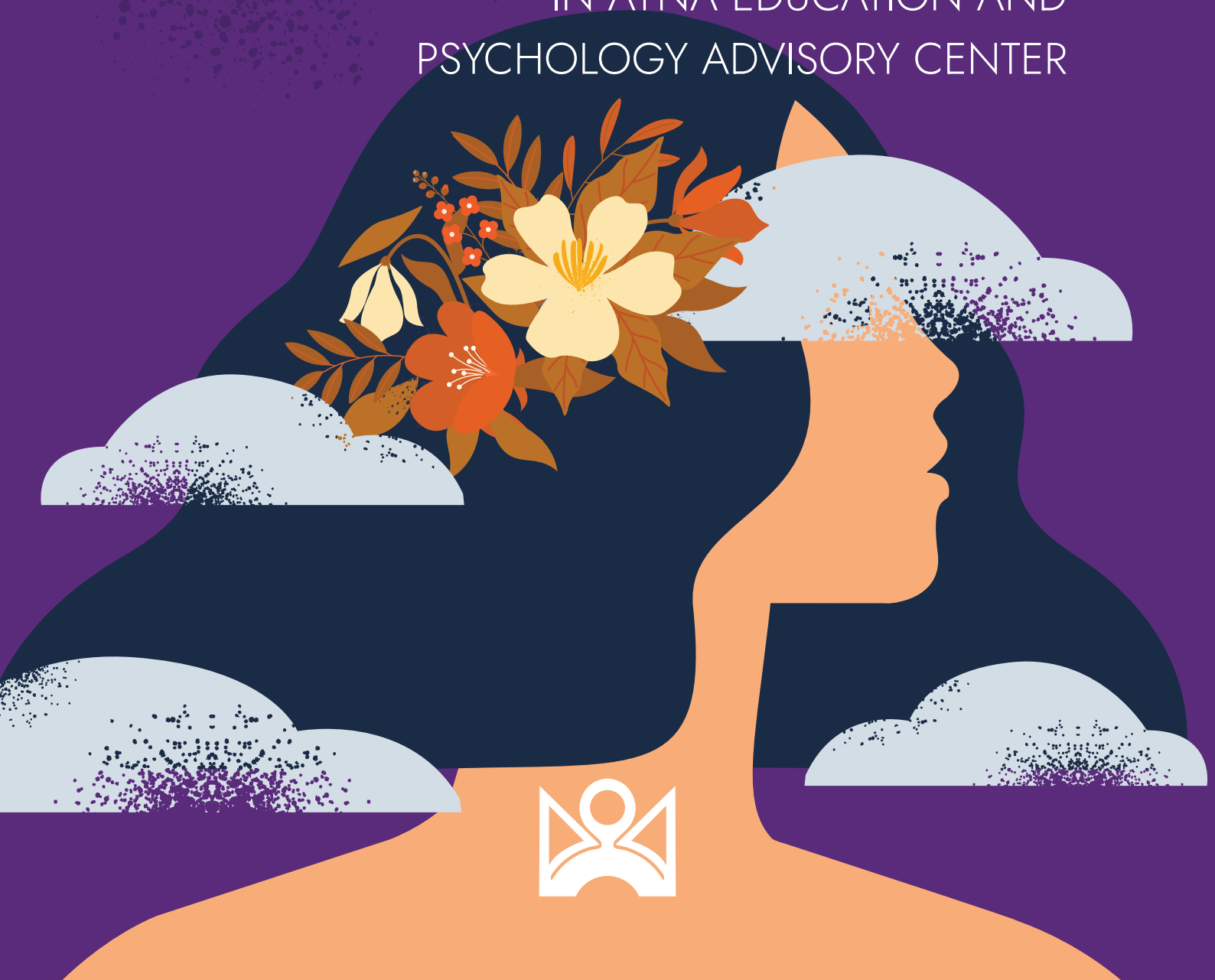


EMDR

EXPERIENCES

IN AYNA EDUCATION AND
PSYCHOLOGY ADVISORY CENTER



EMDR DENEYİMLERİ

Özünüzle Tanışın!

Clinical Psychologist Ayşegül ÖNK ERAY

Psycho-oncologist, Adult, Couple/Family, EMDR, Psychodramatist

EMDR, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, is a method that was discovered by chance when Dr. Francine Shapiro, in 1987, noticed that the eye movements lowered the intensity of disturbing thoughts. He studied this effect on trauma patients and developed it further. According to Shapiro, the physiological problems in the brain that was caused by the trauma was getting better with the bidirectional stimulus that was used in this method. But what is trauma? It is anything that is beyond our capabilities to cope. When we are faced with something that can cause trauma, our thoughts, feelings and images about it are not processed but frozen in our brains. This causes them to remain vivid in our mind. The past continues to live in the present.

