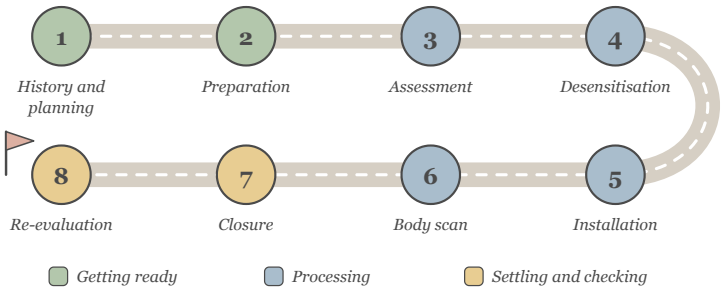
–LENSS–

Your EMDR Journey

A step-by-step guide to EMDR therapy and how we will work together.

Welcome. This guide explains what EMDR is, what happens at each stage, and how you stay in control throughout. You can read it at your own pace and bring any questions to our sessions. There are no silly questions.

The worksheets in this pack go with the different steps. We will use them together, so you don't need to complete anything before we have talked about it.



What is EMDR?

EMDR stands for **Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing**. It was developed by the American psychologist Dr Francine Shapiro in the late 1980s. It is recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the World Health Organization as a treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It is also used to help with anxiety, phobias, grief, low self-worth and other difficulties that are rooted in upsetting experiences.

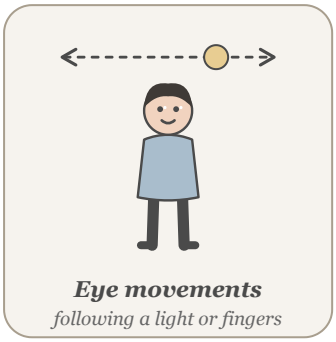
When something overwhelming happens, the brain sometimes can't process it in the usual way. The memory can get 'stuck', stored with the original images, feelings, body sensations and beliefs. Later, something small can trigger it, and it can feel as if it is happening again, right now.

In EMDR, you briefly bring the memory to mind while doing **bilateral stimulation** (left–right eye movements, taps or sounds). This seems to help the brain do the processing it couldn't do at the time. The memory doesn't disappear, but it usually becomes less distressing: something that happened in the past, rather than something that still feels present.

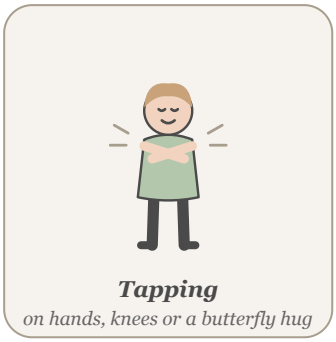
Bilateral stimulation

We will choose together which kind suits you best. You can change your mind at any point.

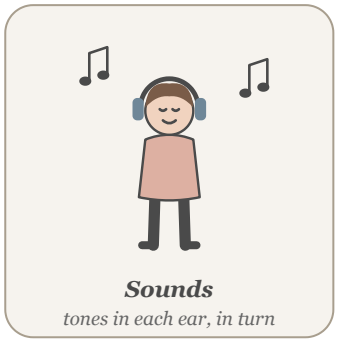
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Eye movements
following a light or fingers



Tapping
on hands, knees or a butterfly hug



Sounds
tones in each ear, in turn

The eight steps of EMDR

EMDR follows eight phases. We move through them at a pace that feels manageable for you.

Step	What happens	Worksheets
1. History and planning	We get to know each other. I ask about your life, what brings you to therapy, your health and your support. Together we decide which memories and situations to work on, and in what order.	Intake Assessment; My Memory Map
2. Preparation	We build your toolkit for staying steady: grounding, a calm place, a container and your resource team. We agree a stop signal. We only move on when you feel ready, and some people spend longer here.	Window of Tolerance; Calm Place; Container; Resource Team; Getting Ready
3. Assessment	We choose one memory (a 'target') and I ask you about the image, the negative belief that goes with it, the positive belief you would prefer, your feelings and where you notice them in your body. You give two scores: the SUD and the VoC.	Beliefs and Scales
4. Desensitisation	You bring the memory to mind while doing short sets of bilateral stimulation. After each set, I ask what you notice. You just report what comes up, without judging it. We continue until the memory feels much less disturbing.	Beliefs and Scales
5. Installation	We strengthen the positive belief, pairing it with the memory until it feels as true as it can.	
6. Body scan	You check your body for any remaining tension, and we process anything that is left.	Window of Tolerance
7. Closure	Every session ends with time to settle, whether or not the memory is finished. We use your calm place or container, and talk about the days ahead.	Taking Care of Myself; Between-Session Log

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Step	What happens	Worksheets
8. Re-evaluation	At the start of the next session, we check how you have been and how the memory feels now, then decide what to work on next.	Between-Session Log

Past, present and future

EMDR usually looks at three things: the **past** memories that are still affecting you, the **present** situations that trigger you now, and the **future**, by rehearsing how you would like to respond next time.

What processing feels like

- You stay awake, aware and in control. EMDR is not hypnosis.
- You don't have to describe the memory in detail. Often a few words is enough.
- Thoughts, images, feelings and sensations may come and go. Some may seem unconnected. That is all part of processing, and there are no wrong answers.
- Feelings can rise for a while before they settle. I will be with you, and you can use your stop signal at any time.
- Some people find it helpful to imagine watching the memory pass by, like scenery from a train window.

After sessions

Processing can continue after a session. You may notice vivid dreams, new memories or insights, strong feelings, or tiredness. This is common and usually settles within a few days. Please plan something gentle after each session, use your calm place and container, and jot anything that comes up in your Between-Session Log. If you feel unsettled or worried, please get in touch.

Questions people often ask

- **Will I forget what happened?** No. You will still remember it, but it usually feels less upsetting.
- **How many sessions will I need?** It varies. A single upsetting event may need only a few processing sessions. Longer-standing or several experiences usually take longer, with more time spent on preparation. NICE suggests 8 to 12 sessions for PTSD after a single event, and more where needed. We will review progress together regularly.
- **Can EMDR be done online?** Yes. We would agree some extra safety steps first, and you would usually use taps or the butterfly hug.
- **What if I want to stop?** You can pause or stop at any time. You are in charge of the pace.

> If you are in crisis or worried about your safety, please don't wait for your next session. Call **NHS 111** and choose the mental health option, call **Samaritans** free on **116 123**, text **SHOUT** to **85258**, or in an emergency call **999** or go to A&E.

NICE (2018) *Post-traumatic stress disorder* (NG116). nice.org.uk/guidance/ng116
World Health Organization (2013) *Guidelines for the management of conditions specifically related to stress.*
EMDR UK Association: emdrassociation.org.uk