

The Use of EMDR in the Treatment of Gambling Disorder

Presented by:
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A Little About Me:

- 2011 Graduate from the UCONN School of Social Work
- Worked as a Therapist in a Gambling Treatment Program from 2011-2016
- Program Manager for Bettor Choice, Wheeler, 2017-Present Day
- LCSW, ICGC-II, BACC
- EMDR Therapist
- Acudetox Specialist
- Adjunct Professor For UCONN SSW from 2014-2018



Agenda

- Intro to EMDR
- Gambling and Trauma
- How to combine the 2
- Tools to use for practice

- Please interrupt me! Do not need to save Q & A for the end
- Any trained EMDR Therapists?

Introduction to EMDR

Traditional Method for Trauma

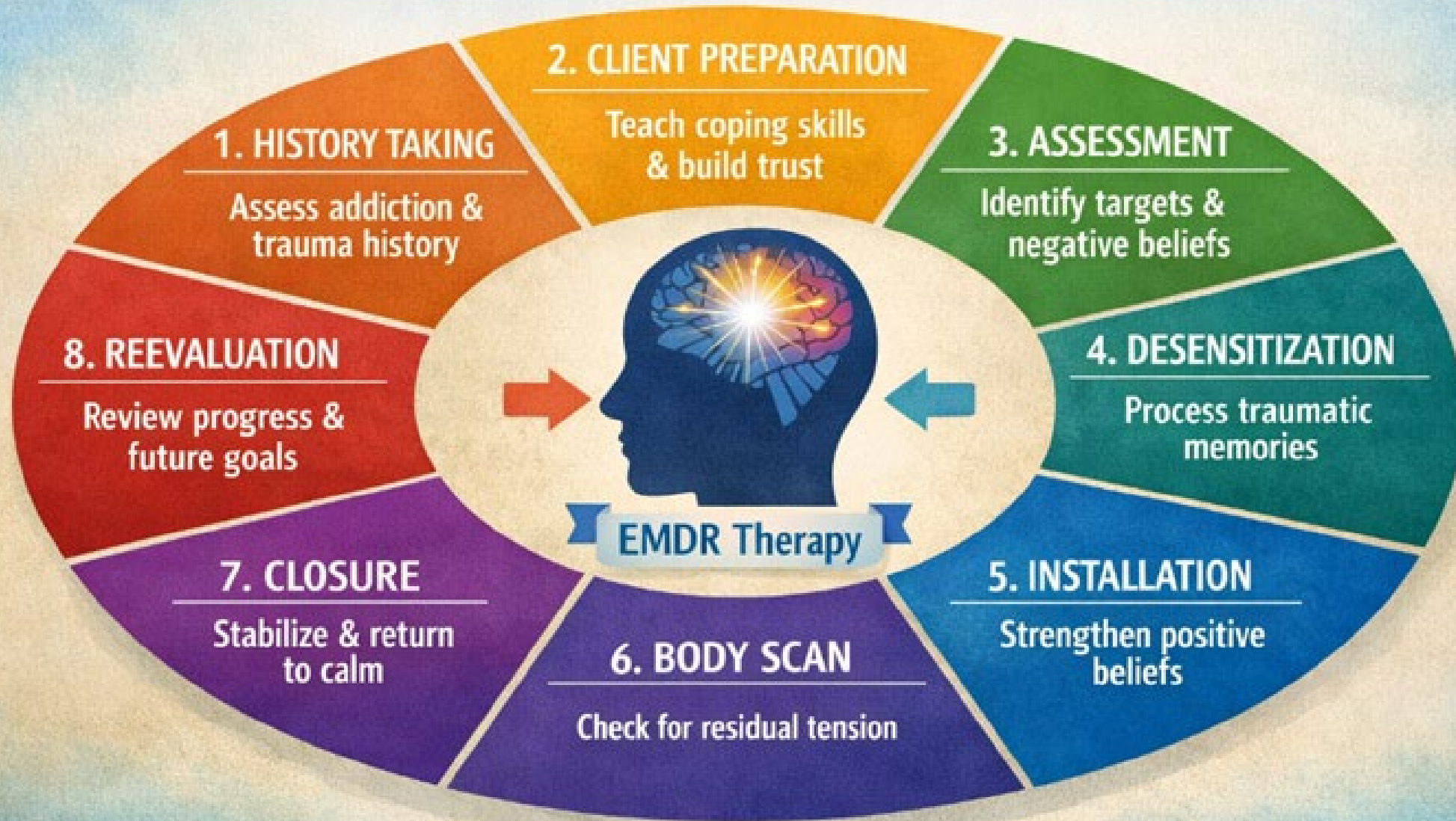
Standard Protocol – 8 Phases

Francine Shapiro, 1987

- She discovered while on walks that when she would be scanning a trail back and forth with her eyes, the emotional charge associated with negative thoughts would lessen.
- Started practicing the technique in therapy sessions
- Developed full evidence-based intervention



The Eight Phases of EMDR in Addiction Contexts





Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing

Traumatic events often go unprocessed and can get “stuck” in our brains. As a result, maladaptive coping strategies can start.

Using different forms of BLS (bilateral stimulation) memories are **reprocessed** to reduce both negative cognitions and improved coping.

Mimics natural brain process that occurs during REM sleep



Unprocessed event