In a healthy process, the brain heals the emotional wounds caused by negative experiences by processing/operating on them. If severe traumatic events are experienced continuously, then the natural processing system of the brain comes to a halt. In situations like these, emotions, beliefs, meanings and perceptions about the experience get stuck in the nervous system. As a result, certain psychological disorders can emerge.

Trauma can cause many different psychiatric symptoms and disorders. These may be acute stress reactions, PTSD, traumatic grief, depression, alcohol-substance abuse or disorders related with anxiety.



At times, they can even trigger prior psychiatric disorders. The most frequently seen among the disorders is "PTSD". 80 percent of the people with PTSD can suffer from panic disorders, social phobias and especially depression.

In EMDR technique, the patient allows the therapist to prompt the mechanisms that can lead to recovery. This technique can be carried out with bidirectional eye movements as well as tactual and auditory stimulus.

The brain changes the unprocessed cognitive distortions to positive perceptions of the present time, when the EMDR therapy is done. In this way, new and true information can continue to be received. When the trauma is treated, the past settles and a more normal life can be attained. As in every well-functioning approach, EMDR therapy intends to change behavior at the end of the treatment. Its most important feature, though, is that it accomplishes recovery relatively faster than other techniques. While it was developed to treat trauma and its effectiveness is proven, nowadays it is used for many other mental disorders.



Clinical Psychologist Zeynep YETKİN

EMDR, Child, Teen, Young Adult

Imagine a child walking hand in hand with their mother. And a dog walking across the street with its owner. What happens when the dog starts barking suddenly and the child flinches from the noise? The child hugs their mother, maybe, and she calms them down. In other words, when the right side of the brain says, "I am scared, I can't protect myself," the left side can successfully say, "Your mother is with you, you are safe. The dog only barked because it got excited. It's not going to hurt you." And in the following days, when the child sees another dog, they are neither affected nor scared by it. However, what happens when they cannot calm down, that is to say what happens when the left side of the brain cannot answer, "You are safe," to right side's fears? The child may begin to fear every dog, start not wanting to walk in that street again or even leave their mother's side. What I mean to say is, that when the communication between sides of the brain is cut off while we are experiencing a situation, the flow is disrupted. Like a knot, the experience is now stuck there. And it starts to affect us in many other areas. So, it is important for the communication between 2 lobes to continue for us to proceed with our lives. And it is with EMDR, we get the support for that connection. It allows us to repair the transition that didn't happen when the child was afraid, even if the time has passed. We put papers, paints and different materials in front of the children. We give them some directions and we start to untie those knots that are bothering them. We ask children to draw pictures of memories that make them uncomfortable or unhappy.



We ask various questions about that moment, so that they think about that memory again, re-enact it in their minds. With the interventions we make, we ensure that that moment no longer disturbs them. For me, the best part of this profession is to see the wonderful smiles on their faces and gleams in their eyes as the knots are untied and I see that they are able to cope with the areas they had difficulty with.

Clinical Psychologist Ceyda YANAR **EMDR, Child, Teen**

Sometimes we experience things we have difficulty coping with, while we are living. The way we are affected by these events changes depending on our age, abilities or the circumstances we are in at that moment. A young child may become sensitive to sound after hearing construction noises, while a middle-aged adult may have trouble walking down the street after extortion. Time passes, events change... The only thing that does not change is the way our brain works when we experience difficulties.

Our brain starts to use both lobes actively to give meaning to an event while experiencing it. Information exchange continues with the bridge that provides the communication. Thus, both the emotional and analytical connections of that experience are provided. We feel things and find a workable solution at the same time. But sometimes certain things happen and the coping methods we have are not enough, the bridge no longer does its job. At a moment when we feel fear, disappointment, anger, or sadness, we cannot seek help from the other lobe for a solution.



The reactions we have shown afterward begin at such moments when the communication between the two lobes is broken. The past continues in the present without us even realizing it.

Children's perception of the world is different from that of adults. The meanings they attribute to events vary. The same event may cause a nightmare for one, while another may not react. Personal experiences are valuable. Children's memories are much more so...

The memories of children become our most important materials while we are working with EMDR. We go back to that memory with them. By providing communication to the bridge, we ensure that the lobes receive the help that they couldn't get from each other before. Pictures, dreams and stories accompany us in this process as well...

