

EMDR Information

Please tell me about any medical health conditions (especially ones that could be exacerbated by stress). Also, tell me if you have eye pain, eye problems, seizures, or if you are taking any medications.

I cannot predict or guarantee what the results of EMDR will be. Distressing emotions and memories can come up during and after EMDR. It is important to have enough resources and support before starting EMDR.

The timing of EMDR is important. It's not recommended to start EMDR before or during an important project or when you are too busy. Healing and practicing relaxation skills takes time and energy.

If you are involved in a potential legal issue, please tell me about it and consult with your attorney before starting EMDR.

"When a disturbing event occurs, it can get locked in the brain with the original picture, sounds, thoughts, feelings and body sensations. EMDR seems to stimulate the information and allows the brain to reprocess the experience. That may be what is happening in REM or dream sleep - the eye movements (tones, tactile) may help to reprocess the unconscious material. It is your own brain that will be doing the healing and you are the one in control." (EMDR Institute manual)

Eight phases of EMDR: History taking, Preparation, Assessment, Desensitization ("EMDR"), Strengthening positive belief/goal, Body scan, Closure, and Re-evaluation

During EMDR, you are in control. You can stop at any time.

You cannot do EMDR wrong. We can work with whatever comes up. During EMDR, I will frequently ask for a brief description of what you are noticing at that moment. Just let me know what you're noticing right then. That will let me know how to proceed.

Sometimes, people start with one memory and focus only on that memory. Other times, people start with one memory and find other memories, emotions, and thoughts coming up. Either way is okay. Occasionally, I will ask about the initial memory.

Once we start processing one set of memories, it's best to finish processing those memories before starting on a new issue/memory. This lessens the chance of feeling overwhelmed.

During EMDR, dual awareness can be helpful- knowing you are safe in my

office and remembering the past. Also, it can be helpful to imagine the traumatic images on a small screen (as far away as necessary) or as if the images are scenery as you ride by on a train.

During EMDR, there is no need to try to consciously control or force a positive solution. Usually, it is better to let whatever happens happen.

After an EMDR session, processing may continue. You might have new insights, thoughts, feelings, or dreams; if so, just notice them and make a note in your journal or TICES log. We can work on them together. Use the safe place exercise, container exercise, and other relaxation techniques when needed. Call me if necessary. If I am unavailable, the Crisis Line is 1-855-278-4204. If it's an emergency, call 911.

After an EMDR session, please be careful walking down the stairs, driving, riding a bike, etc. Make sure you are grounded and safe before doing so.

For more information, www.emdr.com and www.emdria.org are good resources. Also, Getting Past Your Past by Francine Shapiro, the therapist who developed EMDR, is another way to learn more about EMDR. Please discuss any concerns or questions with me.

Practice relaxation exercises daily so that you are able to calm down and relax when needed. The more you practice them, the easier they are to do. Here is a quick reminder of some potential relaxation techniques:

Safe place – Imagine your safe place whenever you want to calm down.

Container – Put any painful emotions or thoughts in the container, knowing that you can work through them when you are ready.

Deep breathing – Breathe in deeply, allowing your abdomen to expand as you inhale. Breathe out fully. Repeat several times. Or say “breathing in” & “breathing out”.

Feet, back/legs, or hands – Notice your feet on the floor. Or your back/legs against the chair. Or your fingers touching your thumbs. Or your hands touching each other.

5 things – Visually notice 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 things in the room. Or 5 sounds?

Breathing shift – Notice your breathing. Remember when you felt calmer and allow your breath to match that calmer pattern. Slower. Or notice & count breaths.

Light stream – Imagine unlimited healing light flowing down through you, permeating any difficulties, and washing away problems.

Spiral – Imagine the difficulty as spiraling clockwise or counterclockwise. Overlay the opposite spiral. Gently change the direction of the spiral.

Grounding – Feel your feet on the floor/ground. Imagine roots connecting you to the earth. Allow the earth to hold and transform any troubles.