Pretend: You are 7 years old and outside playing with your neighbors after school one day

Suddenly, their German Shepard dog jumps on you, unprovoked, and bites you

You are rushed to the hospital and need to get stitches.



What are the possible outcomes of this event?

Nothing

- You are very scared for a while but able to process the event in a healthy way and are provided important healing messages from your parents or perhaps in therapy

Overgeneralize

- Become very fearful of German Shepards
- Start to fear all dogs with pointy ears
- Begin to develop a fear of all dogs which impacts daily living (walks, bike rides, going to friends houses that have dogs)
- Not develop friendships based on if that person owns a pet

Trauma leads to Overgeneralization as time passes

1. Negative cognitions develop
 - a. Safety “I am... in danger, cannot be trusted”
 - b. Power/Control “I am... powerless, weak”
 - c. Responsibility “I... should have done something”

2. These cognitive distortions shape our perceptions of ourselves and the world around us in a negative way.



Healing using EMDR



“Rapid” symptom relief compared to traditional talk therapy – Can take a while to get to this point

Diminished negative emotions such as fear, anger, grief

Cognitive restructuring to develop healthier beliefs about self and others

Physiological calming effects such as reduced hyperarousal or stress responses

The Unknowns about EMDR – “There is a protocol for that”

Mood Disorders (Depression, bipolar)