How Do People Who Experience EMDR Tell It?

What is individual support?

It is being aware; it is learning about yourself.

It is shining a light on yourself and looking at yourself in that light.

It shows many things about yourself that is yours (though not everything), teaches that they happen because of you but at the same time reveals that some things are not like that at all.

It isn't there to show the way, but to show that there are ways...

What is it to me?

It is learning that there is such a thing as awareness...

It is connecting with my emotions. It is learning to listen to oneself.

It is accepting that not everything that is "me" is egoistic.



It is seeing that I am as important as those around me.

It is, for better or worse, trying to understand what happens because of me.

It is being able to want something just because you want it, it is also accepting that you cannot find any justification or explanation for everything.

It is not choosing a path, but knowing that there are selectable paths.

Not only knowing that what I do/choose is my responsibility, but also accepting that what others do/choose is their responsibility. Still, sometimes this process confuses the mind, but it's good to be confused without obsessing over it too much.

My experiences during the sessions are incredible.

First, we identified the painful times of my life that left their mark.

When those moments were determined, the journey to the inner world began.

Even though I thought I would have a hard time remembering those days, the moment I closed my eyes and the vibration was sent to my hand, the feelings of that day came back to me again.

The day we set for my first session was the day my father left home after the divorce. The first recollection was very painful. It was like my father had left me again.

After the vibration stopped and I opened my eyes, I shared what I remembered aloud.

Needless to say, there was also a lot of crying... But every time I closed my eyes (and after the vibration started), I remembered different things.

For example; I noticed the people sitting in the living room, while my father was emptying his closet in the bedroom. And my feelings at that moment...



I remembered things even as I was describing what I remembered between these flashbacks. My feelings at those moments, specifically... The feelings that have hurt me for maybe years, that were clearly not true.

As the sessions progressed, that first scene ceased to cause me pain and existed only as a memory. The effect this had on me was incredible. I felt comfortable and more importantly peaceful. Because, as I remembered, I saw that my father wasn't leaving me as I thought. He was just leaving the house. It was as if the false trace of the first emotions that I felt at that moment was erased from my brain. I did not become hypnotized, but I traveled deep into my senses and repaired a wound related to my now deceased father. Because these wounds are actually hidden in what we remember. I just revealed that secret and made it visible. Thank you...

My EMDR Experience

Within a few months of receiving individual support, we switched to the EMDR method. I had never heard of it before. In fact, in the beginning, we neither talked about the theory of the method nor did I research it so that the method can work naturally without any of my information spoiling it. Especially in those months, every day, consciously or unconsciously, thousands of associations were running through my mind. But, of course, there was a lot of distractions in my life, so they would fly away and then come back again. Still, I didn't know how to evaluate and put them into words, they just took up space in my mind without reaching a certain maturity. When we were starting EMDR, first we identified a "gateway", an event that affected me deeply.



Afterwards, in the session room where I was completely calm and away from distractions, these associations and the emotions they evoked gradually started to complete a puzzle by making meaningful connections with each other. As we progressed with the EMDR method, the emotions represented by the “gateway” began to change and their negative connotations began to become neutral.

I see the EMDR method as a journey of inner discovery and am very happy to have this experience.

Bicycle

It felt like the train passed so very close this time. I wonder if the rails get closer to the house each time. I have a whole world of questions in my mind, but I can't ask them, they would make fun of me again. But the noise and the vibrations were different each time the train passed by. Some seem to be passing through the house. Breaking it, disrupting it from its foundations... Some trains passed more slowly; they were just going where they wanted to reach, quietly. As if they had stories to tell. No one believed me, but each one had a lot of things to say and I was hearing it.

The house is very crowded, I have a problem inside that I can't describe. I'm afraid. Whenever I tell my mom, she says "It's puberty," then adds angrily, "Girls shouldn't say 'I'm bored', people would think they want a husband, it shameful." Want a husband? It was all I needed to know to stop asking questions.

All my cousins, my mother, my siblings, everyone is in the farm; my uncle is one of the staff here and he knows everything about trees.



He told me once that they combined a peach and an apricot tree into a single one. They were grafted, he said and promised to take me to those trees. How do trees merge anyway?

Everyone is doing something at home, they are all in a hurry to clean the house and prepare lunch after our breakfast. Some things in this house are very different from our house; like the granulated sugar in a big drum or the many flour sacks that are placed in a room. It's like a grocery. We buy those from the grocery store, when necessary, but you have to take the train to go to the nearest grocery store here. That's why everything is bought in a bulk. I hate breakfast tables.

