

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing at a Glance

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) was developed by Francine Shapiro, Ph.D., for the treatment of symptoms related to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A form of psychotherapy, EMDR is designed to resolve trauma-related disorders caused by exposure to distressing, traumatizing, or negative life events.

EMDR uses an approach that helps individuals physiologically reprocess targeted memory networks. Treatment focuses on past experiences as the basis for clinical complaints; current situations that trigger dysfunctional emotions, beliefs, and sensations; and positive experiences needed to enhance future adaptive behaviors and mental health.

The duration of EMDR sessions varies according to the presenting trauma. During sessions, the patient focuses on the targeted incident, while simultaneously undergoing bilateral stimulation that can consist of eye movements, vibrations or tapping movements on different sides of the body, or audio tones delivered through headphones. Focused protocols are used, and no homework or detailed descriptions of the events are required.

What the Evidence Tells Us

Over the past 15 years, studies have demonstrated that EMDR is effective in reducing trauma-related stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms among children and adults of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, including veterans. Over 30 randomized trials show that EMDR is beneficial in improving PTSD symptoms. Efficacy studies have compared EMDR to a control group or other commonly used trauma treatments. Findings suggest EMDR is as effective as other trauma-related treatments and in some cases superior in achieving symptom reduction in a shorter amount of time.

Why Your Organization May Consider Implementing EMDR

EMDR has been shown to successfully treat combat veterans, persons with phobias, individuals with panic disorder or generalized anxiety disorder, victims of sexual assault, and victims of manmade or natural disasters.

Your organization may consider implementing EMDR because it is an evidence-based practice with significant positive outcomes in the treatment of trauma-related stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms associated with PTSD. EMDR has been recognized as an effective treatment for PTSD and

other trauma-related disorders by international and national organizations.

More Information on Implementing EMDR

- ▶ The EMDR Institute Web site <http://www.emdr.com/>
- ▶ The National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices Web site <http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=199>