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A monthly newsletter keeping you informed.

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This is a monthly e-newsletter created primarily for EMDR researchers and trained clinicians. The purpose of it is to promote continued dialogue regarding the efficacy and current developments with EMDR therapy and its use with a variety of populations.

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This month we are sharing with you current research focused on the implications of EMDR for adopted children and families. We are hoping you find it useful and informative.

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As the EMDR Research Foundation Board of Directors works to create more research opportunities for our community, we hope you join the conversation with your suggestions for upcoming newsletters.

Sincerely,

Wendy Freitag, Ph.D.

EMDR Research Foundation

**The EMDR Research Foundation Acknowledges
National Adoption Month**



Adoption, Trauma and EMDR

Adoption can be a beautiful experience but one that always starts with loss. In the least complicated of situations, adoption begins with a child having lost his/her biological parents. In many situations, there is the additional experience of failed pregnancies for the adoptive parents. Children who are adopted from foster families have almost universally been abused and/or neglected prior to their placement. This is according to the American Academy of Pediatrics report [Helping Foster and Adoptive Families Cope with Trauma](#). In their report, they say: "Children in foster care suffer a high incidence of developmental delays, as high as 25% in some age groups. Rates of clinical Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as high as 25% have been reported. Over 80% of children aging out of foster care have received a psychiatric diagnosis. Even the systems in place to protect children may prove traumatic, necessitating separation from home and siblings, sometimes in multiple foster placements".

EMDR therapy has been studied with children in various forms; however there has not been systematic research on the effectiveness of EMDR therapy with Adoptive Families. When we look simply at the child's experience we find the following:

Wesselmann, D., & Shapiro, F. (2013) wrote the chapter "Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing" in Julian D. Ford and Christine A. Courtois (Eds.), *Treating Complex Traumatic Stress Disorders in Children and Adolescents: Scientific Foundations and Therapeutic Models*, (pp. 203-224). New York, NY: Guilford Press. They discussed some of the implications of using EMDR therapy with children with Complex Trauma.

Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) is discussed as a therapeutic model for youth suffering from complex trauma. The chapter includes an in depth case study of its use with a young patient. Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) is adapted for children and adolescents suffering from complex trauma through more emphasis on client preparation (Phase 2) assistance with expression of thoughts, feelings, and sensations (Phase 3) and cognitive interweaves, as needed, during reprocessing (Phase 4), For children removed from biological homes due to mistreatment, collaboration with a family therapist can help ensure that present-day

caregivers provide appropriate support during EMDR. In addition, it can be useful to evaluate the parental response to determine if it is appropriate, and whether EMDR therapy is needed to ensure that the caregiver can be both present and an adequate attachment figure for the child. The delineation of EMDR and family therapy roles ensures that EMDR can be implemented every week. The EMDR practitioner can help traumatized children and adolescents by targeting and reprocessing memories to allow comprehensive changes in cognitive, affective, and somatic domains, leading to earned secure attachments and an integrated sense of self. By reprocessing targets involving past, present, and future, EMDR can help hurt children discover a new perspective regarding themselves, others, and their world. Timely treatment can prevent a lifelong trajectory of dysfunction and help end the transgenerational transmission of abuse and victimization fed by the unprocessed memories. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2014 APA, all rights reserved) [chapter] <http://www.guilford.com/books/Treating-Complex-Traumatic-Stress-Disorders-Children-Adolescents/Ford-Courtois/9781462524617#sthash.rMDm5yfb>

Wesselmann, D., Davidson, M., Armstrong, S., Schweitzer, C., Bruckner, D., & Potter, A. E. (2012), wrote an article, [EMDR as a treatment for improving attachment status in adults and children](#). *Revue Europeenne De Psychologie Applique/European Review of Applied Psychology*, 62(4), 223-230. doi:10.1016/j.erap.2012.08.008

Introduction: The purpose of the article is to examine the current literature regarding evidence for positive change in attachment status following Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy and to describe how an integrative EMDR and family therapy team model was implemented to improve attachment and symptoms in a child with a history of relational loss and trauma. Literature: The EMDR method is briefly described along with the theoretical model that guides the EMDR approach. As well, an overview of attachment theory is provided and its implication for conceptualizing symptoms related to a history of relational trauma. Finally, a literature review is provided regarding current preliminary evidence that EMDR can improve attachment status in children and adults. Clinical findings: A case study is described in which an EMDR and family therapy integrative model improved attachment status and symptoms in a child with a history attachment trauma. Conclusion: The case study and literature review provide preliminary evidence that EMDR may be a promising therapy in the treatment of disorders related to attachment trauma. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.erap.2012.08.008>

