

# What to Expect from EMDR Therapy

*A guide to help you feel grounded,  
informed, and prepared*

# Hello and Welcome!

If you're reading this, you're likely beginning—or considering beginning—EMDR therapy. That alone is something to acknowledge with compassion. Starting any form of trauma work takes courage, and I want to first say: **I'm really glad you're here.**

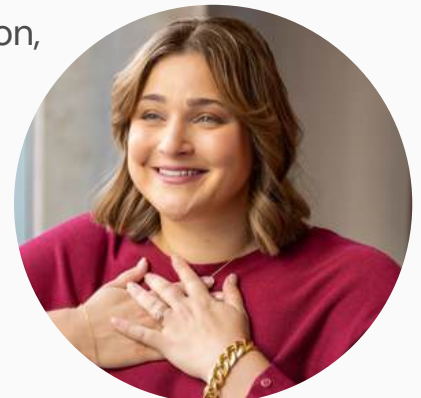
EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) is a powerful, evidence-based therapy designed to help people heal from distressing experiences. But more than that, EMDR can help you feel more grounded in the present, more connected to yourself, and more free from patterns that no longer serve you.

This guide was created to help you feel informed, supported, and prepared. EMDR can feel a little different from traditional talk therapy, and it's completely normal to have questions or even some uncertainty about the process. My hope is that this booklet answers many of those questions while also helping you feel safe and steady as we move forward.

We'll take our time. We'll go at your pace. And you'll never be asked to move into reprocessing until you have the skills and support to feel ready.

If anything in this guide brings up questions—or if something doesn't sit right—please bring it into session. EMDR isn't just about healing old wounds; it's also about building safety and trust in the here and now.

Talk to you soon,  
Dr. Cammy



# What Is EMDR Therapy?

You might be wondering—what exactly is EMDR, and how is it different from regular therapy?

EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. It's a structured, research-supported approach that helps people heal from trauma, distressing life events, and the emotional patterns that often come with them. But more than that, it's a way of helping your brain do what it naturally wants to do—*heal*.

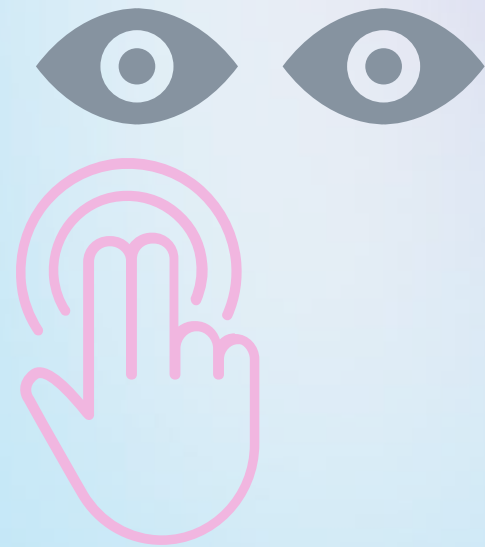
Most of us know that when we get a physical wound, the body rushes in to repair it. The mind works in a similar way. But when something overwhelming or traumatic happens, the brain doesn't always process the experience the way it normally would. Instead, the memory can get "stuck"—trapped with all the sights, sounds, body sensations, and beliefs that were present at the time.

That's where EMDR comes in.



# What Is EMDR Therapy?

Unlike traditional talk therapy, EMDR doesn't require you to retell every detail of what happened. Instead, it uses something called bilateral stimulation—which might be eye movements, tapping, or gentle sounds—to help both sides of your brain communicate and process what's been held in distress. Think of it like helping your brain “digest” the memory, so it no longer feels as raw, charged, or present in your day-to-day life.



You're not erasing the memory. You're changing your relationship to it.

EMDR has been recognized by organizations like:

*The American Psychological Association (APA)*

*The World Health Organization (WHO)*

*The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)*

All of these recognize EMDR as an effective, evidence-based treatment for trauma and post-traumatic stress. But in my experience, EMDR can support healing far beyond what we usually think of as “trauma.”

People often come to EMDR feeling stuck, exhausted by old patterns, or weighed down by something they can't quite name. Whether the pain comes from a single event or a long thread of emotional wounds, EMDR can be a powerful way to shift things that talk therapy alone hasn't quite reached.

I'll walk through it step by step. You'll never be rushed. And your experience—your pace, your nervous system, your inner knowing—will guide the process as much as anything else.

# What Brings People to EMDR?

You don't have to have a single, capital-T "Trauma" for EMDR to be helpful. In fact, a lot of the work people do in EMDR has to do with accumulated experiences—the moments that didn't seem like a big deal at the time but still shaped how you see yourself or move through the world.

Think of your brain like a filing cabinet. When something difficult or overwhelming happens, the brain tries to file it away. But if that experience was too much at the time—too scary, too fast, too confusing—it may never have been filed properly. Instead, it gets left open, half-processed, with alarms still going off every time something reminds you of it.

EMDR helps the brain go back to that folder and finish filing it away—without erasing it, minimizing it, or making you relive it. Just processing it so it can finally be at rest.

Here are some of the most common reasons people seek EMDR:

- PTSD and complex trauma
- Relationship issues like betrayal, constant arguing, and more
- Sexual issues, like pain during penetration
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Depression, especially when tied to self-worth or early experiences
- Grief and loss
- Phobias and irrational fears
- Disturbing memories or flashbacks
- Chronic pain or body-based distress
- Negative core beliefs, like:
  - "I'm not good enough"
  - "I don't belong"
  - "It was my fault"
  - "I can't trust anyone"

And sometimes it's not any one thing—it's a stuck feeling, a loop you can't get out of, or a part of you that still reacts like the hurt version of yourself. EMDR can help with that too.

# Pause and Reflect

*Are there any patterns, memories, or beliefs on this list that feel familiar to you?*

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin grey border, intended for a person to write their reflections on the prompt above.

You might even notice a physical reaction—a shift in your breath, tension in your body, or a sudden emotion. That’s okay. There’s no right or wrong way to respond. Just notice what comes up.

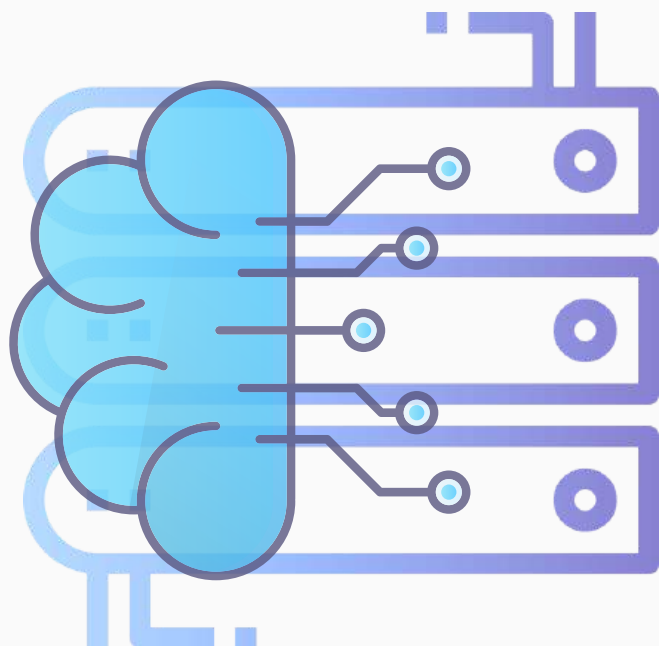
You don’t need to figure it all out now. We’ll explore it together, at your pace.



# How EMDR Works

One of the most common things people ask is: How does this actually work?

And honestly, it's a good question—because on the surface, EMDR can sound a little strange. Eye movements? Tapping? What does that have to do with trauma?



Here's the simplest way to think about it:

When we go through regular day-to-day experiences—conversations, challenges, emotions—our brain processes those events using a natural memory network. It takes what happened, makes meaning of it, and files it away in a way that feels settled.

Even if something upsetting happens, your brain can usually sort it out: ***That was hard, but it's over. I'm okay now.***

That's what happens in a regulated nervous system. The experience gets logged as a memory—part of your past, not something that feels like it's still happening in the present.

But when something traumatic or overwhelming happens, especially if it's sudden, ongoing, or happens when you feel powerless, your brain's processing system can go offline.

# How EMDR Works

Instead of filing the memory away, your brain puts it in “emergency storage.” It stays stuck—along with all the emotions, body sensations, images, and beliefs that were there at the time.

You might know the event is over. But your nervous system doesn’t always get the memo.



This is where EMDR comes in.

*Through a process called bilateral stimulation—using eye movements, tapping, or gentle sounds—we help both sides of your brain engage in reprocessing.*

This mimics the way your brain naturally heals during REM sleep, when your eyes move back and forth and your brain is busy sorting, integrating, and healing. REM is when emotional processing and memory consolidation take place—and EMDR taps into a similar mechanism while you’re awake and supported.

