

## What is EMDR? A Client-Friendly Guide

EMDR (**Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing**) is a structured and powerful therapy that helps people process painful or traumatic memories, so they feel less overwhelming and more manageable. If you're thinking about starting EMDR, here's a simple guide to help you understand what it's all about and what to expect.

- ✓ EMDR helps you work through tough or upsetting memories, so they don't have such a strong emotional hold on you.
- ✓ It uses something called bilateral stimulation—that might look like eye movements, tapping, or sounds—to help your brain "unstack" and reorganize the way it holds onto those memories
- ✓ Many people find relief from symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and more.
- ✓ It's not about erasing memories—it's about changing how they affect you emotionally and physically.

## Preparing for EMDR: A Quick Checklist

Before we dive in, we'll take some time to make sure EMDR is a good fit and that you feel safe and ready.

- ✓ **Are You Ready?**  
We'll talk through your history, current symptoms, and any concerns you have. My goal is to make sure this feels like the right approach for you.
- ✓ **Learning Coping Skills First**  
Before we start processing any memories, I'll teach you tools to help you stay grounded and manage emotions, like:
  - Deep breathing
  - Mindfulness and grounding techniques
  - Visualization tools to create a sense of safetyThese help you stay centered—both during and between sessions.
- ✓ **Pinpointing What We'll Work On**  
We'll identify specific memories or themes to focus on and explore the beliefs that came out of those experiences (like "I'm not safe" or "I'm not enough").
- ✓ **Creating a Safe Place**  
We'll develop a calming mental image or memory that you can return to any time things feel too intense. This becomes your emotional "home base."
- ✓ **Getting Familiar with the Process**  
Before we start, I'll show you how the bilateral stimulation works (eye movements, tapping, or sounds) and let you practice so you're comfortable

## The 8 Phases of EMDR (What We'll Do Together)

1. **History & Treatment Planning** – We'll map out what's going on and where to focus.
2. **Preparation** – Learning coping skills to feel safe during processing.
3. **Assessment** – Identifying the specific memory, emotions, and beliefs to work on.
4. **Desensitization** – Processing the memory using bilateral stimulation.
5. **Installation** – Strengthening positive beliefs to replace the old, unhelpful ones.
6. **Body Scan** – Checking your body for any lingering distress.
7. **Closure** – Ending each session feeling grounded and stable.
8. **Reevaluation** – Seeing how things have shifted and what's next.

EMDR is a well-researched, effective therapy—but it's also a journey. I'll be with you every step of the way.

## What to Expect During & After EMDR Sessions

In the Office (During Sessions)

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In the Office (During Sessions)

- Check-In**  
We'll start each session by checking in on how you're feeling and anything that came up since the last session.
- Grounding First**  
Before diving into memory processing, we'll do a quick round of calming techniques to help you feel centered.
- Processing the Memory**  
You'll focus on one memory at a time, along with any thoughts, emotions, or body sensations that come up. You don't have to say everything out loud—just let me know what you're noticing, and I'll guide the process.
- Pausing & Checking In**  
We'll stop occasionally to check in and make sure you're okay. If things feel too intense, we'll slow down or pause.
- Closing the Session**  
If we don't finish processing the memory in one session, we'll wrap up with grounding so you leave feeling safe. We'll revisit it next time if needed.

Outside the Office (Between Sessions)

- You Might Notice...**
  - Feeling more emotional or thoughtful
  - Vivid dreams or unexpected memories popping up
  - Feeling tired or physically off as your body processes things
- How to Manage This**
  - Use your grounding tools (deep breathing, mindfulness, safe place visualization)
  - Journal thoughts or feelings that come up—it helps track your progress
  - Reach out to me if you're feeling overwhelmed or unsure
- Life After Sessions**
  - Some people feel lighter and more at peace right away
  - Others notice gradual changes in how they think, feel, and react
  - Give yourself space after a session—avoid intense emotional events right after if possible
- At Our Next Session...**  
We'll check in on how you felt after the last session and decide if we need to continue with the same memory or move on to something else.

## One Last Note

Starting EMDR—or any therapy—is a big, brave step. You're not alone in this process, and it's okay to take it one step at a time.

**“You're doing something good for yourself. Healing isn't always easy, but it's absolutely worth it.”**

**Cristina Culiolo Leoni, MA, LPC, LMFT**  
[www.cristinaculiololeoni.com](http://www.cristinaculiololeoni.com)

## EMDR Equipment Rental Agreement for Telehealth Sessions

Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

As part of our EMDR work together via telehealth, I am offering the option to rent EMDR equipment to support your therapy experience from home. This agreement outlines the terms and expectations for the rental period.

### 1. Who This Agreement Is For

This rental is available only for clients participating in EMDR telehealth sessions. In-person clients will be provided equipment at no extra cost during sessions.

### 2. Rental Equipment Includes:

- EMDR machine (bilateral stimulation device)
- Headphones for bilateral audio tones
- Tactile pulsers (buzzers)
- All necessary wires and connectors
- Storage bag to hold all equipment

This equipment is for use **only during our EMDR sessions together.**

### 3. Rental Fee

- Monthly fee of **\$95** while the equipment is in your possession
- This fee is **not covered by insurance** and is billed as an out-of-pocket cost

### 4. Return Policy

- Equipment must be returned **within 7 days** of your final scheduled EMDR session or by the agreed-upon date
- If the equipment is **not returned within 7 days**, you agree to pay the **full replacement cost**, based on the **current market value** of the equipment at that time

### 5. Client Responsibilities

- Use equipment gently and follow therapist instructions
- Notify your therapist immediately if anything is not working
- Return all equipment in good condition (excluding normal wear and tear)

### 6. Use Limitations

This equipment is **not to be used outside of therapy sessions** unless specifically agreed upon. Unauthorized personal use is not permitted.

