

EMDR therapy as a body oriented psychotherapy

Suggested as an Oral Presentation.

The body has been an integral part of the AIP approach and the EMDR Therapy protocol from its inception. While the EMDR Therapy protocol has included the body as one of the channels being assessed, the focus of much of the work done has been sensory, cognitive and emotional.

This talk will suggest that the body (the somatic channel) is a central element in human experience, the experience of trauma, and that of the traumatic memory, and as such it can and should also be a focus of the EMDR Therapy basic protocol.

Throughout the talk, two main topics will be addressed. The first will touch upon the ways in which EMDR Therapy can be used with clients suffering from both acute and chronic somatic conditions, and research pointing to the effectiveness of EMDR Therapy in somatic disorders will be presented.

Next, and following the belief that “the more we learn from other disciplines, the more efficient and effective we can become” (Luber & Shapiro, 2009), a second focus of attention will be placed on the integration of knowledge from somatic therapies (e.g., Kurtz, 2007; Levine, 2012; Ogden, Minton, Pain, & Bhugra, 2006). Participants will be introduced to concepts basic to these modalities, including nervous system regulation and dysregulation, pendulation, titration, drives for completion and protection and discharge. In addition, emphasis will be placed on enhancing therapeutic interventions by focusing on the somatic channel in clients presenting with mental health disorders. More specifically, participants will learn how to apply somatic interventions in the preparation phase in order to enhance clients’ connection to their bodies, and utilize somatic resourcing in order to improve stabilization and safety. Next, the therapist’s role in making use of somatic awareness to help regulate and guide EMDR therapy through tracking and body reading will also be addressed. Last, participants will also gain knowledge on how to make use of somatic interweaves throughout the processing of traumatic memories, with an emphasis on working with bodily sensations, postures, and movements.