

Chapter 16

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy in Children Experiencing Mental Health Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy in the context of childhood mental health issues. It explores the origins, principles, and therapeutic mechanisms of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy. One of the keys focuses of this chapter has been the adaptation of this therapy for children. Finally, this chapter emphasizes the importance of training and supervision for therapists working with EMDR therapy among children, as well as the need for further research and development in this field. This chapter concluded that eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy has emerged as a widely accepted and effective treatment approach for addressing mental health problems among children. By incorporating this therapy into their practice, mental health professionals can provide evidence-based interventions to help children overcome mental health challenges and promote their overall well-being.

1. EVIDENCE-BASED PSYCHOTHERAPIES AND CRITICISMS ON THEIR USE AMONG CHILDREN

Evidence-based psychotherapies have emerged as foundations of effective mental healthcare interventions for managing various mental health problems among children. Evidence-based psychotherapies are supported by rigorous research and empirical data, provide systematic frameworks for understanding

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and treating psychological disorders (Connolly Gibbons et al., 2016). With the advent of evidence-based psychotherapies as foundations of therapeutic tactics, the field of children's mental healthcare has seen a paradigm shift. It is because modern evidence-based psychotherapies recognizes the unique psychological needs of children. Thus Evidence-based psychotherapies, which are based on a plethora of rigorous research and empirical data, can provide not just clinically proven treatments, but also comprehensive frameworks for understanding and treating psychological illnesses in children.

While evidence-based psychotherapies have demonstrated efficacy through their clinical evidence and rigorous research approach, some critics argue that the standardized nature of these interventions might not fully accommodate the diverse needs of individual children (Cook, Schwartz, & Kaslow, 2018). It is mostly because the over emphasis of evidence-based psychotherapies on empirical evidence could inadvertently overshadow the importance of factors such as cultural sensitivity, socioeconomic context, and family dynamics that play a pivotal role in shaping a child's mental health experience (Ratnani et al., 2023).

There is an emerging imperative to proactively address gaps at various levels in the successfully implementation of evidence-based psychotherapies in the field of Child Psychology, orchestrating the harmonious interplay of diverse paradigms within the realm of Evidence-Based treatments. The voids that have materialized in the practice of Evidence-Based treatments, owing to the rapid integration of cutting-edge technology, the fusion of data science, and the infusion of Artificial Intelligence into the realm of medicine, are exerting a tangible impact on the educational trajectory of physicians in training. As a result, a domino effect is eroding the foundation of trust in the healthcare ecosystem. However, a promising avenue lies ahead: through the integration of novel scientific frameworks, there are potential to empower the next generation of psychologists by, infusing their learning journey with modern evidence-based treatments.

2. INTRODUCTION TO EYE MOVEMENT DESENSITIZATION AND REPROCESSING THERAPY

2.1 The Origin and Evolution of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing therapy (EMDR) is a modern evidence-based psychotherapy discovered and developed by the famous American psychologist Dr. Francine Shapiro in the late 1980s (Rosen, 2023). This psychotherapy has gained global acceptance as an effective treatment for people who have been through traumatic events as well as those suffering from a variety of other psychiatric problems such as Anxiety & Depressive Disorders (Wajid & Gauhar, 2021), Substance Abuse Disorder (Tcheshmedjiev & Farrell, 2023) and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (Scelles & Bulnes, 2021). EMDR therapy combines cognitive therapy, exposure therapy, and bilateral stimulation to assist patients in processing their painful memories and reducing the negative impact of traumatic previous experiences.

EMDR therapy has its roots in the late 1980s, when it was accidentally discovered by Dr. Francine Shapiro. According to Dr. Francine Shapiro she was struggling with personal problems in the year 1987 when she went for an evening walk to a local park to clear her distressful thoughts. During her walk, she noted that as she moved her eyes quickly from one side to the other side, her own unpleasant thoughts and feelings began to vanish. Upon this discovery she began to experiment with deliberately shifting her

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