

General working mechanism of trauma-focused therapies – some conclusions from research findings on EMDR.

Starting from an overview on our own findings, the current state of research on EMDR working mechanism will be reviewed and described in three domains: (1) reduction of subjective stress and psychophysiological deactivation during treatment sessions indicating habituation and memory integration, (2) orienting responses at the begin of bilateral stimulation corresponding to the stimulation of seeking behavior as proposed by Jaak Panksepp, (3) stimulation associated activation of frontal cortical activity indicated by increased EEG indicating improved top-down control.

An integrative model of working mechanism will be proposed highlighting the importance of a dual mode of attention for trauma memory processing as a general mechanism common to all exposure based therapies.