

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a comprehensive, integrative psychotherapy approach. It contains elements of many effective psychotherapies in structured protocols that are designed to maximize treatment effects. These include psychodynamic, cognitive behavioral, interpersonal, experiential, and body-centered therapies².

EMDR is an [information processing therapy](#) and uses an eight phase approach to address the experiential contributors of a wide range of pathologies. It attends to the past experiences that have set the groundwork for pathology, the current situations that trigger dysfunctional emotions, beliefs and sensations, and the positive experience needed to enhance future adaptive behaviors and mental health.

During treatment various procedures and protocols are used to address the entire clinical picture. One of the procedural elements is "dual stimulation" using either bilateral eye movements, tones or taps. During the reprocessing phases the client attends momentarily to past memories, present triggers, or anticipated future experiences while simultaneously focusing on a set of external stimulus. During that time, clients generally experience the emergence of insight, changes in memories, or new associations. The clinician assists the client to focus on appropriate material before initiation of each subsequent set.

EMDR is now accepted as a treatment of choice by numerous mental health departments, and trauma organizations.

EMDR has a broad base of published case reports and controlled research which supports it as an empirically validated treatment of trauma.

The Department of Defense/Department of Veterans Affairs Practice Guidelines have placed EMDR in the highest category, recommended for all trauma populations at all times. In addition, the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies current treatment guidelines have designated EMDR as an effective treatment for PTSD (Chemtob, Tolin, van der Kolk & Pitman, 2000) as have the Departments of Health of both Northern Ireland and Israel (see below), which have indicated EMDR to be one of only two or three treatments of choice for trauma victims. The American Psychiatric Association Practice Guideline (2004) has stated that SSRI's, CBT, and EMDR are recommended as first-line treatments of trauma.

For more information go to <http://www.emdr.com/efficacy.htm>.