



Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing

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What is EMDR? EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization

and Reprocessing) is a powerful and relatively new form of psychotherapy which has been very successful in helping people who suffer from trauma, anxiety, panic, disturbing memories, post traumatic stress, and many other emotional challenges. The EMDR therapy uses bilateral stimulation (eye movement, tactile stimulation, or acoustic stimulation) which repeatedly activates the opposite sides of the brain, releasing emotional experiences that are “trapped” in the nervous system. This assists the neuro-physiological system, the basis of the mind/body connection, to free itself of blockages and reconnect itself.

Work-Related Social Anxiety – Gone Tom was a professional who freelanced, and was quite successful at what he did, but he was terrified of making a mistake in public and drawing attention to himself. As a result, he avoided eating in restaurants with his colleagues. During EMDR therapy Tom thought about this fear and noticed the thoughts, emotions and physical sensations he was having. The therapist began moving her hand from side to side in a horizontal direction and asked Tom to follow with his eyes and simply notice what was “coming up”, and to report this whenever the therapist stopped. Without conversation, the therapist began moving her hand, and again Tom followed with his eyes and reported what he noticed. The session continued like this for 60 to 90 minutes until Tom was experiencing only positive feelings and thoughts. At the next week’s session he reported that he had had lunch out with his co-workers every day and only experienced the slightest anxiety. (Sheehan, 2001).

EMDR’s Origins In 1987, psychologist Dr. Francine Shapiro was walking through the park and thinking about something that was troubling her. She noticed at some point that her eyes were darting back and forth. When she returned to her thoughts she noticed that they were not as disturbing. This intrigued her and she tested it out on herself by thinking of something disturbing, then thinking of it again while purposely moving her eyes back and forth. The results were the same (Quinn, 2004).



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She developed this further, initially with war veterans dealing with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). The astounding successes she had with them attracted much interest. From here the protocol was developed further involving various issues. What is remarkable is that during her research, Shapiro found that not only does EMDR desensitize painful memories but people spontaneously began to view themselves and the event in a healthier and more positive way. So, “I’m worthless” became, “I’m a good and lovable person and deserving of love and respect.”

How EMDR Might Work Exactly how EMDR works is not really known. We do know from memory and brain research that painful or traumatic experiences are stored in a different part of the brain than pleasant or neutral ones. Traumatic material gets “stuck” in the brain and remains in its original form, with the same thoughts, feelings, bodily sensation, smells and sounds. It is as though it is sealed off from the healthy, functioning brain.

What researchers think is that EMDR in some way is able to “nudge” that material so that it neurologically reconnects with the healthy brain and then is reprocessed and integrated at an accelerated speed. The most popular theory is that when the eyes move back and forth it creates brain activity similar to that which occurs during REM (rapid eye movement) sleep. It’s during the REM phase (when we dream) that we resolve conflicts, process information and consolidate learning and memory. More simply put, information processing takes place. By creating similar brain activity, while thinking about the painful event, it appears that EMDR is able to help the brain finally process the “stuck” material, enabling the person to arrive at an adaptive resolution. The painful event or trauma becomes an unfortunate memory but it no longer produces the emotional pain that it did before.

A Growing Number of Applications Since Dr. Shapiro took that walk through the park in 1987 and chanced upon this discovery, nearly 30,000 licensed therapists, throughout the world have taken the EMDR Institutes training program. What is wonderful is that over the past ten years many accomplished therapists have found that EMDR is helpful in treating many other problems besides PTSD. Some of these include other anxiety disorders, depression, sexual abuse issues, work related problems and low self-esteem (Sheehan, 2001).

There are a number of factors to consider when evaluating the appropriateness of EMDR therapy for a person's particular situation and history. During your consultation with a trained EMDR therapist, all the relevant factors will be discussed in full to help you both come to as decision to move forward with EMDR (Boulware, 2001). The EMDR protocol is one option to access in the therapeutic process and is an option with potentially powerful results.



Remember...
 It's easy to contact EAP!
 Just call locally 549-5561 or toll free
1-888-409-4499. Also the 24/7 *After Hours Emergency* toll free number **1-800-668-9920** gives you direct access to a professional counsellor.

Sources:

Boulware, C. What Is EMDR? Online. Carol Boulware, Ph.D. <http://www.emdr-therapy.com/emdr.html> (19 Jul 2005: 2001).

Quinn, S. A Powerful New Therapy for Relief From Trauma and Intrusive Memories. Online. Susan Quinn M.A., M.F.T. - Marriage and Family Therapist. http://www.quintal.net/subjectPages/emdr_article1.htm (19 Jul 2005: 2004).

Sheehan, V. EMDR - Therapy of the Future. Online. EMDR Portal. <http://bestmindhealth.com/library/2004-11-25a> (19 Jul 2005: 2001).



Make a Plan for Fall Spending

Mary Huntely, Credit Counsellor

It's already the middle of our short Canadian summer and I'm here to rain on your *care free summer bliss*. There will soon be cash drains like *back to school* shopping or setting up house-keeping for a college or university student!

Stop... Stay cool! There's still time to do some basic planning around the expenses coming over the next few months. Our best advice is to make that plan.

Back to school shopping is often stressful for parents and kids. If your children are at the age when your idea of a reasonable price for a t-shirt is different from theirs, a solution is to tell them how much you are willing to spend and they will be responsible for the balance. Another alternative is a clothing budget. Always include a *cushion* in your budget to accommodate for the incidental and unexpected expenses of school such as student cards, school photos, and planners/agendas.

When budgeting for after school sports registrations, you need to consider the cost of equipment, uniforms, traveling and accommodation. If your child is involved in a travel team, the costs can be significant. Buying equipment out of season or used can lead to considerable savings. Carpooling with other parents to out-of-town activities and sharing accommodation can also help you save money. Taking a cooler of food from home on your next road trip rather than eating out. It's usually healthier than fast food.

As far as Christmas is concerned, take a tip from Santa and make a list then check off people as you purchase the gifts. Pay cash or start a Christmas bank account. Credit card purchases can be expensive if you don't pay the full amount monthly.

For more information regarding your budgeting options for a credit free Christmas, please contact FSEAP to book an appointment with a Credit Counsellor.

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