

# EYE-MOVEMENT DESENSITIZATION & REPROCESSING (EMDR)

A research-supported psychotherapy used to relieve distress associated with traumatic experiences

## **How Does it Work?**

EMDR is a physiologically-based approach to processing trauma that helps individuals adapt to disturbing memories in less distressing ways. Trauma has a broad range of effects on the way the brain processes memories and information, and EMDR helps repair normal brain processing so that individuals are no longer distressed by intrusive thoughts, images, sounds, and intense feelings associated with the traumatic memory.

## **What is the Focus?**

The therapist uses a technique called bilateral stimulation (BLS), while the client brings in their senses to focus on the experience, and the client just notices whatever comes to mind without making efforts to control direction or content. BLS may be visual, auditory, or tactile, and it is continued during the processing until the memory becomes less distressing and associated with adaptive thoughts and beliefs. The client may experience intense emotions during treatment, but by the end, clients report a reduction in the level of disturbance associated with the trauma.

### **EMDR uses a structured eight-phase approach that includes:**

- Phase 1: History Taking & Treatment Planning*
- Phase 2: Preparation*
- Phase 3: Assessing Targets*
- Phase 4: Desensitization*
- Phase 5: Installation*
- Phase 6: Body Scan*
- Phase 7: Closure*
- Phase 8: Reevaluation*

One or more sessions are required for the therapist to understand the nature of the problem and determine whether EMDR is appropriate for you.

### **How Long Does it Take?**

A typical session can be from 60 - 90 minutes. The type of problem, amount of previous trauma, and life circumstances determine how many treatment sessions are necessary. Controlled studies show that EMDR decreases PTSD symptoms, guilt disturbing memories, anxiety, emotional distress, panic attacks, complicated grief, and phobias.

### **For More Information, Please Contact:**

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