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EVERY MEMORY DESERVES RESPECT

EMDR, the Proven Trauma Therapy with the Power to Heal

EMDR Therapy Myths vs. Facts

MYTH: EMDR therapy is not supported by research.

FACT: Though EMDR sounds unusual and, perhaps, initially difficult to understand (moving eyes back and forth reduces suffering?!), it is an evidence-based therapy that is fully supported by an extensive body of scientific research. It has been endorsed as a top-tier trauma treatment by well-respected organizations around the world.

MYTH: EMDR is a mechanical, impersonal process.

FACT: At the heart of good EMDR therapy is your relationship with your therapist. It is critical that you feel safe and seen and accompanied every step of the way. Your therapist creates a treatment plan that is uniquely right for you and will work with you to find a pace that suits you. You will find that EMDR is actually a deeply intimate process.

MYTH: EMDR is just for PTSD.

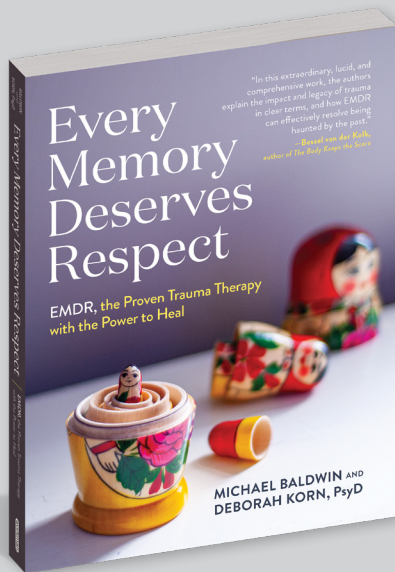
FACT: EMDR is effective in addressing trauma related to both major events, such as sexual assault and combat, and events that sound less severe but can be equally debilitating. An identified major trauma and a diagnosis of PTSD are not prerequisites for EMDR therapy. In fact, many people entering therapy don't even recognize that they are suffering from the consequences of traumatic events in their past. In addition to PTSD, EMDR is being used to treat many other problems—general anxiety, phobias, addiction, depression, pain, obsessive-compulsive disorder, low self-esteem, and intimacy issues, to name a few.

MYTH: EMDR therapy is only for adults

FACT: Research supports the effectiveness of EMDR therapy in treating children and adolescents with PTSD and other trauma-related symptoms. In fact, EMDR may work more quickly with kids, because their “memory networks “ are less complex and extensive, and there are shorter “channels of associations” to pursue.

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MYTH: EMDR therapy does not work for complex or severe trauma.

FACT: EMDR is effective in helping people affected not only by single traumatic events but also by chronic, prolonged trauma—childhood sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and neglect, domestic violence, endless separations and losses, or illness. A complex history requires a more elaborate game plan and treatment usually takes longer. That said, it is still regarded as a highly effective psychotherapy for survivors of severe, chronic trauma.

MYTH: EMDR will make you feel worse.

FACT: Your safety, comfort, and capacity to maintain functioning in the world are top priorities in EMDR therapy. EMDR allows you to observe or witness your memories from a distance, so you always feel safe and in control, even when tackling really challenging material. You can come into session in distress and leave feeling lighter and so much more hopeful. Even when processing difficult memories or emotions, your therapist will make sure you never feel alone, lost, or overwhelmed.

MYTH: You have to know exactly what your trauma is, and you must relive it in order to heal.

FACT: Often, the event that caused the trauma is not particularly clear, but the triggers, symptoms, and emotions associated with it are, and those are what a therapist will initially focus on with you. You do not need to relive your trauma to heal. You will process your trauma at a safe distance, observing it as if you were a passenger on a train just watching the scenery go by—always fully alert, safe, and grounded in the present.

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