The women and girls of the house gather in the hall while they are cleaning together. Though, they can talk from room to room, still they come to the center with excitement and talk for minutes or even hours. These conversations never end. Sometimes in a group, sometimes 2 or 3 people in a corner, they talk all the time.

I feel like I am not allowed to say but I am getting bored. From the garden gate, I see Ahmet, he is busy messing with his bike, the others are nowhere to be seen. I go to him and get his bike without speaking. And as soon as I step on the pedal, I'm away from the house. Each pedal takes me farther. There are train tracks on the right, if I turn that way I could get stuck under a train.

I turn left towards the beach; I have always loved the sea. I see the workers working among the cherry trees, my aunt's husband is among them, picking cherries. Its stain is not removal, I'd learned that when I got my favorite shirt stained. My shirt was stained, but I could only wear sleeveless T-shirts and shorts when we came to the farm.



This place was close to the sea, I've read in a book that the sea tames people. Anyway, I won't eat cherries again.

The closer I get to the beach, the sharper the smell of seaweeds grow-- how delightful it would be to die in the sea.

The weather is beautiful, I greet each and every one of the trees as I pass by, they look magnificent. I slow down a little, while passing in front of the pine trees. I also have to greet the cones on it, I love the cones very much. I hear the sound of crickets; they accompany me on the way.

The sound of my bike, the crickets and the birds, the sun warming my back-- we're all going together.

There are no cousins to mock me, no mother to criticize everything about me; the sea, the trees, the birds, the smell of seaweed, my bike and me. I am alone. My hair flutters in the wind, each strand dances separately. They all say my hair is ugly, but it feels nice when it is waving like that in the wind. Good thing I learned to ride a bike.

I suddenly feel the taste of earth in my mouth. It won't go away without water, gets into my throat when I try to clean it, and my knee hurts more than my mouth. The right one is covered in blood. From afar, people see me falling, I have to pack up and get out of here. I don't know those men.

I get up and continue pedaling rapidly, my knee hurts so much, there is blood everywhere. How can I clean my clothes without anyone seeing? Everyone will make fun of me again. My mother will be very angry. I feel nauseous, I have a knot in my throat I can't swallow. I'm so scared, I feel cold. There are trees, dead trees that look terrible. The crows are in the middle of the road.



All I hear is the noise from the bike chain, the chain must be about to break completely. Every few seconds, I hear clicking, click-click, then again after a while, click-click.

And at that moment, it is as I am splitting in two and a race begins between us. I forget all the pain, anxiety, fear. "Hey, I'm faster than you, you can't catch me! You'll see, I'll pass you by," says one part but I win the race...

Earphones

First, we need to adjust the sound, then its speed-- seems everything is ready. Preparing my headphones takes me to a very different memory at once.

About 3-4 years ago, one evening, I excitedly bought a headset after work and stood in front of the computer, waiting for our appointment. For the light to turn green, her to come online. But I have to wait a little longer, it wouldn't do for me to write this instant.

First the call sound in my ear, then a warm "Hello". Meredith has a very warm smile.

It looks like I had to do some practice before going to England. Beyond that, other lives have always intrigued me.

The speed, the volume coming from the headphones, everything is ok, then we start. The name of the method is EMDR. I've heard it before, I've seen it on TV by chance, although I don't know much about it. There is the ease of surrendering myself to someone I trust. The first clicks echoing in my ear take me deeper.



The sounds in my ears are assisted by my dreams, and I break the deepest shell of the process of shutting myself out, the one that has been forming since I have been 13 and was on my way back to my aunt's. That day, the clicking noises from the bicycle chain caused me to shut down and live my whole life in a cell. EMDR entered that area and helped me take another step towards freedom. Every click is like knocking on the door of a room in my mind, though, never carelessly. We knocked on all the doors and went in. Even to the deepest ones. The sounds and smells hitting my face were terrible as the doors opened. But now the doors are open, the rooms can be organized and spacious.

