

What is EMDR?

EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing, a highly effective and well-researched therapeutic method developed in 1987 by Dr. Francine Shapiro, for healing many types of psychological distress including past or recent trauma, self esteem issues, creativity blocks, complex unresolved grief, being the victim of a violent crime, combat experiences, and performance anxiety. It is also used to enhance performance, build self-confidence and inner resiliency.

Our brains can process and integrate most of our experiences without leaving a lasting negative effect. But research in the area of trauma tells us that when an experience is very intense or threatening, the ability to process the experience can get stuck along with negative interpretations or beliefs. EMDR works to unlock the lodged memories and reengage the brain's natural ability to integrate the experience.

Is There Research That Support These Claims?

Eighteen randomized controlled (and 12 nonrandomized) studies have been conducted on EMDR, making it the most thoroughly researched method ever used in the treatment of trauma. The Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense placed EMDR in the "A" category, as "strongly recommended" for the treatment of trauma. A recent study of individuals who experienced rape, military combat, loss of loved ones, disasters and serious accidents, found that 84-90% had relief of their emotional distress after only three EMDR sessions. Another study showed that EMDR was twice as effective in half the amount of time of standard traditional psychotherapeutic care.

What Happens During an EMDR Session?

In an EMDR session, we discuss the history and other particulars of the issue you would like to resolve. The core of the procedure involves the client focusing on a pre-selected specific image or remembered sensations while the therapist guides the client's eye to move in a particular pattern, usually back and forth. Each set of eye movements may be several seconds long to several minutes. After each set of eye movements, the client is instructed to just notice whatever changes occur in the mind and body without controlling the experience in any way. The therapist considers this information in the light of his or her training and then instructs the client to focus on a new modified image and once again performs a set of eye movements. Eye movements are not the only option available. Certain tapping and auditory stimuli have also been demonstrated to be effective.

How Long Does EMDR Take?

The number of sessions required depends upon the history, duration and life circumstances surrounding the concern. Many issues can be resolved within a few sessions. More extensive trauma may take longer although most people experience some relief and benefits after each session.

EMDR can be used as a supplementary treatment on occasion within standard ongoing therapy; or it can be used as the primary method. It can also be used as an adjunct to your ongoing therapy with another therapist.

For Additional Information

Contact the EMDR Institute: www.emdr.com (831) 761-1040

To Schedule an EMDR therapy appointment with Leslie Davenport

Contact the Institute for Health & Healing:

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