

## PLAY THERAPY, ART THERAPY, & EMDR

Older children (usually above age 8) may respond well to the standard EMDR protocol; however, due to the nature of a child's brain and cognitive skill development, the application of the standard protocol often needs to be modified when working with younger children. Because children naturally process information through creativity, EMDR therapists working with children often need to interpret the "language of play and art" to best support their treatment.



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## EMDR

EYE MOVEMENT DESENSITIZATION  
AND REPROCESSING

*"They just popped out of my head,  
the monsters are gone."*

*- 8 year old client*

*"Things are back on track!"*

*-thankful parent*

## WHAT DOES EMDR TREAT?

Anxiety  
PTSD  
Trauma  
Depression  
Panic Disorders  
Eating Disorders  
Addiction

CONTACT SAMANTHA WALSH,  
EMDR, ART THERAPIST, CERTIFIED  
PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR,  
TO SCHEDULE AN  
APPOINTMENT!

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## WHAT IS EMDR?

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a psychotherapy treatment method that is effective for resolving emotional difficulties caused by disturbing, difficult, or frightening life experiences. When children are traumatized, have upsetting experiences, or repeated failures, they lose a sense of control over their lives. This can result in symptoms of anxiety, depression, irritability, anger, guilt, and/or behavioral problems. We know that events such as accidents, abuse, violence, death of a loved one, and natural disasters are traumatic, but we do not always recognize the ways they effect and influence children's everyday lives. Even common upsetting childhood events such as divorce, school problems, peer difficulties, perceived failures, and family problems can deeply affect a child's sense of security, self-esteem, and development.

When an upsetting, scary, or painful experience happens, sometimes the memory of the experience stays "stuck" or "frozen" in the mind and body. The experience may return in a distressing and intrusive way. The child may cope by avoiding everything associated with the upsetting experience. For example, when a child has experienced a bad bicycle accident, there may be repeated nightmares, fear of trying new things, and avoidance of things associated with biking.

Most experts agree that the best way to get "unstuck" and free from the symptoms is through exposure to the traumatic experience. This means to face the memories or troubling events until they are no longer disturbing.



## Can EMDR Help My Child?

EMDR can be used with all ages, from young children through teens. Case reports indicate that EMDR has been used successfully with preverbal children, as well as with teens who do not want to verbalize their upsetting issues. As with any intervention, the younger or more avoidant the child, the more challenging it is to find ways to engage them and focus their attention on the problem at hand. It is helpful for parents and professionals to explain that EMDR is a way to get over troubling thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. EMDR has been used to help children deal with traumatic events, depression, anxiety, phobias and other behavioral problems. The EMDR process is different for each child, because the healing process is guided from within. Some children report that EMDR is relaxing and have an immediate positive response. Other children may feel tired at the end of a session, and the benefit from the treatment comes in the days to follow.