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INTERNATIONAL GRIEF INSTITUTE

# RESILIENCE

## RX™

# EMDR THERAPY

## Self care techniques for the bereaved

The science behind why they work and how to implement them after loss



An iCare Aftercare™ resource  
International Grief Institute

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INVESTING IN COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

## WHY IT WORKS

During normal life events, our brain stores and networks our memories so they connect to other things we remember. During traumatic events, the brain experiences a disconnect between what we experience (feel, hear, see) and what our brain stores as a memory, creating a traumatic wound that our brain hasn't allowed to heal, so it doesn't realize that the trauma has passed.

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing is an extensively researched psychotherapy modality developed by Dr. Francine Shapiro, a proponent of trauma-informed mental health care, who discovered a connection between eye movement and upsetting memories in the late 1980s. EMDR underwent its first clinical trial in 1989.

EMDR has since been demonstrated to be an effective treatment for trauma and trauma-related disorders by helping the brain jumpstart its natural networking to process those experiences.

Now used around the world for disorders such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, and other sequelae of traumatic life experiences, research shows that EMDR reduces the vividness and emotions associated with the traumatic memories.

## HOW IT WORKS

A typical EMDR therapy session with a trained mental health clinician lasts from 60-90 minutes.

The client is instructed to briefly focus on the traumatic memory while simultaneously moving the eyes in a specific way. During the eye movements, attention is first focused on a negative emotion, image, or body sensation related to this event, and then shifts to a positive belief.

While the experience isn't forgotten, the emotional response from the event is lessened or resolved.

"The thing that EMDR therapy does so beautifully is to remove the barrier so that the client can begin connecting the positives and safety of the present with the pain of the past."

DR. JIM KNIPE, psychologist  
& master EMDR clinician



## DISORDERS THAT CAN BENEFIT FROM EMDR

- ✓ Anxiety and panic attacks
- ✓ PTSD
- ✓ Depression and bipolar
- ✓ Dissociative disorders
- ✓ Grief and loss
- ✓ Pain
- ✓ Phobias
- ✓ Sexual assault
- ✓ Violence and abuse

## 8 EMDR PHASES

EMDR is divided into 8 phases that guide treatment:

1. History is discussed and treatment plan is developed
2. Preparation, explanation and EMDR expectations
3. Assessment of traumatic event
4. Desensitization technique
5. Installation of a positive belief
6. Body scan to check for lingering disturbance
7. Closure to return to calm
8. Re-evaluation at each subsequent session