Instead of re-living the trauma, you’re allowing your brain to re-process it—to move it from “still happening” to “something that happened.”

And when that shift happens, things start to feel different. The memory is still there, but the emotional charge fades. The belief that “I’m not safe” might be replaced with “That was then, and I’m okay now.”

It’s not about forgetting. It’s about freeing yourself from the emotional grip of the past.



# Brain Sidebar

## A Metaphor for EMDR



Imagine your brain is like a library.

Most memories get sorted and shelved where they belong.

But when something traumatic happens, the memory never makes it to the shelf. It's left in the middle of the floor, scattered across your nervous system, easy to trip over.

EMDR helps the librarian (your brain) finally return to that pile—pick it up, make sense of it, and place it where it belongs.

The memory still exists. But now it's filed, contained, and no longer interrupting the whole library.



# Pause and Reflect

## What's Beneath the Surface

**Take a moment to check in with yourself.**

*Does the idea of a “stuck memory” or “scattered pages in the library” resonate with your experience?*

*Are there moments or feelings in your life that seem bigger than the situation at hand—like they belong to something older or deeper?*

*What does your body notice when you think about letting some of that weight go?*

There's no need to analyze or fix anything here. Just notice. You can jot down a few thoughts, or bring anything that came up into session. This is your process, and we'll move through it together.

# The 8 Phases of EMDR Therapy

- 1 History Taking & Treatment Planning
- 2 Preparation
- 3 Assessment
- 4 Reprocessing
- 5 Installation
- 6 Body Scan
- 7 Closure
- 8 Reevaluation

EMDR isn't something we jump into on day one. It's a structured, step-by-step process, and we'll move through it together at a pace that feels right for you.

There are eight phases total, and while that might sound like a lot, each phase has a clear purpose and helps build a sense of safety, clarity, and direction.

Let's walk through what that looks like.

# The 8 Phases of EMDR Therapy

## 1. History Taking & Treatment Planning

This is where we begin. I'll ask about your current concerns, past experiences, and what's bringing you to therapy now. We won't dive deep into trauma right away. We're just getting to know your story and starting to connect the dots. Together, we'll figure out which memories, patterns, or beliefs feel most important to work on—when you're ready.

## 2. Preparation

Before we even think about reprocessing, we'll focus on helping your nervous system feel grounded and supported. I'll teach you some simple but powerful tools for staying regulated—things like visualizing a calm place, creating a mental "container" for distressing thoughts, or checking in with your body. The goal is for you to feel safe, resourced, and in control.

## 3. Assessment

Once you feel ready, we'll choose a specific memory or target to work on. This isn't just about what happened—it's also about how it lives in your body and beliefs. We'll identify:

- An image or moment that represents the memory
- The negative belief you hold about yourself (e.g., "I'm powerless")
- How it makes you feel emotionally and physically
- What you *wish* you believed instead (e.g., "I did the best I could")

This gives us a roadmap for the next phase.

## 4. Reprocessing

This is where the bilateral stimulation (eye movements, tapping, or tones) begins. You'll bring gentle attention to the memory while I guide you through short sets of stimulation. You don't need to talk the whole time—just notice what comes up. Memories might shift, feelings might move, or you may even get random thoughts. That's all part of the process. We just keep following the thread.

# The 8 Phases of EMDR Therapy

## 5. Installation

Once the distress around the memory decreases, we strengthen a new, positive belief. For example, if we started with “I’m not safe,” we might install “I survived” or “I’m okay now.” The bilateral stimulation continues here too, helping your brain anchor this belief in a deeper, more embodied way.

## 6. Body Scan

Even when the memory feels better cognitively, the body sometimes holds onto tension or residual emotion. We’ll pause here to check in with your body, notice any leftover discomfort, and process it if needed. This helps complete the experience more fully—so your system isn’t holding onto old stress.

## 7. Closure

Whether or not the memory feels fully reprocessed in one session, we’ll always wrap up in a way that brings you back to a place of calm and regulation. We’ll use the grounding tools we practiced earlier so you leave feeling steady and contained.

## 8. Reevaluation

At the start of the next session, we’ll check in. How are you feeling? Did anything shift over the past few days? Do you feel complete with that memory, or is there more to explore? This helps us decide what’s next—whether that’s more work on the same target or moving forward to another layer.

**Healing isn’t always linear. Sometimes we revisit memories, pause for extra support, or shift directions based on what’s coming up in real life. That’s normal. What matters is that you’re not doing it alone. We’re building something together—one piece at a time, in a way that honors your pace and your story.**



# Your EMDR Journey

While the 8 phases of EMDR give us a general map, your actual path through EMDR might look a little different—and that's completely okay.

Some people move through the preparation phase quickly. Others may spend weeks (or even months) building up the sense of safety and regulation needed to begin processing. Both are valid. Both are EMDR.

Sometimes we follow the steps in a very linear way. Other times, we pause. We shift. We adapt. For example, if we're working with acute trauma—something recent and clearly defined—the process might focus more on present-day regulation and resilience, without digging into early memories or deep beliefs.

In some cases, we might bypass or modify certain phases entirely. If you're highly resourced, the preparation work might be brief.

If your trauma happened in a single incident, we might go straight into targeting that memory once you feel ready. If your trauma is complex or layered, we may integrate other modalities to support your system along the way.

**There's no "right" timeline for healing. And there's no prize for doing it quickly.**

What matters most is that we honor your pace, your body, and your readiness at every step.

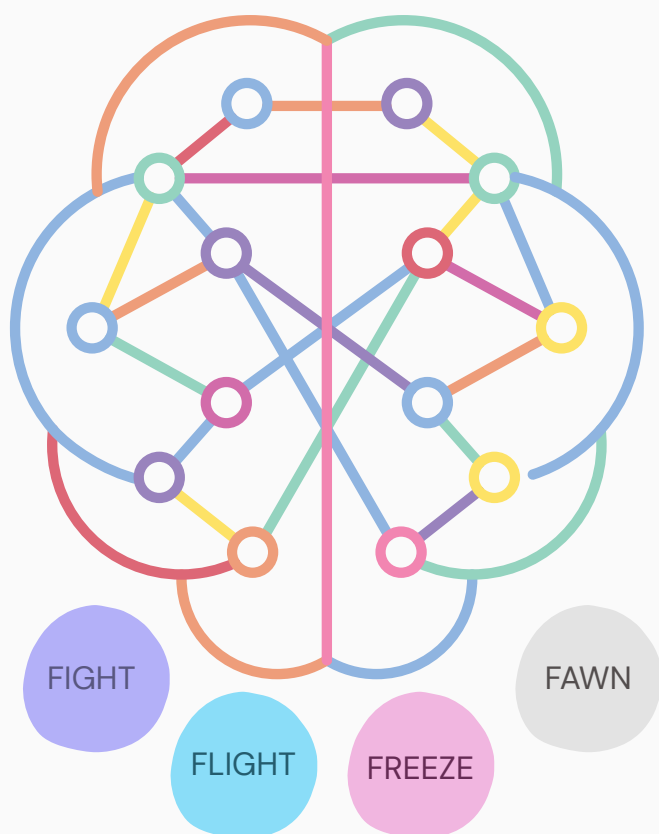
The EMDR process is meant to meet you where you are—not the other way around.



# Brain Sidebar

## Why Everyone's EMDR Process Looks Different

Your brain isn't a machine—it's a living, adapting system. And healing doesn't happen on a conveyor belt.



When you experience trauma, your nervous system reacts in the way it believes will keep you safe—whether that's fight, flight, freeze, or fawn. These responses shape how trauma gets stored and how easily (or not) it can be reprocessed later.

Some brains are ready to reprocess quickly, especially if there's a strong sense of present-day safety. Others need more time to build trust, calm the nervous system, or simply stay grounded through the process.

Your timeline has nothing to do with strength or resilience.

It has everything to do with what your body needed to survive—and how we now support it in healing.

# Getting Ready

## Preparing for the First Three Phases

You don't have to do anything "perfectly" to begin EMDR. But it can be helpful to know what to expect during the early stages—so you can feel more grounded and supported as we get started.



History Taking

Preparation

Assessment

The first three phases lay the foundation for everything that comes next. They help me understand where you've been, how your nervous system responds to stress, and what kinds of tools or strategies are most likely to support your healing.

Let's walk through what that might look like, and how you can take care of yourself along the way.

# Getting Ready: Preparing for the First Three Phases

## Phase 1: History Taking

This is where we begin building the roadmap. I'll ask about your current concerns, some of your life history, and any patterns or experiences that feel important. We'll also talk about your strengths and supports—what's helping you stay afloat.

