



EMDR Handout

George Laws Social Work Services LLC

EMDR?

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) was developed by Francine Shapiro in 1987. She noticed that while she was contemplating and concentrating on one of her issues, during a walk through a park, that her eyes were moving back and forth, much in the same way, as *rapid eye movement (REM) occurs during sleep to digest daily experiences*. She wondered if a similar process, consciously directing the *rapid eye movements (REM)* could treat Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). She devised a protocol, administered it to her clientele, many of whom were war veteran's suffering from PTSD, and researched the effects of this treatment. From the beginning this treatment proved helpful and continues to prove to be successful in reducing the symptoms of traumatic stress for long periods of time. Thus, restoring mental health to sufferers. Since then, EMDR has been used to effectively treat a wide range of traumatic stress responses and mental health problems.

Traumatic Stress Response - What's Happening?

Normally, the body manages new information from your usual experiences without you being aware of it. However, a sudden overwhelming event such as a car accident; or when one is repeatedly subjected to childhood neglect; or emotional abuse in a significant relationship, are not "usual". These traumas overload your natural physical, mental and emotional systems' abilities for; generating, organizing, processing and healing you. These systems become unable to digest and eliminate the toxic elements of those past experiences. Remember with traumatic stress, the overloading of your biosystems are caused by these unresolved disturbing experiences, which further establish disordered and dysfunctional qualities in your health. Simply because they remain "unprocessed", stuck in your bodily tissues and brain. The energies of traumatic memories of a specific event are maintained in your brain's limbic system, within an isolated memory network that is associated with emotions and physical sensations, and which are disconnected from the brain's cortex where we use language to store

memories. The limbic system's isolated and charged traumatic memories can be continually triggering you (amygdala) overriding similar present events in your life causing difficulties for you and perhaps others. Often the memory itself is long forgotten (suppressed), but the suffering and painful feelings (symptoms) persist, such as anxiety, panic, anger, judgement, jealousy, or despair and are continually triggered in the present. Your ability to live in the present and learn from new experiences can therefore become inhibited.

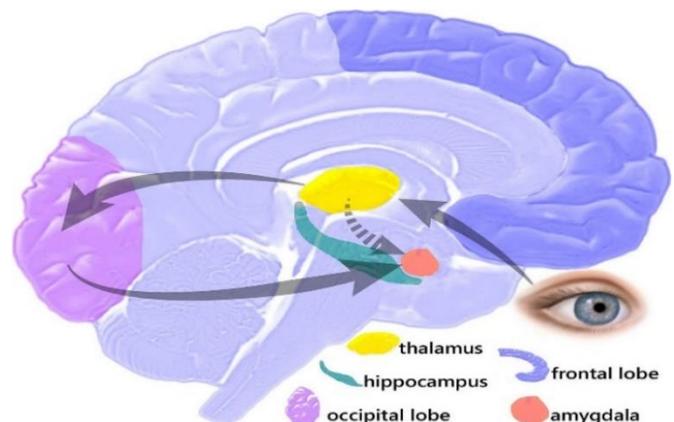
These immobilized memories are determining the quality of your life, your consciousness, your levels of clarity and coherency and zest in living. These suppressed and unprocessed memories are existing 24/7/365. They are "living images" of sensing, feeling, thinking, emoting, reasoning, wanting, intending, recognizing, and identifying and are stored in your biosystems in a "raw" form. These images need processing, understanding and healing. EMDR helps create the connections between you and your brain's memory networks, enabling your brain to process the traumatic memory in a very natural way.

What happens before an EMDR session?

Firstly, a thorough assessment will be made where I will ask specific questions about your history. **Collaboratively**, you and I will work to build a safe, stable and resourced platform from which we will know whether and when it is appropriate to use EMDR. This may be early on or later. We will both know this timing. After stability and safety are realized, we will then decide on a memory or event to work on, perhaps your earliest memory, perhaps your worst one or something between these.

What's happening in an EMDR session?

The natural healing ability of your body is accessed through *dual attention and bilateral stimulation*. Dual attention is consciously holding a memory and its images of an experience of an event while noticing what is happening now, in your present internal experiencing, while also perceiving, through your senses, the bilateral stimulation directed towards your body. In summary, you will be attending to what's happening outside you, while attending to what you are experiencing inside you - your body and mind.

