

CONNECTING

Healthy Information from the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center  March/April 2005

Reprocessing Therapy – EMDR

History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, and if faced with courage, need not be lived again.

~ Maya Angelou

Sally sought therapy, describing herself as being depressed, having difficulty sleeping and worrying most of the time. She was also getting behind in her work. Her worries were about her adult children. Sally reported, "I know it's unreasonable, I know they will be okay, but I just feel so bad." Her feeling bad was further explored by asking her where in her body she noticed that feeling and if there were any physical sensations connected to that. She placed her hand on her stomach and said that she gets a jittery nervousness in her belly. With her eyes closed, Sally was asked to search her memory for any earlier time when she had the exact same feelings and body sensations. Her eyes popped open and she told of feeling that way with her ex-husband. She was surprised that this came to her mind, as she had been divorced for ten years. She talked about being physically abused in the marriage and how she still felt guilty that the children had witnessed this. She also believed that she was to blame for the abuse. Sally's present-day worries were readily traced through her feelings and body sensations to these unresolved issues from her past. Therefore, her therapist recommended to her a therapy called Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, also known as EMDR.

EMDR is a powerful psychotherapy that uses eye movements to access the brain's own healing system to relieve many different types of psychological distress. Dr. Francine Shapiro of the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California, originally developed EMDR in 1987 for the purpose of treating traumatic memories. Since then, EMDR has evolved through the contributions of therapists and researchers from all over the world into a set of principles and protocols that incorporate useful elements from several therapeutic approaches. The American Psychological Association and the Department of Veteran's Affairs credits EMDR as a highly effective treatment for PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder).

EMDR is based in the theory that the brain has an information processing system that moves us to resolution and a balanced state of mental health, just as the body has a natural healing response to physical injury. Our bodies automatically go into action to heal a wound, but when something gets stuck in the wound, it will fester and resist healing. Our nervous system, when confronted with trauma or other distressing events, can also get stuck and block the innate healing process of our minds. Neuroscientist and psychiatrist, Bessel van der Kolk, former Director of the Harvard Psychological Trauma Clinic, explains that a trauma memory is information about an event that gets locked in the nervous system almost in its original form. The images, thoughts, sounds, smells, emotions, physical sensations, and beliefs that instantly developed about the self (such as "It's my fault" or "I'm powerless") are all stored together in a memory network that takes on a life of its own. This network is isolated from other memory networks and does not connect into the information processing system to reach resolution. This network becomes a packet of unprocessed and dysfunctional information that can be reactivated at the slightest reminder of the original event.

EMDR is the means of reaching and reactivating this isolated memory network to allow healing to finally occur. The eye movements facilitate the linking of the trauma network to other memory networks and, in so doing, activate the information processing system. As the negative thoughts, emotions, physical sensations and self-denigrations are reprocessed in the mind-body, they become less vivid and disturbing. The person taps into more appropriate information that is grounded in the present with her thinking abilities intact and no longer overwhelmed by the emotions. Beliefs about oneself become self-enhancing, rather than self-denigrating.

The EMDR treatment with Sally began with a thorough history taking and assessment to obtain a complete clinical picture of her traumas, resources, defenses, and mind-body connections. A safe place was created in the therapy office as a comfortable and trusting relationship was formed between Sally and her therapist. The therapist designed a treatment plan identifying which memories to target with the protocols. Sally was guided through a process of identifying the current disturbing emotions, body sensations, and beliefs associated with the past event. The therapist led Sally through a repeating series of eye movements, checked in with her to pace her processing, while all the time following the EMDR protocols. The guilt she associated with being abused changed to intense fear as different pictures went through her mind. As the guilt was gradually released and her fear began to dissipate, the tightness she held in her body was softening. Sally reported, "I can see now that this was not my fault. I wasn't doing anything wrong. What he did was wrong." At subsequent therapy sessions, Sally reported being much more relaxed around her adult children. She was sleeping again and able to refocus at work.

No one knows exactly how EMDR works. One view is that the protocols used in the process serve to activate various memory networks simultaneously and the eye movements induce a state of relaxation to the nervous system allowing new connections, based in the present, to be formed in the brain. Another view is that the eye movements stimulate the same process that occurs during REM or dream sleep. REM sleep has been shown to be necessary to clear one's mind of the day's residue through dreams for more effective functioning the next day. A third view is that the dual attention required of the client (paying attention to the eye movements, while at the same time focusing on the mental picture, feelings, and beliefs about the memory) keeps one foot in the present and one foot in the past while formulating a current perception of the past event.

EMDR is not a cure-all. It is not effective with psychosis, schizophrenia, or endogenous depression. It is effective with anxiety, phobias, depression, PTSD, childhood sexual abuse, domestic violence, addiction, pain, and low self-esteem. EMDR is also useful in

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such areas as performance anxiety, increasing confidence in business, school, sports, and performing arts.