How you can support this phase:

- Explore your Distressing Event Timeline (more on that below)
- Notice any memories or life themes that tend to come up over and over
- Share any beliefs that feel deeply rooted, even if they don't make logical sense
- Let me know what feels off-limits for now—we don't need to go anywhere you're not ready for



## Tool: Distressing Event Timeline

If you're someone who finds structure helpful, you might want to explore the Distressing Event Timeline I offer on my website. It's a gentle tool that helps us map out events—big or small—that still feel emotionally charged or unresolved. You don't need to fill in everything, and you're not expected to explain or analyze it all. The goal isn't to "dig"—it's simply to notice.

Feel free to bring it into session if you'd like to talk it through together—or just use it privately as a way of beginning to surface memories and patterns with more clarity.

[Download Distressing Events Timeline Here](#)



And just to say—it's completely normal for more memories to come up as the work unfolds. You don't have to remember everything at once. Your brain will reveal what it's ready to process, in its own time.

# Getting Ready: Preparing for the First Three Phases

## Phase 2: Preparation

Before we go anywhere near painful memories, we spend time helping your nervous system feel grounded, steady, and supported. I'll teach you some simple, flexible tools you can use both inside and outside of session to help regulate your emotions and feel more in control.

How you can support yourself during this phase:

- Practice the calming tools we explore together (like visualization, breathwork, or containment)
- Share openly with me about what feels supportive—and what doesn't
- Begin noticing the physical sensations that show up when you feel safe, overwhelmed, or disconnected
- Remind yourself that slow is strong—if we stay here for a while, it's because we're laying the groundwork for real change

## Phase 3: Assessment

Once you feel ready, we'll start choosing specific memories or beliefs to work with. I'll guide you in identifying how the experience shows up—not just as a story, but in your body, your emotions, and the beliefs you carry.

Things to keep in mind here:

- You don't need to have the whole memory or full story—your brain will offer what it's ready for
- Trust any emotional or physical cues that show up, even if they seem random
- I'll be checking in regularly to make sure we're moving at a pace that feels manageable



# Pause and Reflect

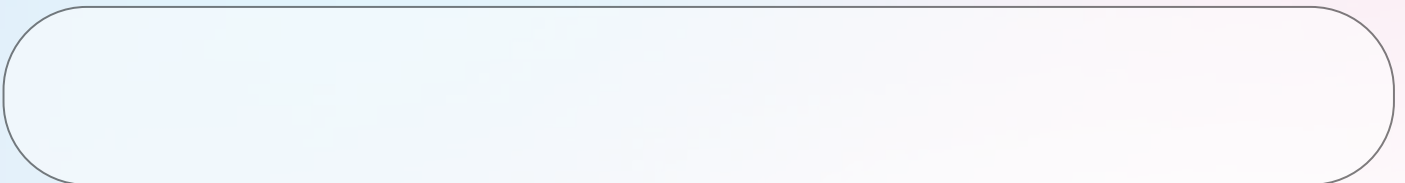
## You're Not Behind

**Take a moment to check in with yourself.**

*How do you feel when you think about starting something new—especially something as personal as trauma healing?*



*What parts of you feel ready?*



*What parts might still be unsure, guarded, or needing more time?*



There's no timeline you need to meet. No "right" amount of preparation.

You don't have to know exactly what you want to work on. You don't even have to feel fully ready.

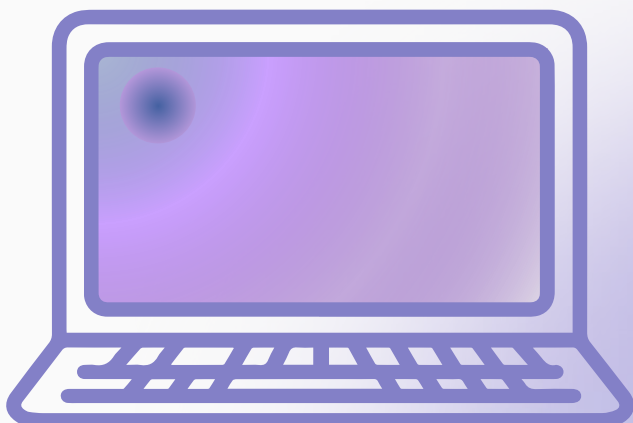
Just bringing your attention to the idea of this work is a meaningful beginning. You're already showing up. And we'll keep moving forward together, one step at a time.

# What Does Reprocessing Feel Like?

Let's talk about what actually happens during an EMDR session —specifically during the reprocessing phase.

This is where the bilateral stimulation begins and the healing work starts to unfold.

In my practice, I use a secure online platform that brings up a moving ball on the screen. The ball gently moves back and forth to simulate rapid eye movement (REM)—the same type of movement your eyes make during deep sleep, when your brain naturally processes emotion and memory.



Some people choose to watch the ball with their eyes, tracking it side to side.

Others prefer to close their eyes and simply listen to the tones that alternate between their left and right ears.

Some clients switch between the two depending on how their body feels that day. There's no one right way—it's about finding what feels most supportive and least overwhelming for your nervous system in the moment.



# Getting Ready: Preparing for the First Three Phases

During reprocessing, you'll bring your attention to a specific memory or belief—just enough to “touch into” it. Then I'll guide you through short sets of bilateral stimulation (the eye movements, tones, or taps). After each set, I'll pause and check in.

I might ask:

- “What do you notice now?”
- “Where did your mind go?”
- “What came up for you just then?”

There's no pressure to have a certain kind of answer. You might notice an emotion, a body sensation, a new memory, or even something random. Sometimes things feel stuck, and other times they move quickly. Your brain is doing the work beneath the surface—even when it doesn't feel linear or clear in the moment.



You are not reliving the memory. You're observing it, gently and with support, while your brain begins to move it through.

Over time, the emotional charge often fades.

The memory starts to feel more distant, more neutral, more like something that happened—rather than something you're still carrying.

Every reprocessing session is different. Some feel like a slow unfolding. Others might feel more emotionally intense. Some might feel like nothing happened at all—and then something shifts days later.

Whatever your experience, we'll move through it together. You'll never be asked to “push through.” We'll pause whenever needed, and I'll be tracking closely with you the whole way.

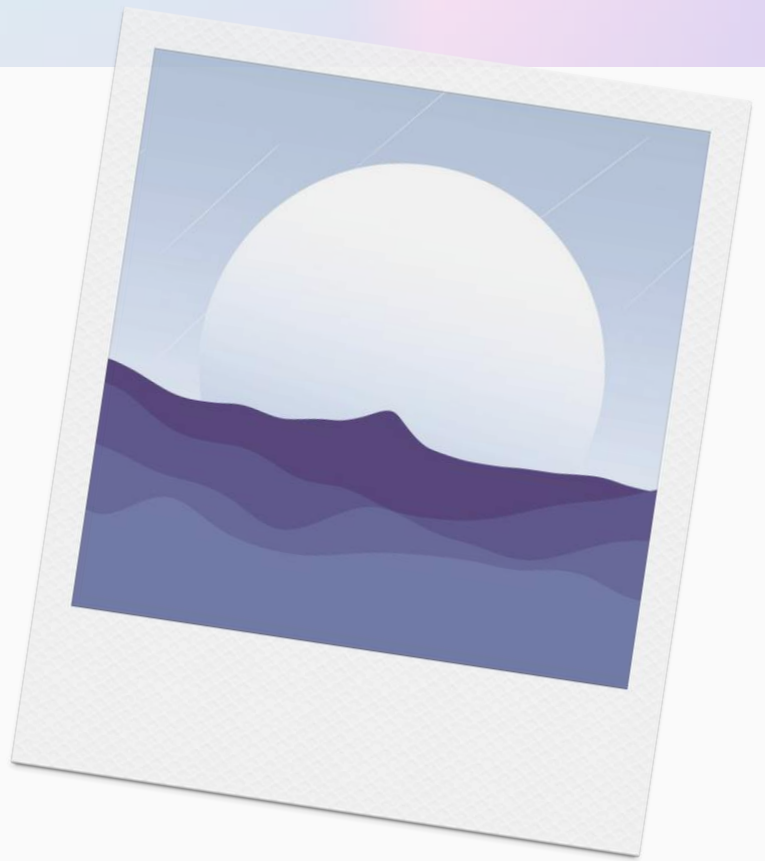
# Brain Sidebar

## Trusting the Process

EMDR doesn't always feel like a big breakthrough.

Sometimes it feels quiet, slow, or even kind of confusing.

That doesn't mean it's not working.



Your brain is healing in its own way, in its own time.

Some sessions may feel intense and emotional. Others might feel like nothing happened—until you notice that something that used to really trigger you now feels... softer.

You don't have to force anything. You don't have to "do it right."

The work is happening—beneath the surface, in your nervous system, in the parts of you that have been waiting a long time to feel safe.

# What to Expect After a Reprocessing Session

Think of EMDR reprocessing like emotional surgery.

We're going in, locating something that hasn't healed quite right, and giving your brain the conditions it needs to finally do what it was designed to do: restore balance.

But even small surgeries can leave tenderness behind.

