

Intro to

BILATERAL STIMULATION

And the Science Behind EMDR



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About Shannon

Shannon McNiece is the best in the world at creating transformational neuro-health experiences for those seeking their highest Truth, Love, and Light.

As a double board-licensed therapist and the world's first luxury holistic neuro-health transformation expert, she is creating a new paradigm for change in the 21st century. Shannon recognizes neuro-health as the preeminent catalyst for deep personal expansion. Shannon unlocks the magic that lies within each of us through her luxurious blend of science and spirit, a luminous overlay of two domains commonly pitted against one another. By aligning mind, body, and spirit with ease, her clients access a sustainable and fully actualized state of clarity, joy, and integrated well-being.

Based in the U.S. where she serves her clients globally, Shannon is a mom to two amazing young adults, and two quirky, funny rescue dogs (Ninja Shadow and Ronin Legend). She believes in laughing every day.

Let's start with

WHAT IS E.M.D.R.?

Definition

EMDR is an evidence-based, clinician led, psychotherapy for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In addition, successful outcomes are well-documented in the literature for EMDR treatment of other psychiatric disorders, mental health problems, and somatic symptoms. Adaptive Information Processing (AIP), the model on which EMDR is based, posits that much of psychopathology is due to the maladaptive encoding of and/or incomplete processing of traumatic or disturbing adverse life experiences. This impairs the client's ability to integrate these experiences in an adaptive manner.

The eight-phase, three-pronged process of EMDR facilitates the resumption of normal information processing and integration. This treatment approach, which targets past experience, current triggers, and future potential challenges, results in the alleviation of presenting symptoms, a decrease or elimination of distress from the disturbing memory, improved view of the self, relief from bodily disturbance, and resolution of present and future anticipated triggers.

-EMDRIA, International Association Definition



A Little

BACKGROUND NOTE

It may seem obvious, but we'll say it anyway - EMDR is a specialized therapeutic treatment. As with any specialized therapeutic approach, or treatment modality, there are numerous components - most of which we do not go into here.

Clinicians embark on years of education, and undergo a lot of specialized training in order to competently provide EMDR.

For the general public, please consult with a professional if you're interested in learning more about this incredible methodology.

Psychology Today runs a therapist directory that is a great place to start connecting with providers in your area (no paid affiliation).

This handout is designed as a broad informational overview to give you a snapshot into the proposed mechanisms and scientific theory behind these two fascinating areas - BLS and EMDR.

And it has to be said: Nothing in this handout should be construed as medical advice.

Please explore the work of
Dr. Francine Shapiro, Dr. Perry,
Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, Dr. Pat Ogden,
and Dr. Robert Stickgold for more info.

Okay now on to the good stuff!

Everyone's Question

HOW DOES E.M.D.R. WORK?

There are actually several different hypotheses behind the brain-body mechanisms of EMDR.

These hypotheses may not be mutually exclusive; and they may be complimentary.

THE HYPOTHESES:

- 1) Rhythm Hypothesis
- 2) R.E.M. Hypothesis
- 3) Working Memory Hypothesis



Rhythm

Rhythm is often found as a naturally calming remedy.

The rhythm of our maternal heartbeat in-utero is our first common human beat.

Beating, dancing, drumming, and swaying are used across cultures for rituals (i.e. protection, healing, etc.).

Rhythm is regulating and elicits a sensation of safety.



Rapid Eye Movement

In her original description of EMDR, Shapiro proposed that directed eye movements mimic the saccades of rapid eye movement sleep (REM),

EMDR may rid the brain of unnecessary toxic buildup just as the brain does in natural REM sleep on a daily basis.

The repetitive redirecting of attention in EMDR may induce a neurobiological state similar to that of REM sleep. This state may be optimal to support the cortical integration of traumatic memories into general semantic networks.



Working Memory

Bilateral Stimulation (BLS) disrupts working memory by activating both sides of the cerebellum.

A memory that is currently active, is stored in what is known as 'working memory.' Long-term memory has huge storage capacity, but 'working memory' does not.

By bringing distressing memories into 'working memory,' then introducing bilateral stimulation, the system is taxed through dual simultaneous tasks.

Recalling a negative memory, and doing eye movements at the same time, has been shown to diminish the vividness of the memory and deflate the stored emotional charge on that memory.

Okay, Now

WHAT'S BILATERAL STIMULATION?

Bilateral Stimulation (BLS) simply means stimulation of both sides, as in both sides of the brain.

BLS prompts interhemispheric communication through the corpus callosum (the nerve "bridge" between hemispheres).

Bilateral stimulation is a core element of EMDR. It can be said to produce four main effects:

1. A relaxation effect, decreasing uncomfortable physiological arousal.
2. Increased attentional flexibility (you get unstuck from the ways you have been thinking about a problem or event in your life).
3. Distancing effect (the problem seems smaller and further away).
4. Elimination of or decreased worry.

Continued

BILATERAL STIMULATION

BLS activation is both a bottom-up and top-down approach.

The cascade of changes starts in the lower areas of the brain first, as a physiological response (e.g., decreased tension) then travels 'up' the brain leading to mental changes (e.g., decreased worry).

Because this order works with how the brain normally processes information, the effects are often experienced more quickly and easily than with top-down strategies, such as talk therapy.

To get a little more scientific, bilateral stimulation leads to an increase in limbic processing along with decreased frontal activation.

<https://blissmentalhealth.com/what-is-bilateral-stimulation>

<https://anxietyreleaseapp.com/what-is-bilateral-stimulation/>

THE COOLEST PARTS

BILATERAL STIMULATION CAN:

- Enhance creativity by strengthening new neural connections.
- Enhance executive functioning (EF).
- Improve personal insight.
- Reduce psychosomatic symptoms.
- Resolve trauma.
- Enhance emotional well-being,
- Encode adaptive, affirming thoughts, feelings and beliefs.

Important Note

ADAPTIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING

The Adaptive Information Processing (AIP) model is the theory that guides the EMDR treatment procedures and offers an explanation for the basis of pathology (Shapiro, 1994, 2001, 2007).

This model postulates that humans have an innate information processing system that assimilates new experiences and stores them into existing memory networks in an adaptive state.

These networks link the thoughts, images, emotions, and sensations associated with experiences. According to the AIP model, pathology arises when new information is inadequately processed and then stored in a maladaptive mode in the memory networks, along with associated distorted thoughts, sensations and emotions.

AIP theory hypothesizes that when the memories are adequately processed, symptoms can be eliminated and integrated.

What are the

TYPES OF B.L.S.?



Visual/ Eye Movements

Such as following therapists fingers

Or following a lightbar

What are the

TYPES OF B.L.S.?

No affiliations



Tactile/ Touch

Such as TheraTappers

Or Butterfly taps

Or TouchPoints

What are the

TYPES OF B.L.S.?

No affiliations



Auditory/ Ears

Such as: Bilateral Sound, Bilateral Beats, Binaural Sound, Binaural Beats, or BioLateral Sound experienced through Headphones

Some YOUTUBE channels to explore: Destined Dynamics OR Dr. David Grand's BioLateral Sound

Or Drum Circles

Or Being in Nature.

Birdsong has demonstrated mental health benefits & activates BLS pathways.

Auditory BLS optimizes the inherent benefits of music. Music processing is distributed throughout the brain, accessing preverbal neural networks. And it is passive, no effort required. Just pop on the headphones!



We hope you enjoyed this Intro overview.

Let's Connect

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Thanks!