

What is EMDR - For Adults

EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) is a psychotherapy approach developed by Dr. Francine Shapiro to help people heal from trauma or adversities such as issues of abuse, bullying, domestic violence, grief/loss, attachment wounds, abandonment, PTSD, and many other complicated life issues. EMDR therapy is now validated as an evidence-based approach and included in SAMHSA (the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) and the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. In addition, EMDR therapy has been validated by over 20 randomized controlled clinical trials.

EMDR therapy integrates elements of many traditional psychological orientations and is based on the adaptive information processing model (AIP). The AIP model hypothesizes that there is an inherent information processing system in the brain that gets blocked when traumatic or adverse events occur, causing these events to get locked in the brain with the original picture, sounds, thoughts, feelings and body sensations. Whenever a reminder of the traumatic or adverse event comes up, those pictures, thoughts, feelings, and sensations can continue to be triggered. According to Dr. Shapiro, many emotional problems and disorders are manifestations of these unprocessed trauma memories that are stored in the brain. EMDR therapy works on helping the brain reprocess these traumatic memories, and as a result alleviating the emotional and psychological disorders.

EMDR therapy has been used with children and adolescents with a wide variety of emotional and psychological problems including PTSD, anxiety, phobias, depression, attachment disorders etc. The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare has now accepted EMDR therapy as an evidence-based approach for children.