EMDR is different from more traditional psychotherapies in that it accesses the physical and emotional systems, as well as the cognitive system, in a structured way that promotes these systems working together towards healing. Utilizing the body in the process is critical to the results of EMDR, leading to more energy flow and clearer thinking. Generally, change occurs and is integrated more quickly than would generally be the case with traditional talk therapy.

Susan Arland, M.A.

Susan is a licensed mental health counselor. She has received Level I & II EMDR training. Susan holds a master's degree in counseling from New York University. Additionally, Susan is trained in working with deaf and hard of hearing persons and in American Sign Language.

Resources

Shapiro, Francine, [Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing \(EMDR\), Second Edition: Basic Principles, Protocols, and Procedures](#) (New York: The Guilford Press, 2001)

Grand, David, [Emotional Healing at Warp Speed: The Power of EMDR](#) (New York: HarmonyBooks, 2001)

Women Helping Women Annual Luncheon



- Speaker:** Carmen Lampe Zeitler,
Children and Family Urban Ministries
- Topic:** *In Our Choices, We Create*
- Date:** Friday, March 11, 2005
- Time:** 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Location:** Hotel Fort Des Moines, Grand Ballroom
10th and Walnut, Des Moines
*Parking available in Allied Insurance parking garage
immediately west of the hotel with access through the
skywalk.*
- RSVP:** Contact the Center (274-4406) before
March 8, 2005

The Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center established the Women Helping Women Fund to help make counseling available to women who are struggling with the challenges of life on very limited resources. Since 1999, the Center has sponsored an annual luncheon to raise both awareness of the Center's work with women and girls and funds to help subsidize our services to low-income women and girls.

Nearly 60% of the Center's clients are female. Over half of these women and girls cannot afford the full cost of therapy. Individual counseling is an important first step for women toward restoring their lives, rebuilding relationships, and re-establishing hope for the future. With your help, the Center can continue to expand our work with women and girls. Please consider a gift to the Women Helping Women Fund. Access to quality, affordable counseling at critical moments in the lives of women and girls can mean survival.

C.O.O.L. Corner

Children Overcoming the Obstacles of Life

Spring is just around the corner!

How does your garden grow and flourish ~ what is needed for your children to bloom?

- ▶ Plenty of time outside: to run, jump, climb, ride, skate, slide, swing, roll....
- ▶ Plenty of time to sleep: close the blinds, turn off electronics, soothe frayed nerves with a warm bath, calm excited hearts with a massage.
- ▶ Plenty of healthy foods: drink water (not juice or pop), eat fruits and vegetables, decrease grains and sugars, eat a little meat, take a good multiple vitamin.
- ▶ Plenty of unconditional love: spend time just being together playing, coloring, reading, resting, cooking....

Reflection on Two Gifts

*What the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling
Center offers the community*

One is connectedness.

We live in a culture of disconnection,
of scattered lives,
lots of isolation, with folks talking past each other.
The Center works to help people reconnect
with themselves
with others.

The Center is all about healthy relationships.
The staff themselves provide a model for how professionals
need each other and work together.

Two is transcendence.

Marcus Borg in a new book, *The Heart of Christianity*,
quotes the Catholic mystic, Thomas Merton,
who believes that spiritual presence is always
alive and in our midst.

But we are too distracted to know or to see.
Borg believes there are thin places
where the light can shine through.
Some institutions in their work create such thin places
where a person might catch a glimpse
of the hidden,
see herself in a different light,
discover that life is full of hope after all.

I think the Center provides such opportunities for light.
We are not the light, but we bear witness to the light
that is always already available to each of us.

That is what we are about
as staff and board of Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center.
It is a real joy to be part of all of this.

~ Rev. Bill Cotton, Board President ~
~ Annual Meeting remarks, February 3, 2005 ~

Educational Events for the Community

The Center is once again sponsoring free community education events to explore the variety of complementary therapies available in the Des Moines community. The winter/spring series is focusing on A Naturopathic Approach for Wellness. All events take place on the first Tuesday of the month, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m., at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, 4126 Ingersoll Avenue in Des Moines. The events are free, but please call or e-mail the Center to let us know you will be attending or to obtain further information (274-4006 or info@dmpcc.org). The remaining sessions are:

March 1, 2005

Nutritional Supplements: What's Right for Me?

There is no "one size fits all" when it comes to nutritional needs. This program will address the different nutritional needs of people relative to their age, gender, general health, and any other medications currently used. It will also address how to compile your own health information so that when you engage a health care provider, you will be better able to express your concerns.

April 5, 2005

Digestion, Nutrition, Elimination: The Path to Wellness

The current medical system in this country is based on sickness care not on restoring health. This program will address what it takes to absorb nutrients and expel toxins in a healthy body and what the first steps are to regaining wholeness and health.

Ned Looney, R.Ph., will be the presenter both evenings. Ned received his B.S. in Pharmacy from Drake University in 1977. In 1999, Ned opened medihealth solutions, a natural health and wellness center. Go to the website for more description: <http://www.dmpcc.org/life/life.html>.



