

# Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing [EMDR]

## INFORMED CONSENT FOR TREATMENT

Please initial in the space provided [\_\_\_\_\_] after your have read the material.

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EMDR is a simple but efficient therapy using bilateral stimulation (BLS), which includes and is used:

- Tapping, auditory tones or eye movements
- To accelerate the brain's capacity to process and heal a troubling memory.

BLS, which occurs naturally during dream sleep, causes the two brain parts to work together to reintegrate the memory. Some clients experience relief or positive effects in just a few sessions. EMDR is effective in alleviating trauma-related symptoms, whether the traumatic event occurred many years ago or yesterday. It gives desired results—with little talking, without using drugs, and requires no “homework” between sessions. \_\_\_\_\_

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Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing is a trauma resolution modality that currently has more scientific research as a treatment for trauma than any other non-pharmaceutical intervention. Based on thousands of client and clinician testimonials, EMDR has proven an effective and rapid method of reprocessing traumatic material in the treatment of post-traumatic stress symptoms, other traumatic experiences, depression, panic attacks, anxiety disorders, stress, sexual and physical abuse, disturbing memories, complicated grief and addictions and phobias. \_\_\_\_\_

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It is important to recognize that this treatment does not remove memories – it removes the negative emotions that have become associated with particular traumatic events. \_\_\_\_\_

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The possible benefits of EMDR treatment include:

1. EMDR seems to unlock the nervous system and allows the brain to process a traumatic experience. The images, sounds and feelings are no longer relived when the event is brought to mind. The event is still remembered, but the painful thoughts, emotions and sensations associated with it are removed. \_\_\_\_\_
2. EMDR can be thought of as a physiologically-based therapy that assists the brain in making sense out of disturbing material and then storing that material away in a more normal process of memory. \_\_\_\_\_
3. It is important and beneficial for the client to remember that it is the client's own brain that is doing the healing. \_\_\_\_\_

4. The memory is remembered but the painful emotions, physical sensations and the disturbing images and thoughts are no longer present. \_\_\_\_\_
5. EMDR helps the brain reintegrate the memory and store it in a more appropriate place in the brain. The client's own brain reintegrates the memory and does the healing. \_\_\_\_\_

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The possible risks of EMDR treatment include:

1. Reprocessing a memory may bring up associated memories. This is normal and those memories will also be reprocessed. \_\_\_\_\_
2. During the EMDR, the client may experience physical sensations and retrieve images, emotions and sounds associated with the memory. \_\_\_\_\_
3. After the reprocessing session, you may continue to process the information. You may have dreams, memories, flashbacks, feelings, etc. If this happens, write them down in your log and bring them to the next session. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Other memories, flashbacks, feelings and sensations may occur. The client may have dreams associated with the memory. Frequently the brain is able to process these additional memories without help, but arrangements for assistance will be made in a timely manner if the client is unable to cope. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Reprocessing traumatic memories can be uncomfortable as with any other therapeutic approach. \_\_\_\_\_

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As with any other therapeutic approach, reprocessing traumatic memories can be uncomfortable; that means, some people won't like or be able to tolerate EMDR treatment well. Others need more preparation, offered by the therapist, before processing traumatic events using EMDR. \_\_\_\_\_

- There are no known adverse effects of interrupting EMDR therapy; therefore, a client can discontinue treatment at any time. \_\_\_\_\_
- Alternative therapeutic approaches may include individual or group therapy, medication, or a different psychotherapy modality. \_\_\_\_\_
- EMDR treatment is facilitated by a Licensed Psychotherapist having EMDRIA-approved training. \_\_\_\_\_

# HISTORY AND SAFETY FACTORS

The client must ...

- Be willing to tell the therapist the truth about what he/she is experiencing. \_\_\_\_\_
- Be able to tolerate high levels of emotional disturbance, have the ability to reprocess associated memories resulting from EMDR therapy, and to use self control and relaxation techniques (eg. calm/safe place exercise). \_\_\_\_\_
- Remember debriefing instructions and call his/her therapist, connect with supportive family or friends, or use meditation or other techniques (eg. calm place exercise) he/she has agreed to in therapy, if needed. \_\_\_\_\_
- Disclose to therapist and consult with his/her physician before EMDR therapy if he/she has a history of or current eye problems, a diagnosed heart disease, elevated blood pressure, or is at risk for or has a history of stroke, heart attack, seizure, or other limiting medical conditions that may put him/her at medical risk. Due to stress related to reprocessing traumatic events, pregnant women should consider postponing EMDR therapy. \_\_\_\_\_
- Inform therapist if he/she is wearing contact lenses and will remove them if they impede eye movements due to irritation or eye dryness. The therapist will discontinue bilateral stimulation (BLS) eye movements if client reports eye pain and use other dual stimulation (tapping, sounds) to continue reprocessing. \_\_\_\_\_
- Assess his/her current life situation to determine EMDR approach. Client may need the ability to postpone demanding work schedule immediately following EMDR session. \_\_\_\_\_
- Before participating in EMDR, discuss with therapist all aspects of an upcoming legal court case where testimony is required. The client may need to postpone EMDR treatment if she/he is a victim or witness to a crime that is being prosecuted because the traumatic material processed using EMDR may fade, blur or disappear and her/his testimony may be challenged. \_\_\_\_\_
- Understand disagreements with family and/or friends may occur as she/he learns new skills such as assertiveness or social skills after processing problems and disturbing material using EMDR. Vulnerable clients may need to be protected. \_\_\_\_\_
- Be willing to explore the issues(s) that may arise as change occurs. For example, changes regarding your identity; finances; loss of identification with a peer group; and/or attention. \_\_\_\_\_

- Consult with his/her medical doctor, before utilizing medication. Some medications may reduce the effectiveness of EMDR. For example, benzodiazapines may reduce effectiveness possibly due to state-dependent processing and/or regression may occur after ceasing anti-depressants. \_\_\_\_\_
- Address with the therapist his/her ability to attend to EMDR due to recent cocaine dependence, long term amphetamine abuse, seizures, and/or other neurological conditions. EMDR is contraindicated with recent crack cocaine users and long term amphetamine users. \_\_\_\_\_
- If you are predisposed to alcohol or drug use, the urge to use these substances to relax may intensify. You agree to utilize relaxation techniques rather than using drugs or alcohol as a means of relaxing. \_\_\_\_\_
- Discuss with the therapist any Dissociative Disorders; Dissociative Identity Disorder unexplained somatic symptoms, sleep problems, flashbacks, derealization and/or depersonalization, hears voices, unexplained feelings, memory lapses, multiple psychiatric hospitalizations, multiple diagnoses with little treatment progress - EMDR may trigger these symptoms \_\_\_\_\_

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There is no indication that if EMDR therapy is interrupted that there will be any adverse affects, therefore, a client can choose to discontinue treatment at any time. \_\_\_\_\_

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Alternative therapeutic approaches include the following: individual, group and family psychotherapy in congruence with medication management as deemed appropriate. \_\_\_\_\_

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**I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION ABOUT EMDR. I UNDERSTAND THAT I CAN CHOOSE TO DISCONTINUE TREATMENT AT ANY TIME. I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN EMDR TREATMENT AND I ASSUME ANY RISKS INVOLVED IN SUCH PARTICIPATION.**

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Name (printed)

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Client Signature

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Date