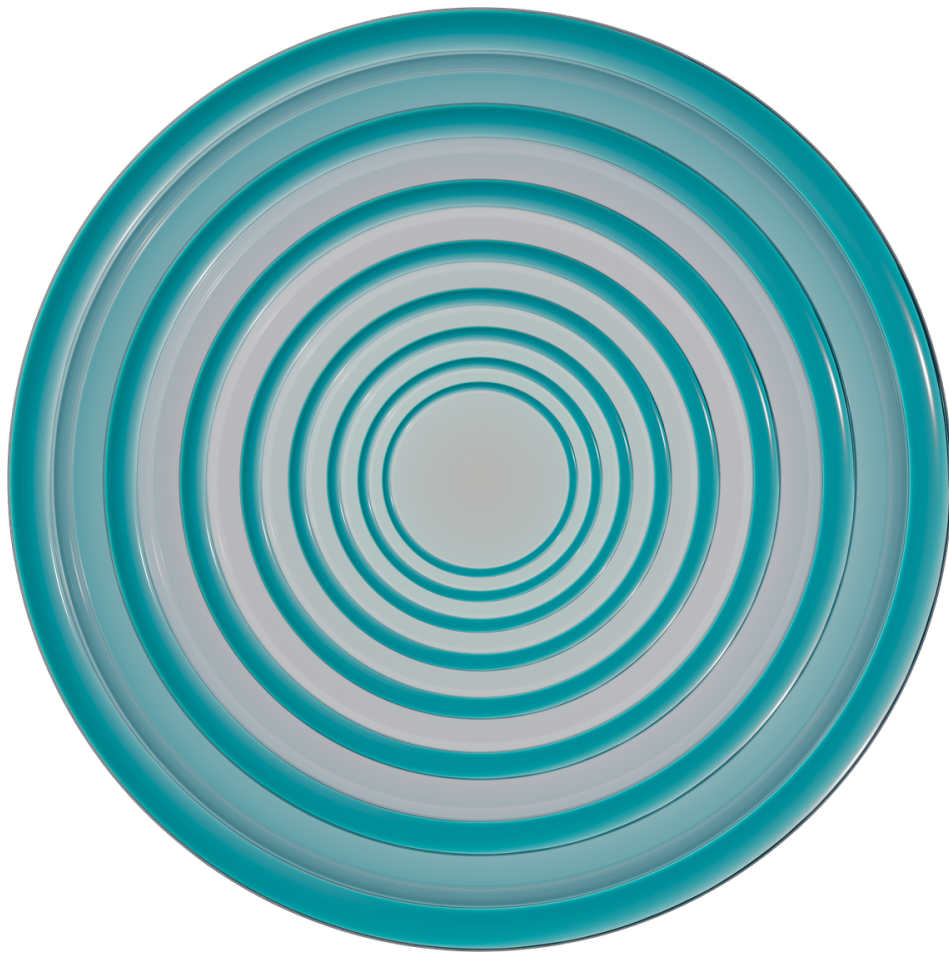


Client Information Guide

Understanding EMDR Therapy

Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing



Your Wellbeing Matters
Integrative Psychotherapy

Understanding EMDR

What Is EMDR Therapy?

EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing. It is a structured form of psychotherapy designed to help people process distressing experiences and memories that may continue to feel emotionally present.

When something feels overwhelming, the experience may not be fully processed at the time. Reminders in the present can then activate some of the original emotions, physical sensations, thoughts or beliefs, even when part of you knows that the event is over.

EMDR aims to help the memory become less distressing and feel more clearly located in the past. It does not remove what happened, but it may reduce the influence it has on your life now.



How Does EMDR Work?

EMDR is informed by the Adaptive Information Processing model. This proposes that some overwhelming experiences may remain stored in a way that leaves the original emotions, physical sensations and beliefs easily activated.

During EMDR, you focus on agreed aspects of a memory while engaging in bilateral stimulation. This commonly involves guided eye movements, although alternating sounds or gentle self-tapping may also be used.

The process aims to support the memory in becoming less distressing and more integrated with other experiences and information.



A structured, collaborative and individually paced therapy

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The Eight Phases of EMDR

Phases 1-4: understanding, preparation and beginning the work

EMDR follows eight phases, but these do not necessarily correspond to eight sessions. We may move between phases or spend longer on particular areas according to your history, needs and responses.

01

Understanding Your History and Needs

History Taking and Treatment Planning

We explore what has brought you to therapy, relevant experiences from your history and the difficulties affecting you now. Together, we consider your goals and whether EMDR may be appropriate.

02

Preparation and Resourcing

Preparation

Before processing begins, we develop ways to help you feel grounded, supported and able to manage difficult emotions. We also agree how you can pause the work whenever needed.

03

Agreeing the Focus

Assessment

Together, we identify a memory, image, belief or present-day trigger to focus on. We also notice the connected emotions and physical sensations, and identify a more helpful belief to strengthen.

04

Processing the Experience

Desensitisation

You focus on agreed aspects of the experience while using bilateral stimulation. We pause regularly so that you can notice what is emerging and remain connected with the present.

Assessment and preparation are important parts of the therapeutic work.

The Eight Phases of EMDR

Phases 5–8: strengthening, checking, closing and reviewing

05

Strengthening a Helpful Belief

Installation

As the memory becomes less distressing, we strengthen a more adaptive belief, such as “I am safe now,” “I have choices” or “I am good enough,” depending on what feels meaningful to you.

06

Noticing the Body

Body Scan

You are invited to notice whether any discomfort or tension remains in your body when you think about the memory. If something is still present, we consider together what it may need.

07

Ending the Session Safely

Closure

Time is given to help you feel sufficiently settled before leaving. When processing is unfinished, we use agreed grounding or containment strategies and discuss support between sessions.

08

Reviewing the Work

Re-evaluation

At a later session, we review what you have noticed and whether the memory remains less distressing. This helps us decide whether to continue, revisit an earlier phase or move to another focus.



You remain awake, aware and in control throughout EMDR.

You can pause at any time, and the pace will be shaped around your individual needs.

References

Shapiro, F. (2001). Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR): Basic Principles, Protocols, and Procedures.

World Health Organisation (2013). Guidelines for the Management of Conditions Specifically Related to Stress.

NICE (2018). Post-traumatic stress disorder.