



EMDR Informed Consent

Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR) is a form of therapy that utilizes bilateral stimulation (BLS) usually in the form of eye movements, tapping or auditory tones in order to accelerate the brain's capacity to process and heal a troubling memory, thought, feeling, or phobia. BLS stimulates the same eye movements which occur during Rapid Eye Movement (REM) or dream sleep. BLS causes two parts of the brain to work in conjunction in order to reintegrate a memory. Some clients can experience relief or positive effects in just a few sessions and others need more sessions. EMDR is effective in treating trauma-related symptoms, whether the traumatic event occurred many years ago or yesterday.

Scientific research has established EMDR as effective for the treatment of post-traumatic stress, phobias, panic attacks, anxiety disorders, stress, sexual and physical abuse, disturbing memories, chronic pain, complicated grief and addictions.

The possible benefits of EMDR treatment include the following:

- The memory is remembered but the painful emotions and physical sensations and the disturbing images and thoughts are no longer present.
- EMDR helps the brain reintegrate the memory and store it in a more appropriate place in the brain. The client's own brain reintegrates the memory and does the healing.

The possible risks of EMDR treatment include the following:

- Reprocessing a memory may bring up associated memories. This is normal and those memories will also be reprocessed.
- During the EMDR, the client may experience physical sensations and retrieve images, emotions and sounds associated with the memory.
- Reprocessing of the memory normally continues after the end of the formal therapy session. Other memories, flashbacks, feelings and sensations may occur. The client may have dreams associated with the memory. Frequently the brain is able to process these additional memories without help, but arrangements for assistance will be made in a timely manner if the client is unable to cope.

As with any other therapeutic approach, reprocessing traumatic memories can be uncomfortable; that means, some people won't like or be able to tolerate EMDR treatment well. Others need more preparation, offered by the therapist, before processing traumatic events using EMDR.

- There are no known adverse effects of interrupting EMDR therapy; therefore, a client can discontinue treatment at any time.
- Alternative therapeutic approaches may include individual or group therapy, medication, or a different psychotherapy modality.

The client must:

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- Be able to tolerate high levels of emotional disturbance, have the ability to reprocess associated memories resulting from EMDR therapy, and to use self-control and relaxation techniques such as calm place, container.
- Disclose to therapist and consult with his/her physician before EMDR therapy if he/she has a history of or current eye problems, a diagnosed heart disease, elevated blood pressure, or is at risk for or has a history of stroke, heart attack, seizure, or other limiting medical conditions that may put him/her at medical risk. Pregnant women should consult with their physician. Due to the stress related to reprocessing some traumatic events, postponing may be appropriate in some cases.
- Inform therapist if he/she is wearing contact lenses and remove them if they impede eye movements due to irritation or eye dryness. The therapist will discontinue BLS eye movements if client reports eye pain and other forms of stimulation can be substituted, if appropriate.
- Before participating in EMDR, discuss with therapist all aspects of an upcoming legal court case where testimony is required. The client may need to postpone EMDR treatment if she/he is a victim or witness to a crime that is being prosecuted because the traumatic material processed using EMDR may fade, blur or disappear and her/his testimony may be challenged.
- Consult with his/her medical doctor, before utilizing medication. Some medications may reduce the effectiveness of EMDR. For example, benzodiazepines may reduce effectiveness possibly due to state-dependent processing and/or regression may occur after ceasing anti-depressants.
- Address with the therapist his/her ability to attend to EMDR due to recent cocaine dependence, long term amphetamine abuse, seizures, and/or other neurological conditions. EMDR is contraindicated with recent crack cocaine users and long-term amphetamine users.
- Discuss with the therapist any Dissociative Disorders with little treatment progress. EMDR may trigger these symptoms, but may also be helpful in attempting to resolve them.



STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING OF EMDR: I have read the EMDR Informed Consent. I have read and understand the possible outcomes of EMDR listed above and understand that I can end EMDR therapy at any time. I agree to participate in EMDR therapy and I assume any risks involved in such participation.

Signature of client or Parent/Guardian _____

Print Name (s) _____

Date _____

*Please keep copy of *EMDR Informed Consent* and return this page to Cambron Counseling at your first appointment.