MANifest is a program for men facilitated by male counselors, built around weekend retreats and Saturday workshops. MANifest is for men of all ages and from every walk of life. Lowell Houts, D.Min., and Mike Sears, Ed.D., facilitate all MANifest programs.

W-O-M-A-N Workshop ~ Saturday, March 5

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Boys typically are nurtured, cared for, and supervised by women through their elementary school years. Boys develop an internalized view of women from all these experiences that Sam Keen, author of *Fire in the Belly*, calls W-O-M-A-N. This internalized image may vary from goddess to temptress. This workshop will explore these images and how they may affect a man's relationships with women in his life. The cost of the workshop is \$50 (includes lunch). Please call the Center to pre-register (274-4006).

MANifest Presentation ~ Thursday, March 31

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

The Rules Have Changed: Male/Female Communication and Sexuality Workshop
This workshop will provide insights to creating the relationship you really want with your life partner. The cost of the workshop is \$45 for individuals / \$80 for couples. Call 779-2424 to register.

MANifest Retreat ~ Sunday-Tuesday, April 10 – 12

5:00 p.m. Sunday – noon Tuesday

MANifest weekends seek to create a sense of community in which men can feel safe to talk about their journeys as men. Retreats are held in a rustic outdoor setting. Retreats are limited to 12 participants and are open to any interested men. The cost of the weekend is \$175 (includes lodging and five meals). If you register by March 31, the cost is only \$150. Call the Center to register (274-4006).

Emotionally Focused Therapy: An Approach to Couple Therapy



DATES: March 4, 2005 – April 22, 2005
TIME: Fridays, 8:15 – 9:45 a.m. for eight weeks
LOCATION: Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center
COST: \$160 plus text
INSTRUCTOR: Susan Pierce, M.S., M.S.W.

This eight-week course will apply attachment theory to couple dynamics and illustrate how it can be used to identify and repair relationship difficulties. Dr. Susan Johnson's book, *The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy*, 2nd edition (2004), will be used as a text for the class. Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) is a short-term structured approach, based on attachment theory, that helps a couple learn to create new and more positive emotional experiences in their relationship.

THE INSTRUCTOR:

Susan Pierce, L.M.H.C., L.I.S.W., has a master's degree in family life ministry and a master's degree in social work. She is a psychotherapist at Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center working with individuals, couples, and families, and has a particular interest in attachment theory.

The Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center is an Iowa Board of Social Work Examiners approved provider #0087 and Iowa Board of Behavioral Science Examiners approved provider #AS98-13. This course is approved for 12 hours of continuing education credit. To register, call (515) 274-4006 or e-mail info@dmpcc.org.

New Board Members

Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center welcomes five new members to the board of directors: Bonnie Campbell, Georgia Helmick, Kevin LaGree, Cheryl Rigler, Laura Sands, Terry Allen and David Witke. Beginning their second term on the board of directors are Gail Stilwill Allen, Sid Ramsey, and Phil Stoffregen. New board officers are Jackie Goetsch, President; Sid Ramsey, Vice President; Tim Diebel, Secretary; and Larry Hartsook, Treasurer.

The Center thanks, in particular, Bill Cotton for his long service as President of the board. The Center also appreciates the six years of dedicated service by retiring board members Dave Hurst, Mary Kramer, and Ron Nielsen. The Center's board of directors is the Center's strongest asset for ensuring the environment that makes possible the vision and healing presence of the Center's work within the community.

Spiritual Direction at the Center

~ Listen carefully with the ear of your heart. ~Rule of St. Benedict

A time for confidential sharing and reflection in the presence of a trained and experienced guide. For more information or to schedule an appointment for spiritual direction with Kathy Reardon, please call the Center (274-4006).

Foundation Board

The Center's Foundation board of directors welcomes two new members: John Merriman and Joyce Rash. The new officers for the Foundation are Hal Higgs, President; Lyle Simpson, Vice President; and D.J. Newlin, Secretary. The Center thanks Betty Durden for her long service as the President of the Foundation board and retiring board member, Don Easter, for his commitment to building the Foundation since its inception in 1996. The Foundation also thanks retiring board member, Henry Harmon. The Foundation board of directors is the Center's guiding light for securing the Center's future by maintaining and growing its permanent endowment fund through bequests and other planned or deferred gifts.

We welcome your feedback!

Please address your comments and suggestions about this newsletter to: Kathleen Murrin ~ DMPCC ~ 550 39th St., #100 ~ Des Moines, IA 50312 ~ (515) 274-4006 ~ info@dmpcc.org

www.dmpcc.org

Visit the Center's website for more information on the Center's counseling services and staff, special events and classes.

CONNECTING

is a publication of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center, an independent, interfaith, not-for-profit organization. For over 30 years, the Center has been providing counseling and educational services to adults, families, adolescents, and children for the purpose of enhancing emotional, spiritual, and relationship health. The Center has satellite offices in West Des Moines, Altoona, Ankeny, and Urbandale.
Editor: Kathleen Murrin

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