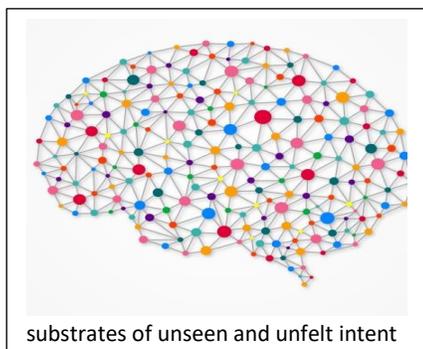


Bi-lateral stimulation is accomplished by watching the Practitioner's fingers move left to right, across your visual field at a comfortable distance from your eyes; or perhaps it will be more comfortable for you to listen to a sound as it moves from your left ear to your right ear; or perhaps, feeling a vibration or a touch alternate from your right hand to your left hand might suit you better. Sometimes, a bar of moving lights or headphones is used.

Whichever style you choose, each cycle will last for a short while and then stop. You will then be asked to report on the elements of the experience you have had during each of these sets of bilateral movements. Experiences during a session may include changes in images, thoughts, emotions, sensations, and feelings.

Sensing these bilateral movements, while attending simultaneously to your inner and outer experience, is supporting you to

- metabolize and discharge the energy of a stuck distressing traumatic memory, and
- restore a fluid experiencing of consciousness with your mind and your body.



With repeated sets of eye movements, the memory tends to change in such a way that it loses its painful intensity and simply becomes a neutral memory of a past event. Also, other associated memories may heal

at the same time. This linking of related memories can lead to a dramatic and rapid improvement in many aspects of your life. By resolving the impact of your past traumas, you may allow yourself to live more fully in the present and have the quality of life you choose.

Is EMDR is for me?

Even though EMDR may accelerate therapy it is not for everyone. Note: you need to be aware of, and willing to experience, the strong feelings and disturbing thoughts, which sometimes may occur during or between sessions. Usually any

Is EMDR is an effective treatment?

EMDR is an innovative clinical treatment which has successfully helped over a million individuals. The validity and reliability of EMDR has been established by rigorous research. There are now nineteen controlled studies into EMDR making it the most thoroughly researched method used in the treatment of trauma, (Details are on www.emdr.org and on www.emdr-europe.org) is recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) as an effective treatment for PTSD

disturbing experiences, if they occur at all, last for a comparatively short period of time. Together, we can discuss the appropriateness of EMDR for you.

EMDR has been successfully used to treat:		
Traumas	Anxieties	Depression
PTSD	Panic attacks	Complicated Grief
Addictions	Phobias	Anger
Self-esteem	Mood Disorders	Pain Conditions
Phantom pain	Sleep problems	Vicarious Trauma
Dissociative disorders	Stress Related Conditions	Somatic Conditions
http://www.emdr.com/research-overview/		

How long does treatment take?

EMDR can be brief focused treatment or part of a longer self-improvement program. EMDR sessions can be for 60 to 90 minutes. Weekly treatments are recommended.

You remain in control and empowered!

During EMDR treatment, you will remain in control, fully alert and wide-awake. This is not a form of hypnosis and you can stop the process at any time. Throughout the session as little interference as possible is given to support and instill your own self-healing processes. Reprocessing of your memory is usually experienced as something that happens spontaneously, as new felt connections and insights arise quite naturally from within. As a result, most people experience EMDR as being a natural and very empowering therapy.

WHO MIGHT BENEFIT?

Those who are trauma survivors and those who assist trauma survivors suffering from a constellation of post-traumatic stress symptoms and syndromes including;

Hyperarousal · Helplessness · Dissociation · Shame
Hyper-reactivity · Intrusive imagery · Repetitive thoughts
Rage · Nightmares · Hypervigilance · Fatigue · Grief ·
Anxiety · Depression · Phobia · Panic Attacks · Apathy ·
"Spacey-ness" · Frequent Anger or Crying · Isolation ·
Alienation Insomnia · Cognitive dysfunction · Pain ·
Headaches · Neck and Back Aches · Asthma · Digestive
Distress · Spastic Colon · Vicarious Trauma and more.

Symptoms of trauma may be chronic or intermittent; they usually occur in clusters, growing more complex and less connected to its origin, allowing a denial of the importance of the traumatic event.

For Further Information:

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