What is EMDR?

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy helps "unstick" traumatic experiences and allows the brain to process the experiences to an "adaptive resolution".

Does EMDR really work?

There have been numerous controlled studies that have investigated the effects of EMDR. These studies have consistently found that EMDR effectively decreases/eliminates the symptoms of post traumatic stress. Individuals 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. Research has also shown that EMDR can be an efficient and rapid treatment.

For further references, research is on the EMDR International Association Website, www.emdira.org.

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What is EMDR?

Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing

How does EMDR work?

When an individual 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. This is because the images, sounds, smells and feelings have not changed. Such memories can have a lasting negative effect that interferes with the way a person sees the world and the way they relate to others.

EMDR seems to have a direct effect on the way the brain processes information. Normal information processing is resumed, so following a successful set of EMDR sessions, a person no longer relives the images, sounds and feelings when the event is brought to mind. You will still remember what happened, but it is less upsetting. EMDR appears to be similar to what occurs naturally during dreaming or REM (rapid eye movement) sleep.

What is the EMDR session like?

During EMDR, the therapist works with the individual to identify a specific problem as the focus for the treatment. The individual will be asked to call 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 then initiates bi-lateral brain processing by engaging the left and right sides of the brain. This can be done visually, tactilely, or auditory.

Each person will process information uniquely based on personal experiences and values. As quick and vibrant images arise during the session, they are reprocessed utilizing the bi-lateral brain processing that is occurring, resulting in the painful feelings being exchanged for more peaceful and resolved feelings.

How long does EMDR take?

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

The typical EMDR session lasts 60 to 90 minutes. The type of problem, life circumstances, and the amount of previous trauma will determine how many treatment sessions are necessary.

What kind of problems can EMDR treat?

Scientific research has established EMDR as effective for post traumatic stress. Furthermore, therapists have also reported success in treatment for the following conditions:
- High anxiety and lack of motivation
- Depression
- Memories of a traumatic event
- Fear of being alone
- Unrealistic feelings of guilt and shame
- Difficulty trusting others
- Relationships problems
- Grief

Call TCTI to find out more about scheduling an appointment with one of our Certified EMDR Professionals.

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