

Changing core beliefs with EMDR

Preparation form

Core beliefs are deeply held negative beliefs people have about themselves, others, and the world. These beliefs usually originate from their childhood and permeate throughout someone's life. It is often the case that you are **intellectually aware** that the belief is not realistic, but, nonetheless, it **still feels** realistic. People follow certain rules in their lives derived from these core beliefs. These are often described as "if ..., then ..." beliefs.

Examples of core beliefs about yourself include:

- I'm worthless
- I'm a failure
- I do not matter. I'm not good enough. I am uninteresting. I am a loser. I am bad, etc.

Examples of core beliefs about others are:

- Other people are out to hurt you
- People always let you down
- Men only use you for sex or money
- No one can be trusted

An example of a core belief about the world is:

- The world is dangerous

Examples of "if-then" beliefs related to **predictions**:

- If I stand up for myself, then I will be rejected
- If I trust people, then I will be betrayed
- If I try something, then I will fail
- If I am vulnerable, then people will hurt me

Examples of "if-then" beliefs related to **negative self-judgment**:

- If I indicate my boundaries, then I am selfish
- If I am not ready for everyone, then I'm a bad person
- If you don't win, then you're a loser

Beliefs can lead to complaints and persistent patterns, such as mood swings, depression, social anxiety, insecurity, non-assertiveness, dependence, perfectionism, mistrust, etc.

The belief I want to change first (in consultation with my therapist) is:

..... [belief].

Indicate how true these beliefs *feel* in general between 0 and 100%.

Emotionally I believe this%.

What **would I like** to believe instead of the above (core) belief?

.....

Emotionally I believe this%

Treatment with EMDR

Beliefs usually arise from negative experiences, either large or small, such as:

- Being beaten up or abused
- Being bullied or abused
- Falsely blamed for something
- Being abandoned
- Being disadvantaged or belittled
- Being ignored
- Not being cared for or comforted

Through these experiences, you have been led to believe that your core belief is true. Some experiences from the past still evoke negative feelings when you recall them. The memory activates the negative (core) belief. For example, you feel worthless again when you recall being bullied in grade 6. The more often your negative (core) belief is activated, the more it will bother you. If, for example, you often have the thought: "See, I never succeed in anything" (activation of the belief "I am a failure"), you need to clear the old belief up first in order to create a new belief. The multitude of (emotional) negative experiences provide evidence for your (core) belief which prevent you from benefiting from the positive experiences that you have had in life (and possibly experience regularly in daily life). EMDR helps you to process these negative experiences. The evidence for negative core belief is then rendered harmless. Your therapist will explain how EMDR treatment will help with this.

First, you will pick three experiences that **you feel still prove** that your negative (core) belief is true. Look especially - but certainly not only - at your experiences early in your life.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Preparation for EMDR:

Give a short description of each event of no more than half a page per event. E-mail this to your therapist or print it and bring it with you if necessary.

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