After a session, you might feel relief, exhaustion, vulnerability, clarity—or nothing at all. Some people describe a foggy feeling. Others feel like a weight was lifted. Others feel surprisingly emotional or unsettled. There's no one way this looks, and no single “correct” response.

What's happening is that your brain is still integrating. Just like a cut scabs over after you've stopped bleeding, your nervous system keeps doing the work even after the session ends.



# What to Expect After a Reprocessing Session

You might notice:

Emotional waves or mood swings

A burst of insight, clarity, or peace

Vivid dreams or flashes of memory

A sensation of “buzzing” or tingling in your limbs

Feeling lighter—like you’ve set something down  
you’ve been carrying for years

Nausea or stomach discomfort (this is common—  
your body processes emotions, too)

A deeper sense of calm, groundedness, or being  
more “yourself”

Feeling soft, open, or raw

Crying for “no reason”

Fatigue or low energy

None of this means anything is wrong or right. These are just signs that something moved. Even if it doesn’t feel dramatic or obvious at first, change often begins quietly.

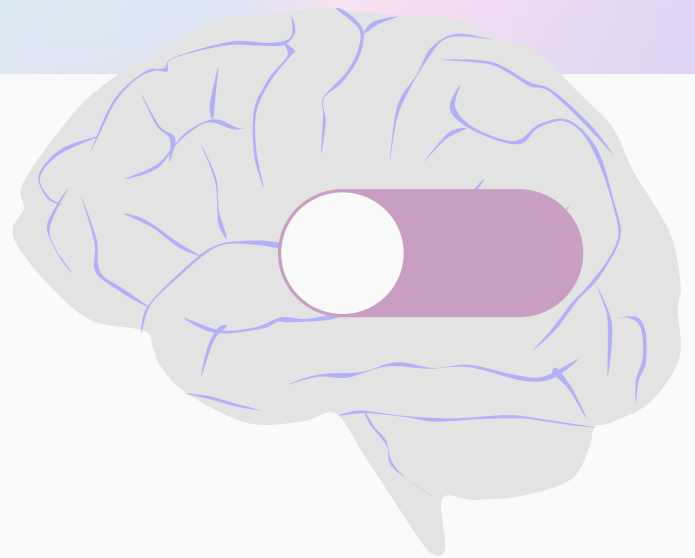
The best thing you can do is offer your nervous system what it didn’t get at the time of the trauma—gentleness, space, and care.

# Brain Sidebar

## Why You Might Feel “Off” (or Really Good) After EMDR

Your brain just did a big job.

And it’s still working—even if you’re not.



EMDR activates the brain’s adaptive memory network—the system that links old memories with new understanding. When that network lights up, it doesn’t shut off the moment therapy ends. Your brain keeps integrating behind the scenes, like a background download finishing even after you’ve closed the app.

That’s why you might feel:

- Emotionally raw or deeply calm
- Tired, foggy, or wired
- Clear, energized, or lighter than usual
- Physically off—like tension, nausea, or heaviness in the stomach

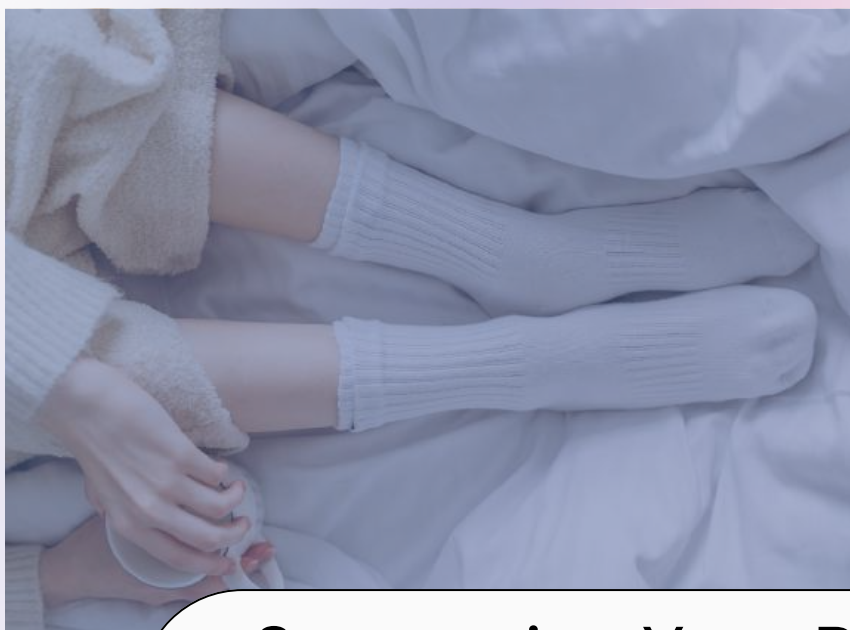
All of these are normal responses to your nervous system recalibrating.

Sometimes the body releases things before the mind has made sense of them. Sometimes you’ll feel nothing at all—and then realize days later that something has shifted.

Whatever you’re experiencing, your brain knows how to do this.

You don’t need to push it. Just take care of yourself while it finishes the work.





## Supporting Your Resilience: Gentle Practices After EMDR



After an EMDR session, your system may feel a little stirred up—like sediment in a glass of water. The work we’ve done shakes things loose so they can finally settle. But that settling takes time, and it helps to give your body and brain the conditions they need to re-center.

You don’t need to “do” anything fancy after session. But small, intentional acts of care can help your nervous system understand:

*We’re safe now. We’re not in the memory.  
We’re here.*

Here are a range of **regulation practices** you can try after reprocessing. You’re not meant to do all of them—just pick what feels grounding or doable in the moment.



# Supporting Your Resilience: Gentle Practices After EMDR

## Ground with the Senses



Use your five senses to remind your body that you're in the present.

- Sip a warm drink slowly
- Run your hands under cool or warm water
- Smell a calming scent (lavender, vanilla, peppermint)
- Light a candle or turn on soft lighting
- Put on cozy socks or hold a grounding object

## Breathe Intentionally



Breath sends signals to your nervous system.

Try:

- Box breathing (inhale 4, hold 4, exhale 4, hold 4)
- Gentle sighs or open-mouth exhales
- Breathing in through your nose, out through a straw

# Supporting Your Resilience: Gentle Practices After EMDR

## Regulate Through Rhythm



The brain responds well to rhythm and repetition. Try:

- Listening to calming music, drumming, or binaural beats
- Rocking gently in a chair or swaying side to side
- Dancing intuitively—even for just 30 seconds

## Move Gently

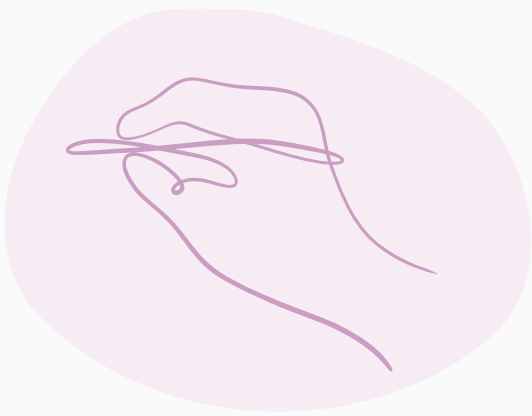


Movement helps the brain finish what it started.

- Take a short walk, even around your home
- Stretch your arms, neck, and hips slowly
- Try shaking out your hands or legs to release energy

# Supporting Your Resilience: Gentle Practices After EMDR

## Externalize the Experience



- Jot down anything that stood out from session
- Draw how your body felt during or after
- Write a note to yourself from a resourced part
- Track changes in mood or physical sensations over the next few days

## Anchor in Safety



- Place one hand on your heart and one on your belly
- Repeat a phrase like “I am safe right now” or “This is my body in the present”
- Look around and name 5 things you see in the room

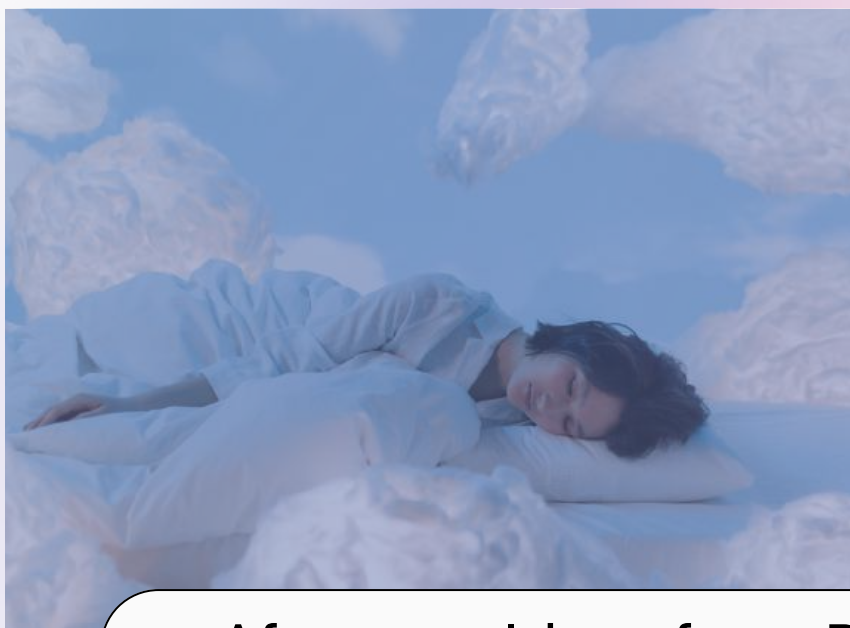
# Supporting Your Resilience: Gentle Practices After EMDR

## Connect or Cocoon



- Reach out to someone safe, even just to say hi
- Let a friend know you may need some gentle check-ins
- Or: go inward. Light a candle, put on soft clothes, and create a calm nest

You don't need to "fix" anything that comes up after EMDR. Your system is already doing the work. These practices just help create the conditions for it to settle, safely and gently.

