



Information about EMDR Therapy for Parents/Referrers

What is EMDR?

- EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) is an evidence-based psychotherapy intervention that enables people to heal from the symptoms and emotional distress that are the result of disturbing life experiences.

What happens during trauma...

- Our brain has capacity to heal, just like the body does. However, when we experience a traumatic event, the memory of this event may not be processed in the same way that an ordinary memory is processed, and may get 'stuck' in the body and mind.
- The part of the brain that usually puts a 'time and date stamp' on a memory (the hippocampus), can become suppressed.
- As a result, the memory may get 'frozen in time' or what we refer to sometimes as "trauma time".
- We then may feel as though we are reliving the event over and over and experiencing the thoughts and feelings that we had at the time of the trauma. This can present as symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, and intrusive thoughts. Additionally, this may present in behavior (especially for children and adolescents), including dysregulation or challenges with school.

How EMDR Therapy can help children and adolescents...

- EMDR is a treatment model that uses bilateral stimulation (eye movements, tapping just to name a few) to activate the brain in a way that processes and resolves 'stuck' traumatic memories, so they no longer negatively impact on us. In a sense, EMDR 'kick-starts' the brain's natural healing process and gets it moving again.
- Pathways start connecting between the emotional part of the brain and the part of the brain that thinks logically. Your child is likely to start thinking differently about the memory, and it will likely have much less of a negative impact on their life.
- The EMDR process varies for each child and is highly individualized, due to the healing process being guided from within. Some children report that EMDR is relaxing and have an immediate positive response. Other children may feel tired at the end of a session, and the benefit from the treatment comes in the weeks that follow.

What evidence is there that EMDR is a successful treatment?

- EMDR is an innovative treatment which has successfully helped over a million individuals worldwide and its validity and reliability has been established through clinical research with infants as young as 18 months of age. EMDR Therapy is a highly effective method of treatment that is endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO). The database of research can be found here at: <https://www.emdr.com/research-overview/>
- Common Myths about EMDR treatment can be found here: <https://mindfuljourneycounselingandwellness.com/2020/10/08/7-myths-about-emdr-therapy/>