

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR)

What is it?



EMDR is a psychotherapy that enables people to heal from the symptoms and emotional distress that are the result of disturbing life experiences. It is an eight-phase treatment. Eye movements (or other bilateral stimulation) are used during one part of the session which helps clients begin to process the memory and disturbing feelings. In successful EMDR therapy, the meaning of painful events is transformed on an emotional level.

Treatment Description

Phase 1: History Taking

Client and therapist work together to find a target for EMDR processing which would include distressing memories or current situations that cause emotional distress

Phase 2: Emotions

Therapist will teach you ways to handle emotional distress. Providing a variety of imagery and stress reduction techniques the client can use during and between sessions.

Phase 3-6: Processing

A target is identified and processed using EMDR therapy procedures. These involve the client identifying three things:

1. The vivid visual image related to the memory
2. A negative belief about self
3. Related emotions and body sensations.

While also identifying a positive belief to refer to during the session.

Phase 7-8: Closure and Evaluating Progress



Is This Right For Me?

The most widespread use of EMDR is for PTSD. It has also been effective for individuals living with anxiety, depression, dissociative, personality, OCD, eating, and trauma disorders. Gender dysphoria is commonly treated with EMDR as well.

More Information

More than 30 positive controlled outcome studies have been done on EMDR therapy. Some of the studies show that 84%-90% of single-trauma victims show significant social, emotional, and behavioral improvement after 3 90-minute sessions. Even though it is a "newer" type of therapy EMDR therapy is now recognized as an effective form of treatment for trauma and other disturbing experiences by organizations such as the American Psychiatric Association, the World Health Organization and the Department of Defense.



Additional Resources

- [Cleveland Clinic](#)
- [What is EMDR?](#)
- [More Information about EMDR](#)

