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Trauma Therapy Consent Form – EMDR

Kari Kokko, MSW, RSW, SEP is a Registered Social Worker who has completed advanced training in a number of trauma therapy approaches. This document aims to help you understand the theory and practice of EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitizing and Reprocessing) in addressing trauma.

What is EMDR?

EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, and was developed by Dr. Francine Shapiro as a specific protocol to assist with the reprocessing of traumatic memories. It has since been used for a variety of other life challenges, such as anxiety, panic, intrusive thoughts, core beliefs, complex grief, etc. As stated by the EMDR International Association, when a person is very upset, their brain cannot process information as it does ordinarily. One moment becomes “frozen in time,” and remembering a trauma may feel as bad as going through it the first time because the images, sounds, smells, and feelings haven’t changed. Such memories have a lasting negative effect that can interfere with the way a person sees the world and the way they relate to other people.

EMDR seems to have a direct effect on the way that the brain processes information. Normal information processing is resumed; you still remember what happened, but it is less upsetting. EMDR is hypothesized to be similar to what occurs naturally during dreaming or REM (rapid eye movement) sleep. Therefore, EMDR can be thought of as a physiologically based therapy that helps a person see disturbing material in a new and less distressing way.

During EMDR, the therapist works with the client to identify a specific problem as the focus of the treatment session. The client calls to mind the disturbing issue or event, what was seen, felt, heard, thought, etc., and what thoughts and beliefs are currently held about that event. The therapist facilitates the directional movement of the eyes or other dual attention stimulation of the brain, while the client focuses on the disturbing material, and the client just notices whatever comes to mind without making any effort to control direction or content. Each person will process information uniquely, based on personal experiences and values. Sets of dual attention stimuli are continued until the memory becomes less disturbing and is associated with more adaptive thoughts and beliefs about one’s self. During an EMDR session, the client may experience intense emotions, and by the end of the session, most people report a noticeable reduction in the level of disturbance.

Statement of Informed Consent

Informed consent for trauma therapy is essential and out of respect for your right to choice and self-determination. Consent must be given voluntarily, knowingly and intelligently. Consent is active and ongoing, and you can change your mind at any time.

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and fully understand the information contained in this document. Any and all questions I have regarding the contents of these documents have been answered to my satisfaction, and I consent to receiving EMDR interventions offered by Kari Kokko, MSW, RSW, SEP.

I consent to receive EMDR

Client Name

Client Signature

Date