

What is EMDR - For Parents

You have in your hands the delicate and complex work of shaping another human being. Being a parent is such a privilege but it also requires a great commitment and work. If you have a child with emotional or behavioral difficulties, the good news is that there is help and there are many therapeutic modalities that can help you and your child. One of these therapies is called EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing).

EMDR 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, 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.

It is worth highlighting how the traumas that have not healed in this generation have the potential of being passed into the next. The sense of self in any child does not develop in isolation; in fact it develops in the parent-child relationship and other important relationships early in life. We came to this world to connect with others and when these connections do not happen or they happen in a way that hurt us or injure us, our sense of self does not develop appropriately.

In many cases having the child as well as the parent receive EMDR therapy may be recommended for best results. Sometimes the parent may be highly traumatized by living through the traumas of their children and the healing needs to take place in both, the child and the parent. Sometimes because of the parents' early experiences with their own parents, they may have difficulties setting boundaries with their kids, or they may be overprotective, neglectful or abusive or too distant or too intrusive. Parent's emotional problems can affect their children's emotional, physical and psychological development. For instance, a parent with depression, without knowing or intending to, may neglect their child's needs for connection and love. This can result in having a child with emotional and behavioral problems.

We are privileged now to have so many tools and options that can help us heal. All of us at some point in our lives need help. We are biologically hard wired to need others and need help from others. Don't give up! There is hope and so many ways to find healing and become whole. Remember you don't have to go through this alone. There are EMDR therapists all over the world that can assist you.