

Next Level Recovery

 nextlevelrecovery.com/emdr-therapy-in-utah

The Use of EMDR Therapy in the Treatment of Trauma and Addiction

Addictions develop in connections with trauma. All individuals struggling with addiction have ambivalence about getting sober. “Part of me wants to quit and part of me doesn’t.” Addiction is often a person’s strongest attachment like a friend or comforter. There is often a great deal of fear about losing this coping skill. Addiction memories can be thought of as both negative and positive. **Addictions can become powerfully linked to a strong memory** . Shame is powerful and is a stigma that those with addiction have to deal with. This shame often turns into negative thoughts about self, such as, I am disgusting, I am broken, or I am unlovable. The maladaptive behaviors from addiction reemphasize shame which strengthens the negative thoughts. **One of the goals of treatment is to diminish shame** .

How EMDR Therapy can Increase the Effectiveness of Overall Treatment

There are many therapies used with addiction treatment and co-occurring mental health disorders. The therapies used may include:

- Seeking Safety
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
- Positive Psychology and others.

It is common from those who suffer from some substance abuse disorders or mental health disorders to have experienced trauma in their past. Even clients who had no trauma prior to using substances often experience traumatic events during the use of their substance. ***Sobriety is best obtained when a therapist is able to address the person’s unresolved trauma as early as possible in treatment.*** Once the trauma or disturbing memory is processed, the connection to the addictive behavior may no longer be there. Drug courts report that ***one reason people fail to stay sober is due to the presence of co-morbid mental health problems that have been left untreated.***

Next Level Recovery offers EMDR therapy to help treat mental health disorders and addiction in SLC, Utah. Our team of experienced professionals are committed to helping you on your road to recovery with a customized treatment plan. Call today for a free consultation.



Assessing for EMDR Readiness

A lot of clients with addiction started in their teen and early young adult years. These are the years that most people learn **social, interpersonal, and life management skills**. Therefore, the client's with long term addiction should be assessed for these skills prior to engaging in EMDR treatment. It is important that the clinician teaches these skills to prepare a person for EMDR therapy. **Before addressing a traumatic memory, a client is taught emotional self-regulation to ensure they can withstand being able to return to the memories and process them.**

Addiction and other compulsive behaviors start out as a positive to the user because they provide relief or mask a disturbing memory or action. Addiction helps the person avoid the underlying trauma. **Before a client can utilize EMDR they must have a very high motivation for change.** The client must be able to practice patience, empathy for themselves and others, and acceptance.

What is EMDR? (Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing) How Does EMDR Work?

Many people wonder, "What is EMDR therapy and how does it work?" **Disturbing memories are stored in the brain differently than the day to day memories. These memories don't get fully processed and stored.** EMDR or Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing uses the AIP or Adaptive Information Processing model. This means that memories are stored by association with other memories that link past, present, and future experiences. Think of it this way; our body has 3 ways to communicate with us through our thoughts (mind), our emotions (heart), and our body sensations. **EMDR helps the client process each type of communication.** EMDR is an eight-phase treatment approach that focusses on the **reprocessing of a distressing memory or event**.

EMDR Phases

There are 8 phases of EMDR therapy:

1. History Taking
2. Preparation
3. Assessment
4. Desensitization
5. Installation
6. Body Scan
7. Closure
8. Reevaluation

Phase 1: History Taking

The first phase is to learn a client's history and plan what needs to be addressed. This is usually the presenting problem. It is also where similar memories or behaviors may be linked together. This EMDR session is also the phase where we look at symptoms and how they are driven by earlier memories. The clinician will look at both the client's strengths and deficits. The client is asked to think back to an earlier time when they had these same feelings. **Current dysfunctional reactions are often the result of how they responded to an earlier event or memory.** The clinician will assess what skills and behaviors the client will need to proceed.

Phase 2: Preparation

The second is to prepare the client and build a therapeutic alliance. A clinician will want the client to commit to attending each session and actively participate. EMDR may bring up past experiences that invoke intense emotions. **During the preparation phase, the clinician helps the client learn relaxation techniques that can be used during the processing phase, and ensure the client has the needed support outside the office.** This phase is also used to educate the client on the process, get informed consent, and assess skills.

Phase 3: Assessment

The next phase is assessment this is where the clinician work with the client to determine what memory the client will address. In addition, the clinician will work with the client to **address any negative thoughts they have about themselves when this memory is addressed.** Finally, the clinician will work with the client to identify how they would like to feel about themselves in the future.

These first three phases are preparation phases.

Phase 4: Desensitization

The next phase is the desensitization where the memory that was chosen is brought to the client's mind. Once the thought is brought up the clinician will do bi-lateral movements or BLS. Bilateral stimulation (BLS) is the use of visual, auditory, or tactile external stimuli occurring in a rhythmic side-to-side pattern. This may be light taps, sounds, or eye movements. **During the bilateral movements, the client allows his or her mind to bring to focus thoughts feelings and body sensations that occur from this memory.** This continues

as the brain processes through memory until no more change appears. The client is asked to measure that disturbance on a scale from 0 to 10. Once the client gets down to a zero. The processing is complete.

Phase 5: Installation

The next phase is installation. ***This phase is used to create strength and instill the positive belief*** that was discussed in phase three. Sets of bilateral stimulation are done until the client believes the positive statement to be true.

Phase 6: Body Scan

Phase six is the body scan. This is where a client is asked to check their entire body for physical sensations and the clinician works with them to help them. ***It is important that the client be able to bring up the original memory or event and not feel anybody tension.***

Phase 7: Closure

Phase 7 is closure. Closure ensures that each person leaves better than at the beginning of the session. Is important that the client feels in control after they leave the clinicians office. ***During this phase, a client may be asked to journal a record of their experiences and techniques they used to help themselves feel calm between sessions.*** This is called a TICES log. ***A client will record the Trigger, Image, Cognition, Emotions, and Sensations .***

If this phase is incomplete and the memory still needs some work, the clinician will have the client contain the memory. It will be mentally put in a container and put on a shelf until the next session.

Phase 8: Reevaluation

The final phase is a reevaluation. ***When the client comes in for their next session, the session opens with a discussion of how their positive results have been maintained.*** The treatment plan is looked at to decide if the client needs to address other memories or events that came up during this processing.

Next Level Recovery Treatment Center Provides EMDR Counseling in Utah

If you are searching for “EMDR therapy near me” [contact Next Level Recovery in Midvale, Utah](#). We offer [alcohol](#) and [drug](#) rehab, treatment and [mental health counseling services](#). We will create a ***customizable treatment plan*** that will support you in ***taking care of your mental wellness or to get and stay sober while still keeping up with your work, family, and life.*** [Our friendly staff and professionals](#) are here to aid you on the road to recovery.

Speak with an EMDR therapist in Salt Lake City today. Call 801-386-9799 to schedule a free consultation.

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