL IN  
A NEW AND  
LESS  
DISTRESSING  
WAY**

EMDR seems to have a direct effect on the way that the brain processes information. Normal information processing is resumed, so following a successful EMDR session, a person no longer relives the images, sounds and feelings when the event is brought to mind. You still remember what happened, but it is less upsetting. Many types of therapy have similar goals. However, EMDR appears to be similar to what occurs naturally during dreaming or REM (rapid eye movement) sleep. Therefore, EMDR can be thought of as a physiologically based therapy that helps a person see disturbing material in a new and less distressing way.

## HOW WAS EMDR DEVELOPED?

In 1987, psychologist Dr. Francine Shapiro made the chance observation that eye movements can reduce the intensity of disturbing thoughts, under certain conditions. Dr. Shapiro studied this effect scientifically, and in a 1989 issue of the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, she reported success using EMDR to treat victims of trauma. Since then, EMDR has developed and evolved through the contributions of therapists and researchers all over the world. Today, EMDR is a set of standardized protocols that incorporate elements from many different treatment approaches.

### For more information:

 EMDR International Association

 @EMDRIA

 [www.emdria.org](http://www.emdria.org)

## WHAT IS EMDR?

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a powerful psychotherapy approach that has helped over an estimated two million people of all ages relieve many types of psychological distress.



Designated as an effective treatment by the American Psychiatric Association, the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and more.

