



Suitability & Readiness

Assessing Client Suitability & Readiness For EMDR Therapy

- Screen for Dissociative Disorders (DES, SCID-D, or MID)
- Check for indicators of poor psychic development
 - Years of unsuccessful psychotherapy
 - Depersonalization and/or derealization
 - Memory lapses
 - Flashbacks and intrusive thoughts
 - Somatic Symptoms
- Level of psychosocial functioning.
 - Chronic instability at home and/or work
 - Available internal and external resources
- Attachment history
 - Early relationship/attachment disruptions
 - Ability to establish and maintain relationships of any kind
 - Adequate supports
- Integrative capacity
 - Ability to stay present or to maintain dual awareness?
 - Access to positive (integrative) memory networks?
- Affect tolerance/regulation
 - Ability to control behavior and/or manage emotional responses
 - Ability to sustain high or varying levels of emotion throughout the EMDR process
 - Access and tolerate a positive and/or negative state
 - Ability to shift from one emotional state to another
 - Adequate stabilization/self-control strategies in place

Adapted from B. Hensley: *EMDR Therapy Primer. From Practicum to Practice:*



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- Readiness to change
 - External factors (i.e. child, spousal, employment, legal demands) that may interfere with successful treatment outcomes?
 - Have all complicating factors (secondary gains) been identified?
 - Active issues with substance abuse or other compulsive disorders?
 - Capacity and motivation to change?
- Behaviors that interfere with EMDR therapy
 - Addictions, obsessions, compulsions; avoidance or withdrawal; and compliance issues have been addressed prior to reprocessing
 - Danger to self or others
 - History of violent or assaultive behavior
- Medical Considerations
 - Medical conditions have been considered
 - Current medications have been identified
 - If needed, eye movements have been cleared by the physician
 - First-trimester cautions or other complications have been identified and addressed in the case of pregnancy
- Time Considerations
 - Treatment has been timed around projects, demands, and/or work schedules
 - Availability for follow-up
 - 90-minute sessions, if possible, have been arranged
 - Legal obligations have been considered

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- Acute Presentations - caution and case consultation may be necessary
 - Life-threatening substance abuse
 - Recent suicide attempts
 - Self-Mutilation
 - Major loss, illness, or injury
 - Serious assaultive/impulsive behavior
 - Psychotic episodes
 - Active alcohol/drug use
 - Dissociative disorders

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