

EMDR: The Breakthrough Therapy

While EMDR has been on 20/20 and other TV shows, it still seems to be one of the best-kept secrets around, because so few people know about it or what it can do for them. EMDR is an acronym for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. It is an innovative clinical treatment that has successfully helped over a million individuals who have survived trauma, including sexual abuse, domestic violence, combat, crime, and those suffering from a number of other complaints including depression, addictions, phobias and a variety of self-esteem issues. The Breakthrough Therapy For Overcoming Anxiety, Stress and Trauma

Do you suffer from trauma? Check out our list of symptoms to see if you suffer from trauma.

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EMDR has been shown to be the most effective and thoroughly researched method ever used in the treatment of trauma. EMDR triggers an innate, natural stress release process in the brain that often produces rapid and long lasting changes even when other types of treatment have failed.

EMDR is a method of psychotherapy that integrates many successful elements of different therapeutic approaches in combination with eye movements, sounds or tapping that create rhythmical, bilateral stimulation to brain hemispheres.

By activating the natural, information-processing system of the brain, people achieve their therapeutic goals at a rapid rate with recognizable changes that don't disappear over time.

When people come to me for EMDR therapy, they are relieved to discover that, unlike other therapies, they are not required to relive a traumatic event or to share embarrassing details of it with the therapist. While they do need to remember the event during therapy, they are pleasantly surprised at how quickly EMDR removes the emotional charge from their memory, deactivating it as an emotional button. EMDR has been shown to be the most effective way to rapidly release the blocked energy of emotional trauma, bringing long lasting relief.

As a certified EMDR therapist, I am still amazed at how quickly people release even seemingly complex traumas right before my eyes. I have a ringside seat for miracles. Because EMDR triggers an innate, natural stress release process, people are able to let go of stress and negative beliefs about themselves spontaneously as their perception shifts. This gives them new insights into their lives that arise from within themselves. Clients remain in charge of their own process, which is very important for those recovering from having their power taken away by abuse or violation.

While research shows that EMDR is a powerful tool for helping with many kinds of problems, the most dramatic results are often seen with people suffering from trauma. Five recent studies show that after only three treatment sessions, 84-90% of people suffering from events such as rape, combat, loss of a loved one, accidents, natural disasters, etc. no longer had post-traumatic stress disorder. EMDR was demonstrated to be twice as effective in half the amount of time as compared to the standard traditional care, according to a recent study financed by Kaiser Permanente.

While many people show dramatic responses in a short amount of time, there are also those who progress more slowly, which is not abnormal. Everyone progresses at a rate that is appropriate for them and their situation. Like any technique, however, EMDR is more useful in the hands of a skilled therapist.

EMDR is being used to help end conflict by stopping the effects of violence from spreading and causing more violence. Through the Red Cross, EMDR therapists volunteer their time to help in war zones and natural disasters like the Oklahoma City bombing, detraumatizing victims and rescue workers alike. Author of the original book on EMDR, Dr. Francine Shapiro said, "The only way we will end violence is by healing the wounds that cause it."

More information "EMDR is one of the most powerful tools I've encountered for treating posttraumatic stress. In the hands of a competent and compassionate therapist, it gives people the means to heal themselves." Steven Silver, Ph.D.,

Director of the PTSD unit,
Veterans Administration Medical Center,
Coatesville, PA

"EMDR therapy has emerged as a procedure to be reckoned with in psychology . . . Almost a million have been treated . . . research appears to support the remarkable claims made." Washington Post

"EMDR provides a way for people to free themselves from destructive memories and it seems to work, even in cases where years of conventional therapy have failed." Hugh Downs,

20/20, ABC News

"EMDR, which to newcomers sounds implausible and way too good to be true, may become the psychological wonder cure of the nineties, the non-pharmaceutical equivalent of Prozac." New York Magazine

"EMDR assists survivors in the immediate aftermath of violent trauma by breaking through the walls of denial, shock, grief and anger Ideal for those who have been unable to forget past traumatic life events, as it allows for a rapid processing of even deeply rooted memories, giving individuals back control of their lives and their emotions." Dusty Bowencamp, RN CTR,

Disaster Mental Health, American Red Cross

"People often have 'stuck issues' such as phobias, or attitudes about themselves, or tendencies to 'freeze' on the verge of doing something they would really like to do. These stuck issues persist even with a clear understanding of their senselessness and quite often even after many years of otherwise productive psychotherapy. EMDR leads to the rapid resolution of chronic psychological problems like these and has helped my patients resolve issues which had previously seemed unrelenting." Sandra Shapiro, Ph.D.,

Associate Professor of Psychology,
City University of NY

"EMDR quickly opens new windows on reality, allowing people to see solutions within themselves that they never knew were there. And it's a therapy where the client is very much in charge, which can be particularly meaningful when people are recovering from having their power taken away by abuse and violation." Laura S. Brown, Ph.D., ABPP,

Clinical professor of psychology,
University of Washington

"EMDR is a valuable addition to our therapeutic arsenal. It is not a panacea, but it has tremendous power in addressing the sequelae of trauma and a wide variety of psychological problems." Richard P. Kluft, M.D.,

Clinical professor of psychiatry,
Temple University School of Medicine

"EMDR is a powerful tool in the hands of a skillful therapist. I've found it extremely useful in the treatment of the painful aftermath of rape, assault, combat, drug addiction, and the death of a loved one. But I've also found it a real help in overcoming the wide variety of less dramatic issues that bring people into my office; overcoming jealousy, envy, and the loss of relationships (including divorce), fear of taking a test or fear of an intimidating boss, writer's and artist's block, sexual inhibition, and a variety of self-sabotage." Lewis Engel, Ph.D.,

Clinical psychologist, private practice,
San Francisco

"A mainline therapy busily accumulating research on its efficacy, it is also a therapy that makes room for the soul." Common Boundary

"EMDR and spiritual awakening are the most powerful tools I know to end conflict. I combine the two by using a heart-centered, empowerment approach to therapy, because an open heart brings about quicker results from all healing methods, including EMDR" Kalie Marino, MSW,

Clinical therapist, private practice,
Warminster, PA

More information