I always thought that I wouldn't need support, that I could overcome everything. Because of that the thought of needing psychological support always seemed distant to me. While not believing it, I started getting it as a last resort. This is how I came to know EMDR. Everyone probably has traumas that they have experienced in the past, whether they are aware or not, that blocks their life. You want to be able to magic it away with a magical wand. EMDR is that magical wand. First, you face your past traumas. Sometimes it isn't so easy. It's a tough process... But don't give up. It can take a session, or sometimes more, according to your progress. At the end of the process, you can see that the bad memories that had blocked you no longer disturbs you. It is something miraculous... The best part, of course, is the ability to continue your life with positive feelings regarding those traumas. The most important thing that you need to do is the desire to move forward positively. I believe that even the most effective scientific methods won't work if the person is unwilling. I noticed the changes in myself with growing amazement. So, I recommend EMDR for the people who want to be freed from the "knots" in their life.



It was 4 years ago; I was working as a cashier in a supermarket, I loved my job and I was happy. Until that unfortunate incident... My trust and love for people was endless until I was locked up, tortured and raped by someone who worked at the same workplace I did, that I didn't think would harm me, someone I even called "my brother". I won't tell what happened to me because I don't want to remember it. Physically, my body was covered in bruises and signs of abuse. All I wanted was to die. I spent the night in the police station. In the morning when I went to the courthouse, I heard that he was caught. I was so happy at that moment but, still, I was afraid too. I didn't want to see him, so I didn't. It was told to me that he was caught, whereas, in reality, he had committed suicide. I learned this much later. I was thinking that he was in prison, while he was actually at the bottom of the sea. My sister took me to a psychologist, the first one who wanted to hospitalize me. When I refused, we went to another psychologist. When I wasn't really sure about the chance of a treatment working with that psychologist, I went to another yet again. "Yes," I said, "this one can help me," and my therapy process started. I, who wanted to die, who was scared and distrustful of men... I came back to life. "I will never marry," I had said time and time again but I did. I learned that there was a very strong woman inside of me in this process. Yes, I was feeling awful during sessions; I was trying to hold onto life and I did. My therapist showed me how I can deal with my fears and life. It wasn't always easy working with EMDR but it made my life easier later on. I changed my job. I had lost weight from 45 to 36 kilos. I started eating again, seeing life as something beautiful but the most important of it all, I found myself.



I realized that every person has a strong side, only it is hard to utilize it by ourselves. Most of the time we are not even aware of the things that make us ourselves. Hence, why this process is so important, we find what makes us “us” and draw that out.

We learn to cope with our fears and use our strengths. If I didn’t start seeking support, maybe I wouldn’t be alive today. Yes, I am very serious because I thought a lot about dying. But now, I am a woman so strong that nothing deters me. Trusting a man again, getting married; these things were miracles to me. I succeeded in these, thanks to the therapist I worked with. I am successful in my job and I am happily married. Don’t be afraid of getting support, remember that these sessions are going to help you. You aren’t mad just because you are seeing a psychologist, on the contrary we learn how to better use our minds. All these are prejudices of our society. I am much happier now that I didn’t let these stop me and had the courage to face my fears.

Turns out, everything starts when you stop thinking! I had a tough childhood, tougher than I imagined considering it affected me to this for long. To be honest, I was skeptic about EMDR; certain sounds on your ears, a vibrating ball in your hands- it all sounded fantastical to me. I started my first session with a bit of an excitement and fear, then most things in my life changed. The world that I tried to create in my head, in which I spent all my cognitive energy and tried to eliminate my worries by thinking, started to disappear on the horizon. So much so that I wasn’t thinking anymore, my head was gone and my heart had come back. Like the saying “Follow your heart.” To me that is EMDR. It is telling, experiencing the things you want; it is something that depicts you and your inner self.



We studied a memory of my mother and I; my mother became a fish, the room filled with water and we started swimming together. My sentiments were bad about that memory, I felt bad every time I remembered it; yet, it was gone, my core sent back that memory to where it belonged, to the “bad-memories-that-happened-during-childhood”. I always thought that our brains were smart; turns out they really aren’t. I first understood this with diet-cokes. When the brain receives sweetener, it perceives it as sugar; though, in truth, it is not sugar. Their calories aren’t the same, still, because the brain has a straightforward way of thinking, says, “It must be sugar.” There was popular book called “Go Where Your Heart Leads You/Yüreğinin Götürdüğü Yere Git”- that is what EMDR is; following your heart instead of your mind. Once you are there, you understand that you are a brilliant existence, that you have unbelievable fighting mechanisms and can perform miraculous recoveries. While a movie is being shot, behind the scenes of that movie are too being shot at the same time. In other words, you actually get to see behind the scenes of what was happening. EMDR takes you to the behind the scenes and shows how you acted out the dangerous scenes without using a stuntman.

Are you curious what your life’s behind the scenes look like?

Alternative slogan for EMDR: Meet your self!