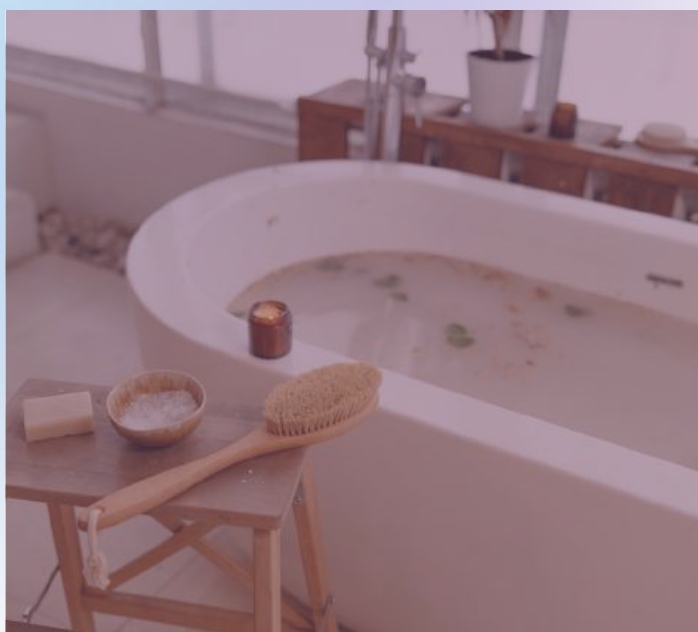
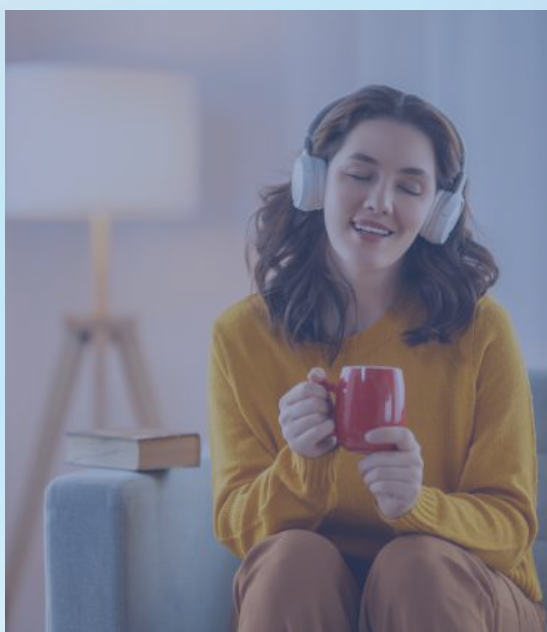


## Aftercare Ideas from Real Clients



These are the go-to aftercare practices that many clients have come back to again and again after EMDR sessions. Everyone's system is different, but these "fan favorites" might spark something that feels just right for you.

You don't need a full ritual. Even one small act of care can help your brain and body come back to center.



# Fan Favorites



## The Weighted Blanket + Candle Combo

Wrap yourself up, turn down the lights, and light a candle. Instant nervous system exhale.

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## A Comfort Show with No Plot Twists

Rewatching *The Great British Bake Off*, *Friends*, *Gilmore Girls*, nature documentaries, or whatever show feels familiar and safe can be a gentle way to settle your system. Whether it's lighthearted, nostalgic, or just predictable—it's all about *what feels good to you*.

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## A Bath or Long Shower

One client said, "It's like I'm washing off the session, not in a bad way—just letting it settle." Add Epsom salts or lavender if you like.

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# Fan Favorites



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## Lo-fi Music or Rain Sounds in Headphones

Let your brain float. Rhythm helps your brain integrate what it just processed—and it also offers a soft buffer from the outside world. Here are a few client go-tos:

- [FC Kahuna - Hayling](#)
- [Upbeat Bilateral Stim Vibes](#)
- [Lofi HipHop](#)
- [Bilateral Nature Sounds](#)

Some clients actually unwind best with louder, more energetic music—rock, hip hop, metal, or something with a strong beat. Check this out:

- [Veil of Maya](#)

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## A Slow Walk, No Phone

A 10-minute walk outside can help recalibrate your nervous system. Trees, sky, or even city sidewalks—all welcome.

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# Fan Favorites



## Hydrate + Gentle Snack

Water, electrolytes, and something grounding like crackers, toast, or a warm drink. Especially helpful if you feel buzzy, foggy, or dissociated. Ginger tea is a gem for nausea.



## Story Time

Sometimes the best aftercare is a slow, soothing audiobook or podcast that doesn't ask much of your brain. Think: gentle storytelling, bedtime meditations, or even something intentionally uneventful. It's not about getting hooked—it's about giving your system something soft to settle into.

Client faves include:

- Michelle's Sanctuary (the besstttt bedtime stories out there!)
- Sleep with Me (the most boring stories of all time)

# Fan Favorites



## Journaling One Sentence

Just one. “What stayed with me today?” or “What softened?” You don’t need to process it all—just honor what’s there.

---



## A Long, Deep Sleep

You’ve probably heard it more than once by now—but truly, this is the most powerful aftercare of all. Let your brain do what it does best while you rest.

---

# Pause and Reflect

## Your Personal Aftercare Plan

Take a few moments to reflect on how your nervous system tends to respond after emotional work. What helps you feel grounded, comforted, or reconnected?

You might write about:

*What usually helps me feel calm when I'm activated is...*

*After a hard moment, I notice that I tend to feel...*

*A few simple things I can prepare ahead of time (music, snacks, support, etc.) are...*

*If I can only do one thing after EMDR, I want it to be...*

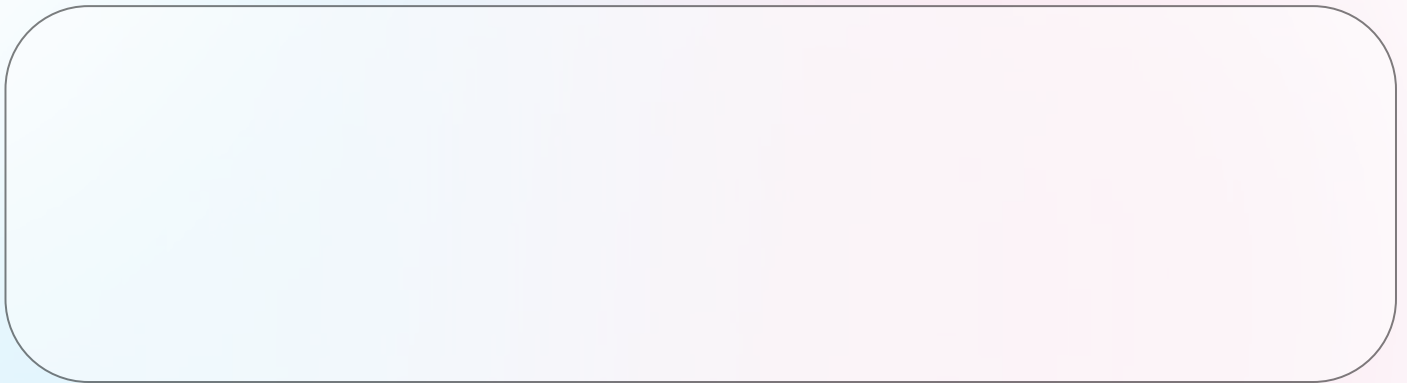
# Pause and Reflect

## Your Personal Aftercare Plan

Take a few moments to reflect on how your nervous system tends to respond after emotional work. What helps you feel grounded, comforted, or reconnected?

