

# 01 EMDR RECAP



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EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) is an eight-phase approach to psychotherapy. It's internationally recognized as an empirically supported treatment, particularly effective for trauma.

Scientific research has demonstrated that EMDR is effective not only for trauma but also for various other issues, including:

- Addictive Behaviors
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Creativity/Flow Development
- Depression and Mood Disorders
- Emotional Eating
- Painful Experiences/Memories
- Loss and Grief
- Pain Reduction (more information at [Dr. Mark Grant's website](#))
- Performance Enhancement (athletic, academic, musical, professional)
- Procrastination and Avoidance Behaviors
- Relationship Enrichment and Healing
- Self-esteem Improvement
- Stress Management
- Trauma (violence/abuse, car accidents, natural disasters)

## CREDIBILITY: DOES EMDR REALLY WORK?

EMDR is a research-based therapy with over 20 years of scientific validation. It has more controlled studies validating its effectiveness for PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) than any other treatment method. For further research citations and information, visit:

[EMDR.uk](http://EMDR.uk)

[UK Trauma Council](http://UK Trauma Council)

[PTSD.UK](http://PTSD.UK)



EMDR is currently top-rated for treating both single-incident trauma (like car accidents or natural disasters) and complex trauma (such as chronic childhood abuse). Brain research has shown that trauma significantly alters brain chemistry and structure. PET scans show that EMDR facilitates neurobiological repair.

## Defining Trauma

When danger is perceived, the body responds automatically:

- The sympathetic nervous system sends stress hormones to the respiratory, cardiovascular, and muscular systems, preparing us to fight or flee.
- The neo-cortex, including Broca's area for speech, shuts down, prioritizing instinct over thought.
- If fighting or fleeing isn't possible, the body enters a freeze response, releasing endorphins to manage pain and causing dissociation from the body and experience.

Trauma can be anything that overwhelms the mind/body/spirit. The traumatic experience is encoded in implicit memory (fragments of images, thoughts, sounds, smells, physical sensations, and emotions).

Post-trauma, all mammals need to discharge energy physically and convert implicit memory into explicit memory by adding words and creating a meaningful narrative.

Humans especially need to share their story to fully heal, but trauma often isolates survivors, making it hard to communicate their experience.

## Trauma Symptoms

- Flashbacks
- Uncomfortable feelings with no apparent source
- Emotional over-reactions
- Physical sensations without a rational cause
- Anxiety despite preparation
- Negative self-talk
- Slips of speech
- Self-sabotaging behaviors

These symptoms are implicit memory trying to surface, while avoidance symptoms like dissociation, self-destructive behaviors, isolation, and denial are the neo-cortex attempting to ignore these intrusions. EMDR helps by enabling implicit and explicit memory to communicate while keeping the body relaxed, transforming traumatic memories into narrative history.

Research shows that writing/journaling helps heal trauma. Trauma and grief are most effectively resolved when shared with a supportive other. After EMDR, people often feel more at peace with themselves and connected to others.

## EMDR 8 STAGE PROTOCOL

- History Taking: Discuss current challenges, symptoms, and goals for the future.
- Preparation: Education: Learn about EMDR to make an informed decision.
- Resource Installation: Visualize positive places, people, and inner strengths using bilateral stimulation.
- Trauma Targeting: Create a list of targets (traumatic memories, negative thoughts, fear/anxiety symptoms, etc.).
- Assessment: Choose a target to work on, rate its distress, and identify desired positive beliefs.
- Reprocessing/Desensitization: Recall the target memory with bilateral stimulation to process and desensitize it.
- Installation: Link the positive belief to the desensitized target memory using bilateral stimulation.
- Body Scan: Scan the body for tension or discomfort and use bilateral stimulation to address these sensations.
- Closure: Ensure the client feels safe, stable, and grounded after each session.
- Reevaluation: Review experiences since the last session and ensure positive changes have remained.

### After an EMDR Session

EMDR facilitates deep and lasting changes. Between sessions, it's normal to discover new information, make unexpected connections, and experience strong emotions. Writing down experiences between sessions can be helpful. Practicing positive resources developed during EMDR can be empowering and comforting.