Introduction to EMDR to for the new client:

EMDR is a special kind of therapy that is helpful to people who have experienced a trauma. A trauma is really in the eye of the beholder but it can be a little trauma like a humiliating experience or distressing event such as divorce or grief, or a bigger trauma like a car accident or abuse. EMDR therapy uses the clients brain as the guiding tool for therapy.

You see our brains are like computers, every day we experience new things and at night when we sleep those experiences are processed and downloaded into our memory. For some reason, sometimes when a trauma happens, our brains do not process the event and the memory gets stored improperly and stuck in our nervous systems. This can cause a manifestation of symptoms that are uncomfortable such as nightmares, flashbacks, disinterest in activities, etc. Its kind of like when a computer gets a virus and certain parts of the computer don’t work the same, until its fixed.

Even though you might think your traumatic event happened so long ago, your body keeps the record of it fresh by associating new memories with it. Because our memory stores information in networks or clusters, new experiences that feel similar to the body as the old traumatic memory get stored together and can trigger symptoms from the original event. For example, when she was 10 Suzy got into a car accident with her mom, she was hurt and the ambulance came to help, there were a lot of sirens and it was a very distressing event. Now Suzy is 18 and she is driving, when she gets passed by an ambulance with its sirens, her body signals to her that she is in distress and she experiences panic attacks behind the wheel. Suzy doesn’t feel safe driving. She has some unprocessed memories.

EMDR therapy is designed to help people like Suzy and you find those memories that are stuck in your brain and to process these so they get unstuck and stored away properly in your memory. It doesn’t erase memories but it does help alleviate the intense emotions, thoughts, sensations and images associated with the trauma. This helps all the yucky symptoms go away. In the case of suzy, following successful EMDR, she’ll always know she was in a car accident, but EMDR will help her to feel safe driving and to not experience panic when she hears a siren.

The great thing about EMDR is that you don’t have to talk out those yucky memories and images that you have, because your brain does all the work, not the therapist! The therapist will guide you through a series of EMDR sessions that will begin to desensitize the distressing memory. You will be guided to recall and hold images of the trauma while the therapist facilitates a form of bilateral stimulazation. This seems to unlock those stuck memories so that the mind and body can process them. During this time your job is just to notice what comes to mind and let it pass by. This process is repeated until the memory is no longer disturbing. It could take as little as one session to process and properly store your trauma.

EMDR has been researched and proven in many studies to be highly effective to help individuals cope with the symptoms of trauma, and the number one treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Do you have any questions?