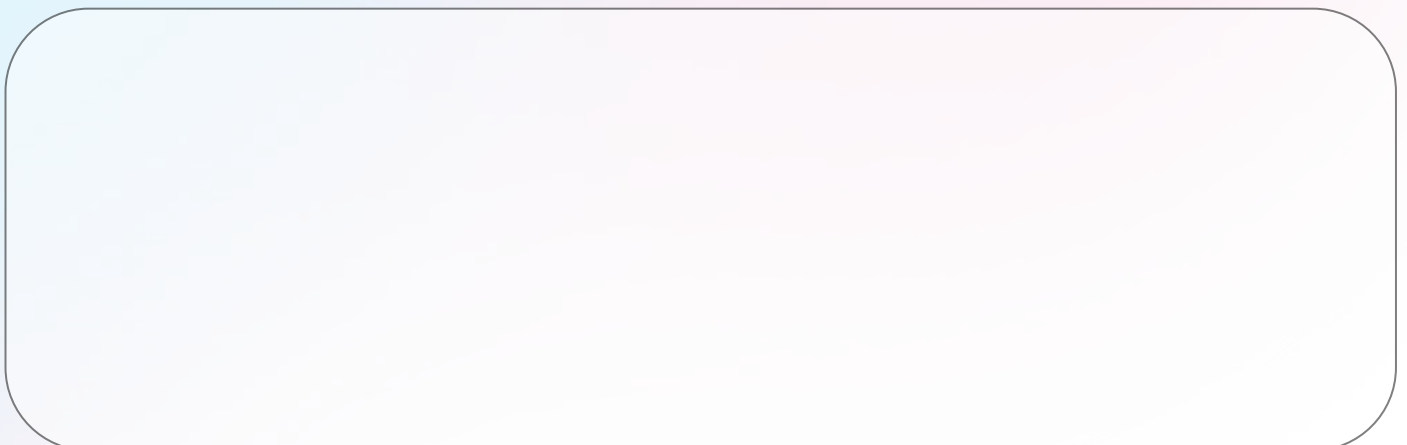
You might write about:

*My plan for sleep after sessions is...*



*And just for you—no pressure, no right answers:*

*What would it look like to treat myself with the same care and gentleness I offer others when they're hurting?*



# Knowing When to Pause: It's Not a Detour. It's Wisdom.

Trauma work isn't a straight path. It's more like a winding trail—sometimes through rocky terrain, sometimes through tall grass, sometimes through deep rest.

There may be moments when continuing EMDR doesn't feel quite right. Maybe your nervous system is too flooded. Maybe life outside of therapy feels unstable. Maybe you're in the middle of something new that makes digging into something old feel too much.

This is not failure. This is *capacity*.

In fact, one of the most healing things you can do is notice when your system says, "Not yet," and respond with kindness instead of pressure.

Signs we may want to pause or slow down:

- You're feeling emotionally flooded or "off" for days after session
- You're struggling to feel grounded in daily life
- You're going through a current crisis or transition

- You're noticing panic, shutdown, or dissociation during or after reprocessing
- You're starting to dread sessions or feel like you're "going through the motions"

If any of this happens, we don't stop therapy—we shift. We might spend more time resourcing, regulating, or just being with what's here. We might move toward relational work, parts work, or coping support until the ground beneath you feels steadier again.

Taking breaks is not about resistance. It's about building safety.

Sometimes the most powerful trauma work is learning how to pause before you push.



# EMDR FAQ

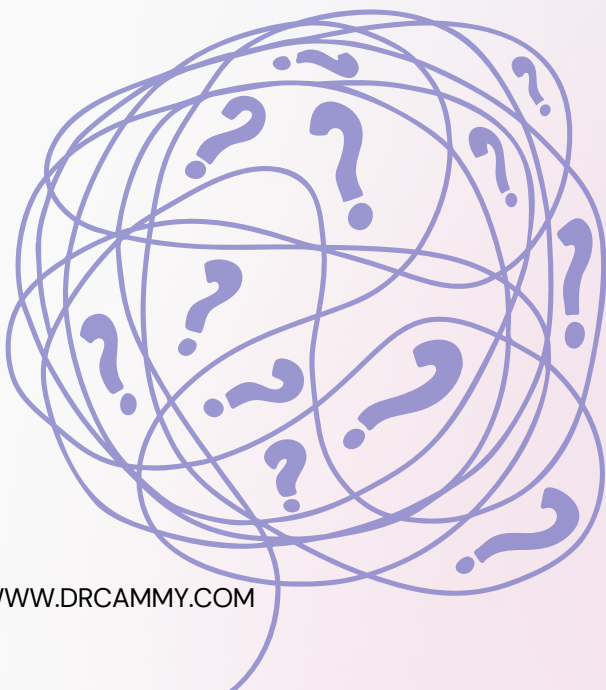
## Common Questions and Honest Answers

Can I do EMDR while taking medication?

Yes. EMDR and medication often work well together. If you're on medication that affects your mood, memory, or nervous system, we'll just stay curious about how it's showing up during sessions.

Can I still do EMDR if I'm not sure I've experienced "trauma"?

Yes. EMDR can help with trauma, but also with anxiety, grief, low self-worth, relationship patterns, or stuck emotional pain. If something feels like it's weighing on you or holding you back, we can work with it.



# EMDR FAQ

## Common Questions and Honest Answers

Will EMDR still work if I don't remember anything that happened?

That's completely okay. EMDR doesn't require you to recall every detail. Your brain will work with whatever fragments, images, sensations, or emotions it's ready to process. You don't need a full narrative to begin healing.

---

What if I cry, shut down, or feel overwhelmed during session?

That's a normal part of trauma work. If something feels like too much, we pause. I'll be right there with you to help you stay grounded, and we'll always move at your pace. You're allowed to feel what you feel—without pressure to explain it.

---

Do I have to use my eyes for bilateral stimulation?

Nope. Some people prefer to watch the moving ball on the screen, others close their eyes and listen to alternating tones, and some switch it up depending on how they're feeling that day. We'll find what works best for your nervous system.

---

# EMDR FAQ

## Common Questions and Honest Answers

What if I don't feel anything during EMDR?

That's okay too. Some sessions feel emotional; others feel flat or confusing. That doesn't mean nothing's happening. Your system might be processing quietly beneath the surface. Shifts can be subtle and may show up later in your body, thoughts, or relationships.

---

Can I get "stuck" in a memory or retraumatize myself?

EMDR is designed to avoid retraumatization. You won't be asked to relive anything. If something feels overwhelming, we pause, resource, or shift gears. You're always in control, and we have tools to support you in staying safe and steady.

---

What if something new or unexpected comes up during processing?

That's actually very common. Your brain might link one memory to others, or surface something surprising. We can hold space for it gently and decide together how to work with it—or not. Nothing has to be forced.

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# EMDR FAQ

## Common Questions and Honest Answers

Do I have to commit to EMDR long-term?

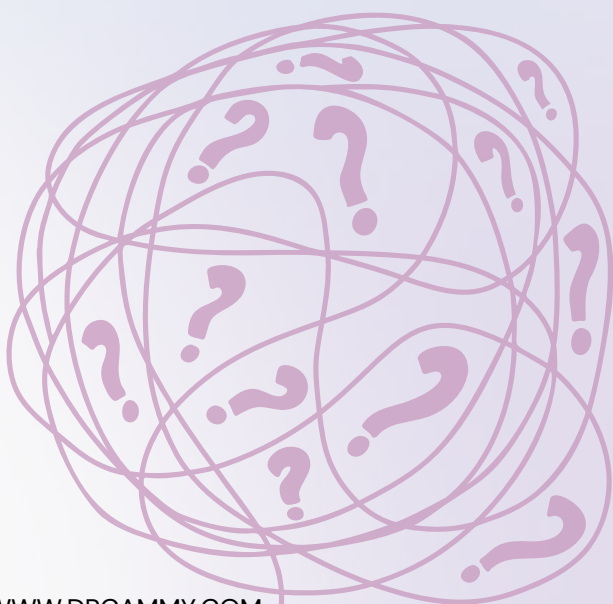
Not at all. You're never locked in. We'll check in regularly to see how it's feeling, and you're always welcome to take breaks, shift directions, or stop if it doesn't feel right.

---

What if I need support between sessions?

If something urgent comes up, reach out. We'll also talk about how to build a support plan for in between sessions—using grounding tools, journaling, or leaning on safe people in your life. You don't have to hold it all alone.

---



# EMDR FAQ

## Common Questions and Honest Answers

Will I have to talk about everything that happened to me?

Not at all. EMDR isn't about retelling your whole story. We work with just enough to activate the memory network—so your brain can reprocess what it's been holding. Sometimes clients say very little during reprocessing, and that's okay.

---

How do I know if I'm making progress?

Progress can be subtle: less reactivity to triggers, more ease in your body, fewer emotional loops, or clearer boundaries. It doesn't always feel dramatic. We'll check in together to track what's shifting over time.

---

What if EMDR doesn't "work" for me?

EMDR is powerful, but not one-size-fits-all. Sometimes change is slow. Sometimes another approach is needed. If EMDR isn't the right fit, we'll adapt. You're not failing—you're just being honest with what your system needs.

