PHASE 2 - PREPARATION

Therapeutic Alliance

Explaining Theory FOR EXAMPLE

‘The eye movements we use in EMDR seem to unlock the nervous system and allow your

brain to process the experience. That may be what is happening in REM, or dream, sleep:

The eye movements may be involved in processing the unconscious material . The

important thing to remember is that is it your own brain that will be doing the healing and

that you are the one in control. Often, when something traumatic happens, it seems to get

locked in the nervous system with the original picture, sounds, thoughts, feelings, and so

on. Since the experience is locked there, it continues to be triggered whenever a reminder

comes up. It can be the basis for a lot of discomfort and sometimes a lot of negative

emotions, such as fear and helplessness, that we can’t seem to control. These are really

emotions that are connected with the old experience being triggered.

Testing EMs / ABLS

(Briefly demonstrate seating position, different directions/speed, show tactile/audio)

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Safe Place …………………………………………………………………………………………

(Write a word/sentence to prompt you about their Safe Place established earlier)

Describing the Model FOR EXAMPLE

‘Disturbing events can be stored in the brain in an isolated memory network. This prevents

learning from taking place. The old material just keeps getting triggered over and over

again. In another part of your brain, in a separate network, is most of the information you

need to resolve it. It’s just prevented from linking up to the old stuff. Once we start

processing with EMDR, the 2 networks can link up. New information can come to mind and

resolve the old problems.

Although unpleasant picture, sensations, or emotions may come up as we do the eye

movements, you can stop the process whenever you want simply by raising your hand like

this [demo]. It’s best to allow the eye movements to continue for as long as possible, but if

things feel too rough, we can stop and you can rest. The idea is that if you want to drive

through a dark tunnel quickly, you keep your foot on the accelerator. If you take your foot

off your car slows down and coasts. So, to get through unpleasant emotions, keeping eyes

moving will get us through more quickly. As we do the set of eye movements, try to

remember that we are only processing old stuff. It may feel real, but it’s just the old

memories locked in the nervous system. The idea is to let the brain become unlocked ,

and let the information pass through.’

Setting expectations FOR EXAMPLE

‘As we process the information and digest the old events, pictures, sensations, or

emotions may arise, but your job is just to notice them, just let them happen. Imagine you

are on a train and the scenery is passing by. Just notice the scenery without trying to grab

hold of it or make it significant. We will start by asking you to focus on a target. Then I will

ask you to follow my fingers with your eyes. After we do that for a while, we will stop and

talk about anything that comes up. You can’t keep a picture steady while the eye



movements are going on, so don’t try. When we talk, you just need to give me feedback on

what is happening. Sometimes things will change and sometimes they won’t. There are no

‘supposed to’s’ in this process. So just tell me what is happening or not. Just let whatever

happens, happen. Any questions?’

Addressing client fears

PHASE 3

Target

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“What memory are we going to work on today?”

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Image

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“What picture represents the worst part of the incident?”

OR “What picture represents the incident?” OR “When you think of the incident, what do

you get?” (only if no emotion, ask - “What can you see, hear, smell?” etc)

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Negative Cognition –

“When you bring up the picture, what negative belief do

you have about yourself now?”

(I statement, present tense, irrational, ‘gut sense’, generalisable, linked to emotion)

OR ‘What thoughts do you having about yourself’ OR ‘How do you define yourself’ OR

’How does that make you feel about self’ OR ‘What does that say about you’ OR ‘What

kind of person does that make you’ OR ‘What’s the worst about that’ OR ‘With the image

and emotion finish this sentence ‘I am …….’ OR ‘State what you think of yourself in your

worst moments, even if you know it isn’t completely true’

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Positive Cognition -

“When you bring up that picture/incident, what would

you like to believe about yourself now?”

OR “…..how would you like to define yourself?” or “….what adjectives would you want to

give yourself?

If problems….“Remember, sometimes we know something with our head, but it feels

different in our gut. In this case, what is the gut-level feeling of the truth of [PC], from 1 to

7?”.

Avoid ‘Not’ statements - 1 is often indication of unsuitability.

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Validity Of Cognition (VOC) - “When you think of that picture/incident, how

true does that (positive cognition) feel to you now on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is

untrue and 7 is totally true?”



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Emotions/feelings - “When you bring up that incident and those words

(negative cognition), what emotions do you feel now?”

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SUDS –

“On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is no disturbance and 10 is the

highest disturbance imaginable, how disturbing does it feel to you now?”

If more than one emotion, still only 1 SUDs rating

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Location of body sensation –

“Where do you feel that in your body?”