OCD

Sleep Disorders

Personality Disorders

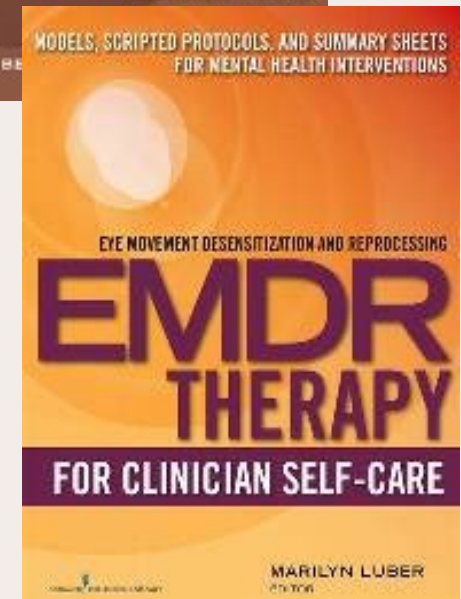
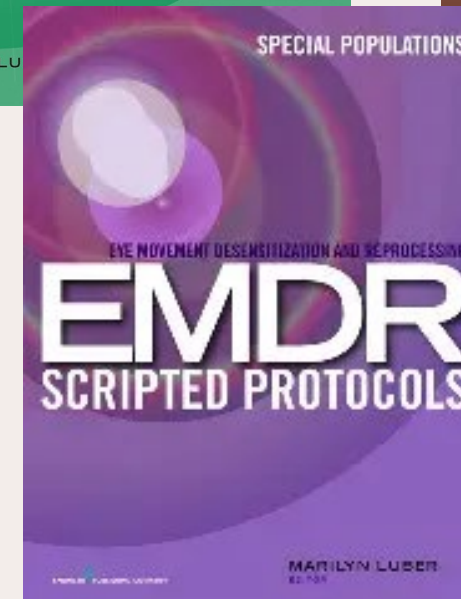
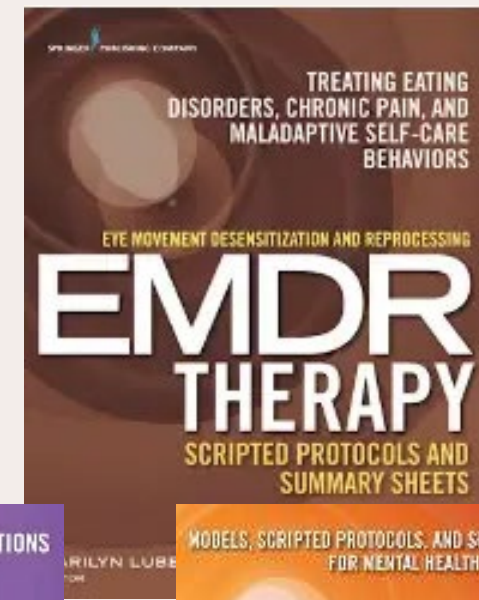
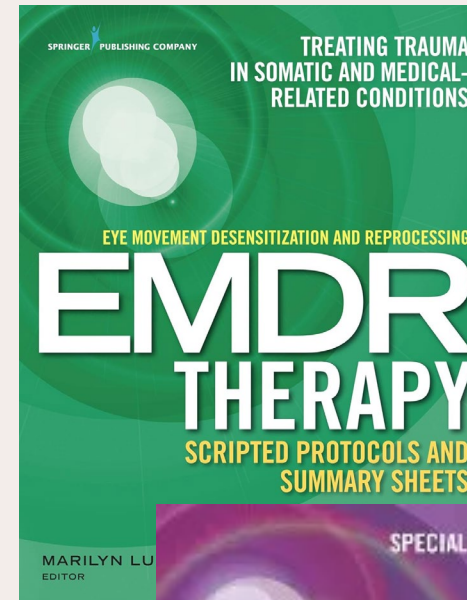
Chronic Pain

Anxiety Disorders

Eating Disorders

Couple's work

Addiction



EMDR for Addiction

EMD – Drop the “R”

2 Different Approaches

*Target the Gambling Behavior

Desensitize **triggers**, **maladaptive positive affect**, and **avoidance** behaviors

*Target the trauma associated with the Gambling

Negative cognitions that developed as a result of Gambling:

I am a horrible person

I am a bad parent

I am a loser...

Handout

(DeTUR- Desensitization of Triggers and
Urge Reprocessing)

Triggers (A.J. Popky)

- Having Money
- Not having money
- Time of day (morning)
- Day of the week
- Watching sports
- Time of the year (summer/August)
- Driving home from work
- Seeing ads
- Arguments with spouse
- Boredom
- Drinking
- “Free” offers



Maladaptive Positive Affect (*Jim Knipe*)

Feelings of excitement (high depressive symptoms)

Feeling smart/intelligent

Comradery/feeling a part of something

Control

Fantasy

Escape

Feeling Numb

Feeling Important



Avoidance (*Jim Knipe*)



Being alone

Paying bills

Responsibility

Going home

Making a change

References

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Thank
you!

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