

How EMDR Helps

Our brains have a natural way to recover from traumatic memories and events. This process involves communication between the amygdala (the alarm signal for stressful events), the hippocampus (which assists with learning, including memories about safety and danger), and the prefrontal cortex (which analyzes and controls behavior and emotion). While many times traumatic experiences can be managed and resolved spontaneously, they may not be processed without help. Stress responses are part of our natural fight, flight, or freeze instincts.

When distress from a disturbing event remains, the upsetting images, thoughts, and emotions may create feelings of overwhelm, of being back in that moment, or of being frozen in time. EMDR therapy helps the brain process these memories and allows normal healing to resume. The experience is still remembered, but the fight, flight, or freeze response from the original event is resolved, and the memory feels farther away.

"I DIDN'T KNOW IT COULD BE LIKE THIS. IT'S LIKE I'VE GOT ON A DIFFERENT PAIR OF GLASSES. STRANGE. SO FRESH. I'M SO SURPRISED. YOU HELPED ME SEE. I FEEL LIGHTER."

IRAQ WAR VETERAN WITH PTSD TREATED WITH EMDR THERAPY [1]

Additional Resources:

1. Introduction to EMDR video by EMDRIA: <https://www.emdria.org/blog/new-what-is-emdr-therapy-video/>
2. Overview of experiencing EMDR Therapy video by EMDRIA: <https://www.emdria.org/about-emdr-therapy/experiencing-emdr-therapy/>

Contact Us:

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Case example retrieved from:
<https://www.apa.org/ptsdguideline/>

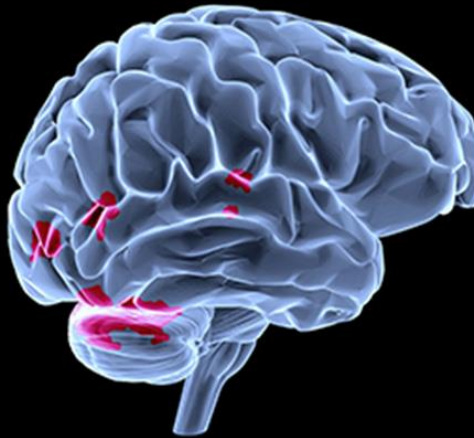
GTEP Therapy Groups for Primary and Secondary Survivors

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), is a form of therapy that helps people heal from trauma or other distressing life experiences. GTEP is a method to apply EMDR principles in a group setting for immediate relief in crisis situations.

Providence  SWEDISH



**Brain showing
overactivity in red**



**Same brain after
EMDR treatment**

Recognition and Use of EMDR

EMDR has been extensively researched and is recognized as an effective treatment by the following agencies:

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs/ Department of Defense.
- American Psychiatric Association
- International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies
- UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
- US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Australian National Medical Health and Research Council

Potential Trauma Symptoms:

- Intense depression, anxiety, anger, shame and/or guilt
- Avoiding situations that are reminders of the event(s)
- Difficulty functioning in daily life
- Feeling "on edge"
- Flashbacks/nightmares that relive the traumatic event(s)
- Anger/Difficulty controlling aggressive impulses
- Sense of numbness of feelings
- Addictive behaviors
- Involvement in high-risk behaviors
- Survivor's guilt
- Chronic pain, headaches

What Group EMDR is Like

After a crisis, it may be determined that short-intervention group EMDR therapy is a good fit for you. This is determined from your personal desire for assistance and the EMDR group screening criteria. After going through stabilization and resourcing exercises, attention will be given to a small part of the crisis so that it can be processed in a safe environment. Event details are not shared with others during this group.

While you think of the upsetting event, the therapist will direct you in sets of side-to-side eye movements or taps. You may experience shifts of insight or changes in images, feelings, or beliefs regarding the event. The sets of eye movements or taps are repeated until the event becomes less disturbing.

Your job during EMDR is to simply pay attention to what is happening 'on the inside', follow the prompts given, and letting the facilitators know if you start to get overwhelmed.

