

Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing

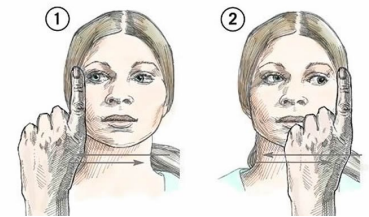
When a disturbing event occurs, it can become locked in the brain with the original thoughts, feelings, or sensations. Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) seems to stimulate the information, desensitize the memory, and allow the brain to reprocess the experience. EMDR was discovered in 1987 by Francine Shapiro by complete accident. Dr. Shapiro was walking in a park, looking back and forth between the trees, and noticed that her eye movements appeared to

decrease the negative emotions associated with some distressing thoughts. She developed a standard and conducted studies to test her hypothesis that rapid eye movements were effective at minimizing distressing thoughts. These studies have later gone on to be replicated and have evolved to include advanced uses within the psychological field. This therapy continues to be studied today, and individuals who are trained in EMDR, are expected to continue their education and training to stay up-to-date on advances.



Eye
Movement
Desensitization &
Reprocessing

EMDR therapy works with the healing power of your own brain by activating the memory through bilateral stimulation. This is most commonly done with eye movements, but this therapy has been adapted over the years to include auditory or tactile forms of bilateral stimulation. There is no right or wrong way of processing your memories while completing EMDR with a trained therapist, as it is your own brain doing the healing. You may feel like what comes up is not associated with the problems that brought you to therapy, but as Dr. Shapiro says, “it’s all connected.”



Before your EMDR therapist, begins to utilize bilateral stimulation, it is important to gather background information. This phase of treatment most often looks like traditional talk therapy and will also consist of assessments and questionnaires. This will aide in the effectiveness of EMDR and in creating a plan for your treatment. There is no set timeline for EMDR completion, as each individual is unique.

EMDR is different from hypnosis in that you stay in the here-and-now and are asked to just notice a disturbing memory rather than relive it. This form of therapy is different from other forms of therapy in that there is little to no homework. After a session of EMDR therapy, processing may still occur, it is recommended that you journal your thoughts without input from others so it is still your brain doing the healing and you are not getting input from outside sources. Once you have completed your journal entry, if you wish to share about your EMDR experience, keep in mind, you are in control of your own thoughts and feelings.