### 7. Return Instructions

At the end of the rental period, I will provide instructions for returning the equipment via mail or in-person drop-off. Please keep original packaging when possible.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you understand and agree to the terms outlined above.

Client Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Private Pay Agreement For Non-Covered Services

Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This agreement confirms that the services provided by Cristina Culiolo Leoni, LPC, LMFT are being delivered outside of any insurance reimbursement for the following reasons:

### 1. Non-Medically Necessary Service

The service being provided (e.g., family or relational therapy) is not intended to treat a specific mental health diagnosis and is therefore not considered medically necessary by insurance standards.

### 2. Non-Covered Service

The service is not covered by the client's health insurance policy. Examples include couples counseling, family sessions without a primary diagnosis, or therapy focused on relationship dynamics.

### 3. No Insurance Billing

The provider will not bill the client's insurance for these services, nor will a superbill or any insurance-related documentation be provided.

### 4. Private Payment

The client agrees to pay out of pocket at the standard session fee of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per session. This fee is due at the time of service unless otherwise arranged.

### 5. Client Understanding

By signing below, the client acknowledges understanding that:

- The service is not covered by insurance;
- They are voluntarily choosing to proceed with private pay;
- They will not receive a superbill;
- They are fully responsible for payment.

Client Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Client (or Legal Guardian, if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Provider Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Quick check: important info just for you

### Therapy Style & Approaches

I use personalized, evidence-based approaches, including:

- ▶ **EMDR** (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing)
- ▶ **Mindfulness practices**
- ▶ **CBT** (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy), including CBT focused on executive functioning (like organization, time management, task initiation, and planning)
- ▶ Other strategies tailored to your needs and goals

### Session Frequency

- Standard sessions last 30-45–60 minutes.
- Weekly sessions are recommended for steady progress.
- You can choose to meet twice a week for faster breakthroughs (this can be especially helpful).
- You can choose to have intensive sessions with 2 or more hours.

### Payment & Insurance

- If you have insurance Standard sessions (30-45–60 min) are covered by insurance
- EMDR sessions that run 90 minutes may require an additional out-of-pocket fee for the extra 30 minutes: **[\$120amount]**
- You can use your HSA or FSA card to cover the additional cost.
- Let me know if you have questions—we'll figure it out together.

### Your Role in Therapy

- Come as you are—no need to have all the answers.
- Therapy is a partnership: we'll work together and take things one step at a time.

### Your Role in Therapy

- We'll create a plan and identify where to start.
- Ask any questions you have—I want this space to feel safe and supportive for you.

### Have questions before we meet?



Feel free to reach out. I'm here to help. **I look forward to meeting you!**

**Cristina Culiolo Leoni, MA, LPC, LMFT**

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

## “Greatest Hits List” of Negative & Positive Cognitions

Use this sheet to identify and reframe beliefs that may be holding you back.

NEGATIVE COGNITIONS	POSITIVE COGNITIONS
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I should have known better</li> <li>I should have done something</li> <li>I did something wrong</li> <li>I am to blame</li> <li>I cannot be trusted</li> <li>My best is not good enough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I did the best I could do.</li> <li>I do the best I can with what I have</li> <li>I did/do my best</li> <li>I am blameless / I am not at fault</li> <li>I can be trusted</li> <li>I am okay / I do my best</li> </ul>
<b>SAFETY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I cannot trust myself</li> <li>I cannot trust anyone</li> <li>I am in danger</li> <li>I am not safe</li> <li>I cannot show my emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can trust myself</li> <li>I can choose who to trust</li> <li>I am safe now</li> <li>I can create my sense of safety</li> <li>I can show my emotions</li> </ul>
<b>CHOICE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am not in control</li> <li>I have to be perfect / please everyone</li> <li>I am weak</li> <li>I am trapped</li> <li>I have no options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am in control</li> <li>I have power now</li> <li>I can help myself</li> <li>I have a way out</li> <li>I have options</li> </ul>
<b>POWER</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I cannot get what I want</li> <li>I cannot handle it / stand it</li> <li>I cannot succeed</li> <li>I cannot stand up for myself</li> <li>I cannot let it out</li> <li>I am powerless / helpless</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can get what I want</li> <li>I can handle it</li> <li>I can succeed</li> <li>I can stand up for myself</li> <li>I can let it out</li> <li>I am powerful</li> </ul>
<b>VALUE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am not good enough</li> <li>I am a bad person / I am terrible</li> <li>I am permanently damaged</li> <li>I am defective</li> <li>I am worthless / inadequate</li> <li>I am insignificant / I am not important</li> <li>I deserve to die</li> <li>I deserve only bad things</li> <li>I am stupid</li> <li>I do not belong</li> <li>I am different</li> <li>I am a failure</li> <li>I am ugly / my body is ugly</li> <li>I am alone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am good enough</li> <li>I am a good person</li> <li>I am restored / I am sacred</li> <li>I am whole</li> <li>I am worthy</li> <li>I am significant / I am important</li> <li>I deserve to live</li> <li>I deserve only good things</li> <li>I am smart</li> <li>I can belong</li> <li>I am special</li> <li>I am a success</li> <li>I am beautiful / my body is sacred</li> <li>I am supported</li> </ul>



You are not defined by your negative beliefs. These thoughts are often shaped by past experiences – but with awareness, they can be challenged and replaced with truths that support your growth.