

Tree of Life Wellness Services, LLC

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What is EMDR?

EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) is an innovative method of therapy that so far has helped over a million people, and typically works much faster than regular talk therapy.

What it works for – EMDR was originally used for people who experienced a traumatic event and now is being successfully used to help people with:

- Post-traumatic stress
- Anxiety and panic
- Depression
- Weight loss
- Sports performance enhancement
- Work performance enhancement
- Self-esteem
- Phobias
- Disturbing memories
- Stress reduction
- Complicated grief
- Sexual or physical abuse
- Combat
- Crime victims

How it works - EMDR uses elements from many therapeutic approaches in combination with eye movements, taps, or sounds which stimulate both sides of the brain and allow the brain's natural healing to be "unstuck". When someone is very upset or traumatized, their brain doesn't process information as it usually does and information gets "stuck" or "frozen in time". Remembering a trauma or thinking about a problem can feel as if it were happening again. EMDR activates the brain's natural healing and information-processing system. After EMDR, the person is still able to remember what happened, but it is less upsetting and the trauma or issue no longer feels like it's being "relived". Some hypothesize that EMDR works similarly to REM or rapid eye movement sleep, where the eyes move during dreams to help the brain process daily life events.

What a typical session is like – In a typical EMDR session we first identify a specific event or mental picture to be the focus of the session. We then identify what underlying belief about yourself the event or picture means to you. During the EMDR, you call to mind both the event and the belief while I facilitate eye movements or taps which are continued in sets until the memory becomes less disturbing. (This causes bilateral stimulation of the brain, which allows the brain to naturally heal and process the memories.) The sets are brief, less than a minute or so, and if desired we can talk about what went through your mind during each set. Sometimes people find that their mind jumps to different aspects of the

event/memory, or to seemingly unrelated things. Other times people don't feel much happening at all, but may later notice changes in their thinking, their interactions with others, or their stress level. Clients sometimes experience intense emotions during the session but usually by the end of the session feel much less disturbed about the event/memory.

EMDR can also be used to "install" positive thoughts and images in the brain, such as imagining oneself with greater self esteem, performing well at work, giving a speech, successfully running a marathon, or losing weight. Using EMDR this way basically involves training your brain for success.

EMDR for weight loss EMDR can also be used to help people with weight loss, particularly if negative or distorted thinking is getting the way. For example, some people do very well on their wellness plan for days, and then unintentionally sabotage themselves by thinking "Oh, I've been so good for so long and I've had a bad day, I deserve to splurge". Or others may feel badly about themselves, suffer from low self-esteem, or regularly go back and forth between trying their hardest to lose weight and then giving up after thinking "Maybe I'm not worth it, I might as well give up". EMDR can help to clear up any negative or distorted thinking to ensure that your thinking and your goals match up.

EMDR can also be used to "install" the positive reasons to lose weight and the positive thinking that will help you meet your goals. For example, installing what it feels like to eat healthy and feel pleasantly full but not stuffed after a meal, or installing what it feels like emotionally to regularly eat healthy and exercise.

How long does it take – Typically at least one talk session is needed ahead of time to get a sense of what you'd like to accomplish and to determine if EMDR would be the best treatment. Then, a typical EMDR session lasts between 50-90 minutes. Sometimes one EMDR session is enough to feel significant relief; other times several sessions are necessary, depending on the nature of the issue and the person's life history.

Does it actually work? – 14 controlled studies support the helpfulness of EMDR. For more information on research studies see the EMDR website www.emdr.com.

For more information –Contact me at 720-280-4368 or treeoflifewellness@gmail.com to find out more about EMDR or to schedule an appointment. Or visit the official EMDR website www.emdr.com to find out more about EMDR or to get more information about the research studies that have been done.

Books about EMDR–

EMDR: The Breakthrough "Eye Movement" Therapy for Overcoming Anxiety, Stress, and Trauma

Francine Shapiro, PhD and Margo Silk Forrest

Emotional Healing At Warp Speed: The Power of EMDR

David Grand, PhD

Small Wonders. Healing Childhood Trauma with EMDR

Joan Lovett, MD