

Be Cautious, But Not Overly Cautious: Finding the middle ground between engaging in little or no preparation and always “going with that” or engaging in prolonged preparation and and prolonging treatment.

There has a controversy concerning the need for stabilization with clients with complex trauma and dissociative disorders. This controversy just points out to the need to adapt the process to each client according to level of therapist experience; different treatment settings, and degree of client pathology (e.g. dissociation). Though more intense work can be done in contained settings, the vast majority of EMDR clinicians work in outpatient settings where clients are left to deal with the aftermath of the session by themselves. We advocate there are times to process and “go with that” early in therapy and times to contain, resource, prepare the personality system, and then process memories so the client is capable of “going with that”. Keeping a balance between being cautious but not too cautious is key in the understanding of effective work with the most fragile cases. Guidelines and criteria to assess client readiness for EMDR processing will be presented. Videos of when we can proceed directly with trauma reprocessing or when we need to use a more progressive approach will be shown to illustrate the differences.

Overall objective: The overall aim of this workshop is for EMDR therapists to provide safe and timely memory processing with clients suffering from complex trauma and dissociative disorders.

Objectives –

- 1) The participant will learn to assess the client ‘s window of tolerance and readiness for EMDR memory processing.
- 2) The participant will learn costs and benefits of EMDR memory processing early in therapy with complex trauma (including dissociative disorders)
- 3) Strategies for keeping the client within the window of tolerance will be discussed (and illustrated with video tapes of sessions) to enable the participant to be better equipped when processing memories with clients suffering from complex trauma.