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# Pause and Reflect

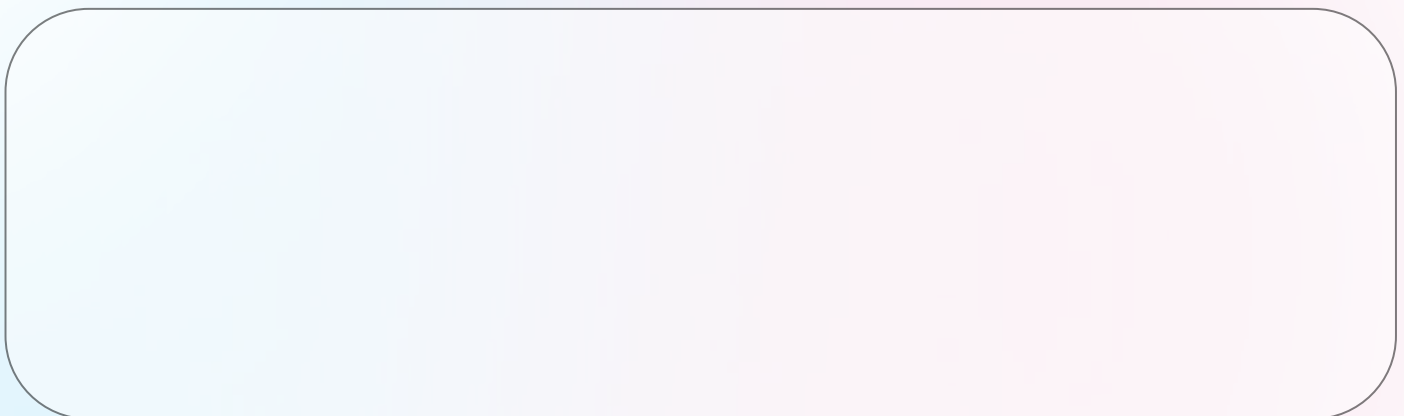
## A Soft Place to Land

*You don't have to have it all figured out. This is just a space to notice what's coming up—no pressure, no judgment, just curiosity.*

You can use these questions as journaling prompts, talking points for session, or simply a way to check in with yourself as you move forward.

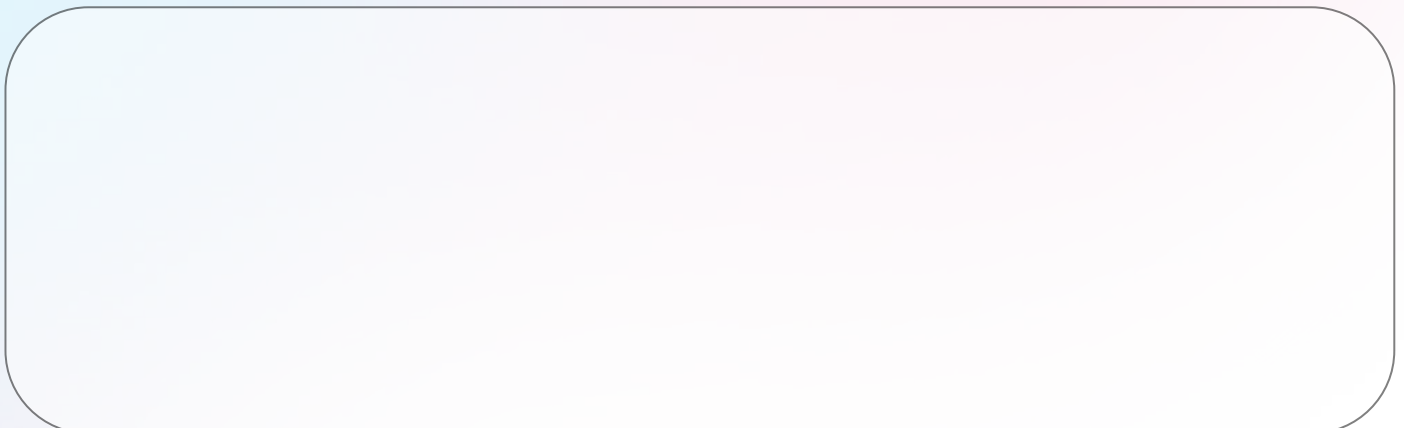
***How am I feeling after reading this guide?***

*(What emotions, sensations, or thoughts are lingering?)*



***What parts of EMDR feel like a good fit for me right now?***

*(What's drawing me toward this process?)*

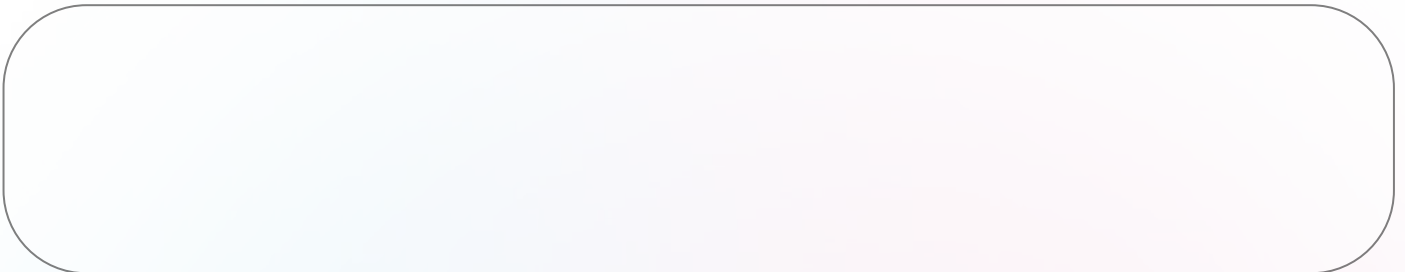




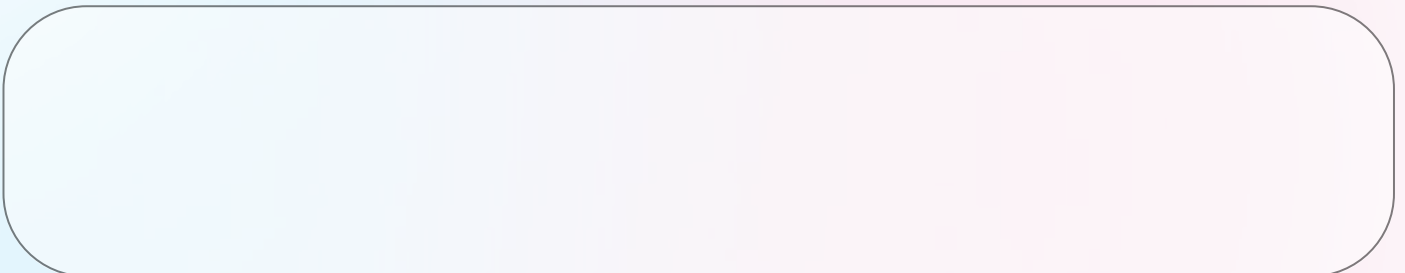
# Pause and Reflect

## A Soft Place to Land

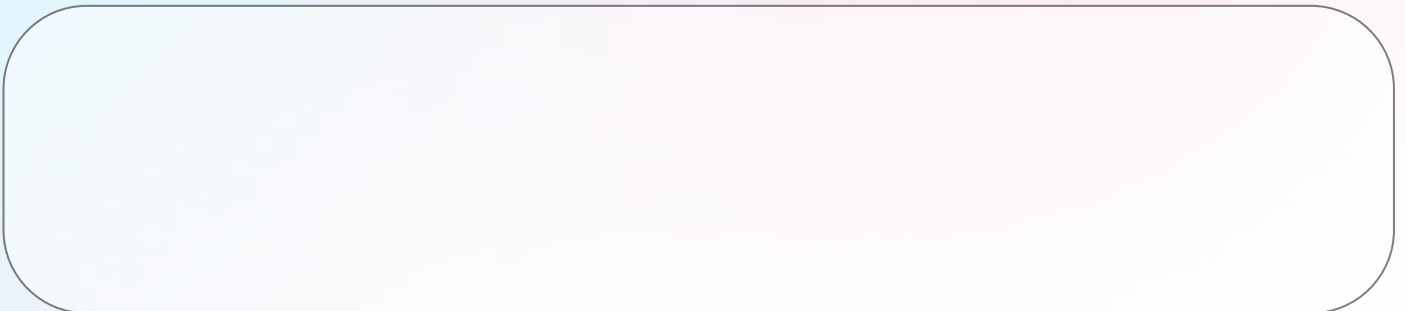
***What parts feel uncertain, scary, or like I'm not ready yet?***  
*(And what kind of support would help me feel more ready?)*



***Are there memories or patterns I already know I want to work on?*** *(If not, that's okay too—this can unfold over time.)*



