

Combining neurofeedback and EMDR for enhanced integration

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Statement: This workshop contributes to the theme of the conference through highlighting the importance of reregulation of the fear-driven brain and offers examples of an innovative treatment combination; neurofeedback and EMDR.

Learning objectives:

The participants are offered an in-depth conceptualisation of the value of enhanced arousal regulation through stabilisation.

A rationale based on the above-mentioned knowledge can inspire clinicians to further adaptations of EMDR to patients with complex trauma and developmental trauma.

Some preliminary findings on how such patients can be prepared to EMDR treatment through neurofeedback is presented.

The important experience of safety and regulation, in the EMDR-protocol for instance offered through safe place-inductions, is highlighted. The phenomenal experience of safety and regulation, hypothetically corresponds to a neuroception of safety and a reregulation of functional networks of the brain. This can be considered a prerequisite for effective working through of traumatic material, thus helping patients to make sense of moments of exposure in trauma therapies. Coregulation in the implicit domain through relational work, and through altered states of consciousness, ASC-based methods, as EMDR, is defined as crucial and potentially necessary for heightening patients' abilities to self-regulation (Gerge, 2018).

Albeit the proven efficacy of the EMDR-protocol, it is not always enough, when helping severely dysregulated patients. As EMDR-practitioners we sometimes work with patients who are difficult to stabilize, be it with safe place installations, grounding techniques aiming at dual awareness, including activation of the orienting response, or relational aspects of our treatments. Such patients might suffer more complex forms of posttraumatic conditions, including developmental trauma and attachment wounds. Highly aroused and/or easily triggered patients, including sufferers of complex PTSD and dissociative disorders might be very difficult to soothe, if their integrative and self-soothing capacity is low. A venue to overcoming this obstacle is presented in the treatment approach, where neurofeedback and EMDR are combined with initial neurofeedback-training for stabilization and EMDR for trauma-treatment. A theoretical rationale for the combined and chosen interventions is presented together with single case vignettes, where the outcome is related to contemporary theories on attachment and neurosciences.