

# Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, or EMDR, is a powerful new psychotherapy technique which has been very successful in helping people who suffer from trauma, anxiety, panic, disturbing memories, post-traumatic stress and many other emotional problems. Until recently, these conditions were difficult and time-consuming to treat. EMDR is considered a breakthrough therapy because of its simplicity and the fact that it can bring quick and lasting relief for most types of emotional distress.

The EMDR technique was discovered by Francine Shapiro in 1989 and uses a natural function of the body, rapid eye movement, or REM, as its basis. The human mind uses REM during sleep time to help it process daily emotional experiences. When trauma is extreme, this process breaks down and REM sleep doesn't bring the usual relief from distress. This is where EMDR comes in. EMDR is the next step or, you might say, an advanced stage of the REM processing.

As troubling images and feelings are processed by the brain via the eye movement patterns of EMDR, resolution of the issues and a more peaceful state are soon at hand.

Research shows that EMDR is rapid, safe and effective. EMDR does not involve the use of drugs or hypnosis. It is a simple, non-invasive patient-therapist collaboration in which healing can happen effectively.

## What Problems are helped by EMDR?

Studies to date show a high degree of effectiveness with the following conditions:

- trauma
- fears
- anxiety
- childhood trauma
- phobias
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- rape
- victims of violent crimes
- post-traumatic stress
- depression
- overwhelming fears
- panic attacks
- low self-esteem
- performance and test anxiety

The EMDR technique is most effective when used in conjunction with other traditional methods of therapy in treating these and many other emotional disorders.

EMDR therapy can help clients replace their anxiety and fear with positive images, emotions and thoughts.

## Are there Studies that show the EMDR is Effective?

Fourteen controlled studies of EMDR make it the most thoroughly researched treatment method ever used to treat trauma. A recent study of individuals who experienced rape, military combat, loss of loved ones, disasters and serious accidents, found that 84-90% had relief of their emotional distress after only three EMDR sessions. Another study showed that EMDR was twice as effective in half the amount of time of standard traditional psychotherapeutic care.

## Is EMDR Hypnosis?

No. During the EMDR session, the client is awake and alert and in control at all times.

## Who Can Administer EMDR?

Only practicing, licensed psychologist or therapists, psychiatrists, social workers and counselors may receive EMDR training and use EMDR therapy with clients.