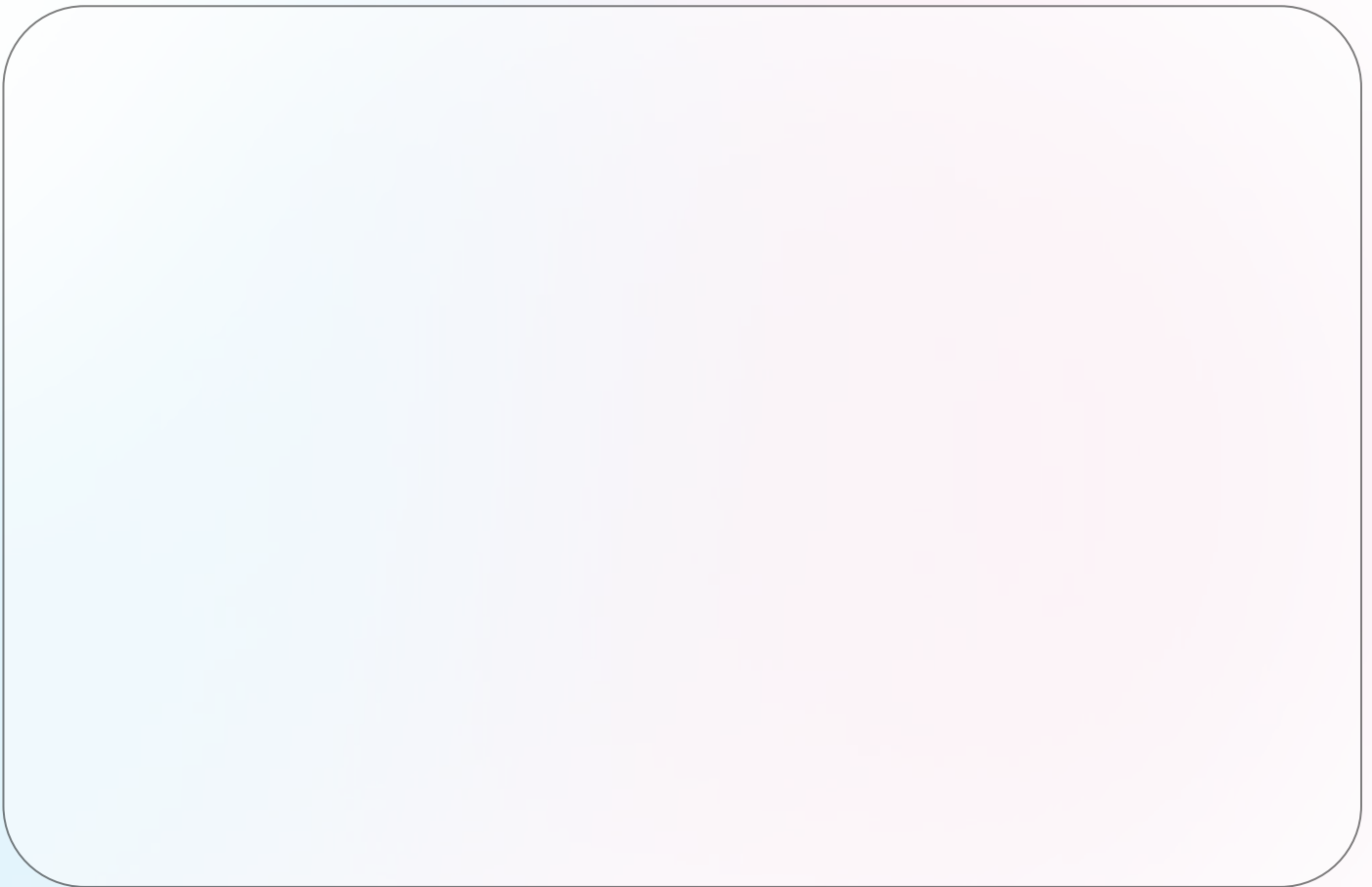
***What has helped me feel safe, grounded, or supported in the past?*** *(Can I use any of those things before or after a session?)*



# Pause and Reflect

## A Soft Place to Land

***Is there anything I want to bring up or ask Dr. Cammy in our next session?*** (This might include things I'm unsure about or want more support with.)

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a user to write their response to the prompt above.

There's no right way to do this work.

Wherever you are is the perfect place to begin.

# Moving Forward

Starting EMDR is a big step—and so is giving yourself time to understand it.

Whether you're feeling ready to begin reprocessing, still settling into the preparation phase, or simply exploring whether this approach is right for you, I want you to know this:

There is no timeline for healing.

There's no race, no benchmark, and no "right" way to move through this.

Your process will be your own—shaped by your body, your history, your resilience, and your readiness.

Some people move quickly. Some stay in preparation for a while. Some pause and return later. All of it is valid.

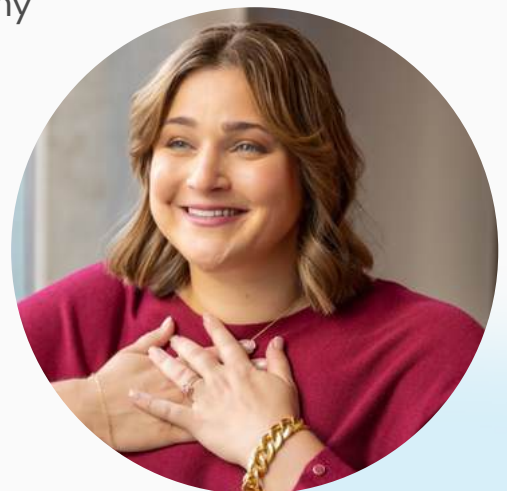
EMDR isn't about forcing change. It's about giving your nervous system the chance to do what it already knows how to do—heal.

We'll move together, at a pace that honors your safety and your story. And we'll continue to check in along the way, adjusting as needed.

You're not doing this alone.

If you have questions, if you're feeling unsure, or if something new has surfaced after reading this guide—bring it into session. Everything is welcome here.

Talk to you soon,  
Dr. Cammy



# Want to Learn More?



If you're curious about the science behind EMDR, what experts are saying, or just want to dive a little deeper into your own healing journey, here are some trusted resources—broken down by category to make things easier to explore.

## The Basics of EMDR

These give you a clear, plain-language overview of what EMDR is and how it works:

- **What is EMDR?** – EMDR International Association (EMDRIA)  
[www.emdria.org/about-emdr-therapy\](http://www.emdria.org/about-emdr-therapy/)
- **APA Guidelines for Treating PTSD** – American Psychological Association.  
EMDR is one of the top recommended treatments: [www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline](http://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline)

# Want to Learn More?

## Why EMDR Works: Brain Science Explained

For those curious about what's happening in the brain during EMDR:

- **"The Brain Science of EMDR"** – Short explainer article from EMDR Healing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lgG2jO89G8>
- **The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel van der Kolk** – A powerful, readable book on how trauma is stored in the body and how therapies like EMDR help. (Note: Some clients find this book intense—read at your own pace.)

## Books for Clients

Gentle, accessible books written with you in mind—not just professionals.

- **Getting Past Your Past by Francine Shapiro (creator of EMDR)**

Written specifically for the public. Full of relatable stories and self-reflection tools.

- **It Didn't Start With You by Mark Wolynn**

A powerful read on inherited trauma and how healing ripples through generations. Not EMDR-specific but deeply compatible.

- **Transforming Trauma by Laurel Parnell**

A therapist's guide—but written in an approachable style that many clients love. Offers insight into how EMDR feels in practice.

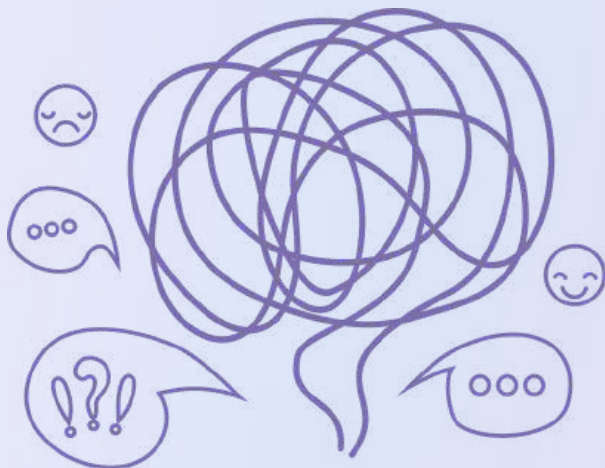
# Want to Learn More?

## Podcasts & Talks

For learning on the go:

- “Therapy Chat” with Laura Reagan, LCSW-C – EMDR episodes
- **The Healing Trauma Podcast** – Stories of recovery, often featuring EMDR
- Search “EMDR therapy” on YouTube or TEDx for short animated explainers and expert talks

## Questions? Let’s Talk



There’s no pressure to read or explore any of this. These resources are here for you if you’re curious, want to learn more, or feel empowered by information.

Bring anything that stands out—or confuses you—into session. We’ll figure it out together.





# What to Expect from EMDR Therapy

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[www.drcammy.com](http://www.drcammy.com)