

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CARE

# EMDR Therapy

Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing — an evidence-based path toward healing from trauma and distress.



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## About EMDR

EMDR stands for **Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing**. It has been an evidence-based therapeutic modality for over **40 years** and is considered the **gold standard for trauma treatment**.

Beyond trauma, EMDR can also be used to support healing from **anxiety, depression, phobias, addiction, and somatic pain**.



## Working With an EMDRIA-Approved Therapist

### IMPORTANT TO KNOW

EMDR Therapy can only be provided by an **EMDRIA-approved, EMDR-trained clinician**. You cannot perform EMDR on yourself. It is a complex modality that requires specialized training and **co-regulation** with your EMDR Therapist. In fact, EMDR Therapists cannot perform EMDR on themselves, either.



## What Is Trauma?

Trauma happens when someone experiences an event in which they felt **trapped, alone, or unable to make sense of it**. The brain intuitively tries to process it through what it knows of truth, other experiences, and reality. If it cannot move through the experience, it gets **stored maladaptively** — away from the adaptive information processing system.

**Signs you may be experiencing trauma include:**

Flashbacks

Nightmares

Insomnia

Anxiety

Depression

Dissociation

Low self-esteem

Relational struggles

Addiction

Somatic symptoms



# The Adaptive Information Processing Model

EMDR Therapy is founded on the **Adaptive Information Processing Model (AIP)**. Our body and brain intuitively know how to heal themselves. But when trauma takes place, the experience can get **stuck in our memory network**, isolated from the adaptive information processing system within us.



**Think of a cut on your knee.** Your body knows how to heal it. But some cuts need additional support to aid the body's natural healing — like Neosporin, bandages, or rubbing alcohol. In the same way, **EMDR helps access your Adaptive Information Processing System** to connect the traumatic experience to adaptive information. This helps the brain **see the past as the past**.



## How Memories Work

Memories are connected through **association**. For example, any time you have interacted with a dog, your brain encodes that interaction in **associated channels**. These may include both positive and negative experiences with a dog — all linked together within your memory network.



## The 4 Aspects of EMDR Therapy

1

### Bilateral Stimulation

Fast bilateral stimulation emulates REM sleep by taxing the working memory and decreasing the distress of thinking about a traumatic experience. This allows the brain to naturally activate the adaptive information processing system built within it.

2

### Dual Awareness

Bilateral stimulation helps the client enter **dual awareness** — like having one foot in the present and one foot in the past. You feel grounded and safe in the here and now while you access and process the past traumatic experience.

3

### Three-Prong Protocol

Therapists conceptualize all experiences and distress through the three-prong protocol. Working through the past, present, and future helps digest distressing material across all associated channels of the memory network.

#### PAST

*e.g., Having an alcoholic father*

#### PRESENT

*e.g., When a spouse has a beer*

#### FUTURE

*e.g., Not feeling angry or fearful seeing a spouse drink*

## 4

## 8 Phases of EMDR

EMDR Therapy is made of 8 Phases. These 8 Phases are broken down into the three parts of trauma treatment: **Part 1 — Stabilization**, **Part 2 — Memory Processing**, and **Part 3 — Integration**.

## PART 1

## Stabilization

We build stabilization skills and distress tolerance *before* working through traumatic experiences. We must have felt safety in the here and now before visiting the past.

## PHASE

## 1

### History Taking

- Establishing felt safety and rapport with your counselor
- Sharing your story and conceptualizing it through the three-prong protocol
- Growing in stabilization skills, communication skills, and other tools that expand your window of tolerance
- Creating a treatment plan — a list of distressing targets in the past, present, and future to process

## PHASE

## 2

### Preparation

- Education about EMDR Therapy
- Reviewing and signing the EMDR Therapy consent form
- Establishing your EMDR Safe / Calm Place — a stabilization skill
- Building your EMDR Container — a stabilization skill

## PART 2

## Trauma Processing

## PHASE

## 3

### Assessment

The client identifies a target to process and activates it through the **4 parts of a memory**: image, cognition (belief), emotion, and sensation.

## PHASE

## 4

### Desensitization

The client processes the trauma using fast bilateral stimulation. During this phase, the brain intuitively works through the memory channels, bringing up different images, emotions, sensations, and beliefs. **The client is in complete control and can stop at any time.** The goal is to bring the distress level down to a 0.

PHASE

5

### Installation

Once the target has been processed, the client focuses on that target while holding a **positive, healthy belief**.

PHASE

6

### Body Scan

The client scans their body while thinking of the target and the positive belief, checking for any **residual somatic distress**.

PHASE

7

### Closure

A time with the clinician to share what came up for you, using containing and grounding exercises to **transition back to your day-to-day life**.

PHASE

8

### Reevaluation

In the following session, the clinician has you think of the target to assess the disturbance level and see if it needs further processing. If the target is fully processed, you move to the next associated channels within the three-prong protocol: **past → present → future**.

PART 3

## Integration

After you have experienced healing, you may need assistance **integrating new ways of thinking and living** into your daily life. This is where Phase 8 can help — working through potential future concerns and creating what we call a **Future / Positive Template**.

#### A GENTLE REMINDER

Healing is not linear, and you are never alone in the process. Your EMDR Therapist walks alongside you every step of the way — you set the pace, and you remain in control throughout your journey.

## Ready to begin your healing journey with EMDR Therapy?

Reach out to **Loma Therapy** today! Loma Therapy provides you with EMDRIA-approved, EMDR-trained clinicians who accept your insurance.

[lomatherapy.com](https://lomatherapy.com)