

IS EMDR APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR CLIENT? IS THE CLIENT READY?

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Review the criteria for appropriateness and readiness with a seasoned EMDR consultant or a certified EMDR colleague.

The mere presence of the following issues does not preclude the client from participating in EMDR therapy, but appropriateness should be discussed with a knowledge consultant or supervisor if these issues are present.

Is EMDR appropriate for your client?

1. Acute presentations (recent suicide attempt; life-threatening substance abuse; serious assaultive or impulsive behavior; psychotic episode)
2. Stabilization (unable to call for help if needed; issues that might endanger the client need to be addressed)
3. Medical/medication considerations (medically stable; address medications that might interfere with processing; eye pain; seizure disorders)
4. Timing considerations

If EMDR is appropriate, the client needs to demonstrate the following criteria. Reprocessing should not be attempted if the client cannot demonstrate these criteria.

Readiness Criteria:

1. Access to positive memory networks (the Calm/Safe Place/State can demonstrate this if it works)
2. Ability to change state (can the client shift from some level of disturbance to more calm?)
3. Ability to stay present/come back if dissociated (assess the level of dissociation if present; treat the dissociation first before doing any reprocessing)
4. Truth-telling agreement (is the client willing to be honest with you in their feedback between sets and between sessions?)
5. If any of this readiness criteria is not present, the clinician needs to stay in Phase 2 until the client can meet the criteria.

Refer to Shapiro, F. (2017). *Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, Basic principles, protocols and procedures* (3RD ed). New York: Guilford, for additional information.