If problems - “You reported an 8 SUDs. Where do you feel the 8 in your body?”

Still problems -

“Close your eyes & notice how your body feels. Now I will ask you to think of something, &

when I do, just notice what changes in your body. OK, notice your body. Now, think of (or

bring up the picture of) the memory. Tell me what changes. Now add the words [state NC].

Tell me what changes?”

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PHASE 4

Desensitisation

“Now remember, it’s your own brain doing the healing & you are the one in control. I will

ask you to bring up the memory and follow my fingers with your eyes. Just let whatever

happens, happen, & we will talk at the end of the set. Just tell me whatever comes up &

don’t discard anything as unimportant. Any new information that comes to mind may be

connected in some way. If you want to stop, just raise your hand.”

“

Bring up the picture & the words [repeat NC] and notice where you feel it in your

body. Now, follow my fingers with your eyes.”

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Begin the eye movements slowly. Increase the speed as long as the client can

comfortably tolerate the movement.

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“That’s it. Good. That’s it.”

If abreacting: “That’s it. It’s old stuff. Just notice it”. (speeding train or tunnel metaphor)

After set of EM (24 to start and then read client) then ask - “Let it go and take a deep

breath.” or “Let it go”



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“What do you get now?” or “What are you noticing now?” or “What comes up now?

Whatever client reports, say “Go with that” or “Just notice that”

Keep going with sets as long as there is change

After 2 sets of no change but still distress, look to change direction, speed up, shift

systems (e.g., “What do you notice in your body?” etc) -

OR are you sensing they are trying to make change (reinforce ‘just notice’)

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If after 2 sets of no change or neutral or positive material you’re probably at the end of

the channel - return to target by asking “When you go back to that memory/

incident now, what comes up/what do you notice?”,

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Whatever client reports, say “Go with that” or “Just notice that”

Keep going with sets as long as there is change

If nothing or neutral AND looking calm when returned to target then ask SUDS “When

you bring up the memory/incident now, on that 0 to 10 scale where 0 is no distress

or neutral and 10 is the highest you can imagine, how much does that memory

causing right now?

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If 1 or above, just say “Just notice that” and continue sets

Move onto Installation only when client reports a 0 (or ecological 1?) SUDs

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PHASE 5

Installation of Positive Cognition

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“Do the words (positive cognition) still fit, or is there another positive statement you feel

would be more suitable?”

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“Think about the original memory and those words (positive cognition). From 1,

completely false, to 7, completely true, how true to they feel?”

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“Hold the memory and words together”. Do normal fast eye movement set.

After set then ask “On a scale of 1 to 7, how true does that (positive statement) feel to

you now when you think of the original incident?”

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Measure the VOC after each set or ask “When you link the words (Repeat PC) with the

memory are they getting stronger or weaker or staying the same?’” after each set .

Even if the client reports a 6 or a 7, do EM set again to strengthen, and continue until

VOC no longer strengthens or plateaued. Then go on to the body scan.



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If the client reports a less than 6 and it does not shift, check appropriateness and

address blocking belief (if necessary) with additional sets/reprocessing.

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PHASE 6

Body scan “Close your eyes; concentrate on the memory and the Positive

Cognition and mentally scan your body. Tell me where you feel anything.”

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If any sensation is reported, do EM.

If a positive/comfortable sensation, do EM to strengthen the positive feeling and

plateaued.

If a sensation of discomfort is reported, reprocess until discomfort subsides.

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PHASE 7

Closure – FOR EXAMPLE

Incomplete session

If you run out of time during a session then towards the last 10 mins of the session try to

choose an appropriate time to stop (i.e., at the end of a channel of association, when

distressed is reduced/reducing, at a positive insight). Inform we are stopping now (don’t

say ‘we are just doing one more set’) and guide them through their Safe Place exercise.

Then go into the instructions below

Complete session

No need for Safe Place, just go straight into reading this statement.

“The processing we have done today may continue after the session. You may or may not

notice new insights, thoughts, memories, or dreams. But sometimes all these things

happen outside of your awareness. So don’t see it as a good or bad thing whether you do

or not. If you do, just notice what you are experiencing. Take a snapshot of it (what you

are seeing, feeling, thinking, and the trigger) and jot it down in a log. We might work on this

new material next time.

The important aspect is just to stay out of the way of any reaction you may have, just like

you’ve done today. Don’t try to understand it, just take a note and if necessary, use your

Safe Place or other relaxation strategies. Remember to look after your self both physically

and psychologically today and until our next session, using the strategies we’ve covered to

date.”