Jarero, I., Roque-Lopez, S., & Gomez, J. (2013). [L'apport d'un traitement du trauma composants multiples, fond sur l'EMDR, des enfants victimes de traumas interpersonnels graves \[The provision of an EMDR-based multicomponent trauma treatment with child victims of severe interpersonal trauma\]](#). *Journal of EMDR Practice and Research*, 7(4), 74E-86E.

This study evaluated a multicomponent phase-based trauma treatment approach for 34 children who were victims of severe interpersonal trauma (e.g., rape, sexual abuse, physical and emotional violence, neglect, abandonment). The children attended a week-

long residential psychological recovery camp, which provided resource building experiences, the eye movement desensitization and reprocessing integrative group treatment protocol (EMDR-IGTP), and one-on-one emdr intervention for the resolution of traumatic memories. The individual EMDR sessions were provided for 26 children who still had some distress about their targeted memory following the EMDR-IGTP. Results showed significant improvement for all the participants on the child's reaction to traumatic events scale (CRTES) and the Short PTSD Rating Interview (SPRINT), with treatment results maintained at follow-up. More research is needed to assess the EMDR-IGTP and the one-on-one EMDR intervention effects as part of a multimodal approach with children who have suffered severe interpersonal trauma. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/1933-3196.7.4.E74>

Adler-Tapia, R., & Settle, C. (2009). [Evidence of the efficacy of EMDR with children and adolescents in individual psychotherapy: A review of the research published in peer-reviewed journals](#). Journal of EMDR Practice and Research, 3(4), 232-247. doi:10.1891/1933-3196.3.4.232.

Research on psychotherapy with children is generally underrepresented in the empirical literature. Currently, there are four randomized clinical trials (RCT) evaluating EMDR in individual psychotherapy with traumatized children-two for children diagnosed with PTSD and two for children presenting with symptoms of posttraumatic stress. Since the first case studies of EMDR with children were published in 1993, 19 studies were identified that met the inclusion criteria for this review. The gold standards identified by Foa and Meadows (1997) to assess the methodology of studies designed to treat trauma were applied to the research on EMDR with children. This analysis discusses the challenges to conducting research on psychotherapy with children including the debate regarding the assessment and diagnosis of PTSD in children. Recommendations for future studies designed with methodological rigor are suggested to investigate the efficacy of EMDR with children who have experienced trauma and other mental health symptoms and diagnoses. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/1933-3196.3.4.232>

All of these studies indicate that EMDR therapy is very promising for work with children. For those children who have been traumatized by life experiences, and by loss, their potential for the future will be assisted by good therapy. We need more randomized controlled trials with traumatized children to determine what would be the most effective treatment and give them the greatest likelihood of a successful adaptation to life and to an adoptive environment.

Giving Tuesday: December 1, 2015



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For more information about the program, including frequently asked questions, please go to: <http://emdrresearchfoundation.org/get-involved/amazon-smile-program>.

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The EMDR Research Foundation is the only funding agency dedicated solely to supporting EMDR research worldwide. With the support of our donors and dedicated researchers throughout the world, we hope to expand the appropriate applications of EMDR therapy.

Get Involved!

At the 2011 EMDRIA Conference, the Foundation initiated the "[Visionary Alliance](#)." This program offers our constituents the opportunity to give a sustaining pledge by automatic monthly donations. An effective way to "pay back" for all the benefits received due to EMDR therapy is to "pay it forward" by your ongoing contribution to EMDR therapy research.

"What does it mean to be a member of the "[Visionary Alliance](#)?"

Your monthly donations of \$15 or more will provide a predictable, continuous stream of income that will give the Foundation leverage when pursuing funding from larger organizations, granting agencies and foundations. It also allows us to predict the amount we can distribute to support research proposals. Please consider becoming a "give as you earn" donor by donating one EMDR therapy session or a portion of a session per month to support EMDR therapy research.

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