



## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

# Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) group protocols

EMDR uses bilateral stimulation (often side-to-side eye movements) while you briefly hold a traumatic memory in mind, helping the brain process it so it carries less distress. Group adaptations, mainly G-TEP (Shapiro and Laub) and IGTP (Jarero and Artigas), bring this to groups after disaster and mass trauma, using self-administered bilateral stimulation instead of therapist-led eye movements.

## WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- Designed for post-disaster and mass-trauma response, not ongoing weekly therapy.
- Not a substitute for individual EMDR for complex or chronic PTSD.
- Rarely a standing community group you'd find in a directory. In crisis? Call or text 988.

## What it's used for

After mass trauma: disasters, community violence, war, and refugee displacement.

IGTP was built for children; G-TEP is used with adolescents and adults.

For when individual EMDR isn't feasible given the scale of the event.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

- 1 Sessions usually run 60 to 90 minutes and follow a defined protocol.
- 2 You self-administer bilateral stimulation, like tapping alternating knees or shoulders.
- 3 Guided attention to the memory, brief check-ins, and a closing exercise. Children often draw.

**Individual EMDR is strongly supported; the group adaptations carry that foundation but have a smaller record.**

- A 2013 Cochrane review found individual EMDR **among the most effective PTSD treatments**, comparable to trauma-focused CBT.<sup>1</sup>
- A 2015 randomized trial of G-TEP after a community incident found reduced trauma symptoms versus waitlist.<sup>2</sup>
- IGTP has supporting case and pilot data across disaster settings.<sup>3</sup>

## MAKING THE MOST OF IT

- **You control disclosure.** You don't narrate details aloud.
- **Name what helps.** Share your grounding and pacing needs.
- **Notice, don't force.** Let the processing unfold at its pace.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1 Is the clinician trained in EMDR and the specific group protocol?
- 2 Is this G-TEP, IGTP, or another adaptation?
- 3 How many sessions, and is follow-up care available?

## Ready to find a group?

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The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



## Sources

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) group protocols · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1** Bisson, J. I., et al. Psychological therapies for chronic PTSD in adults. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (2013).
- 2** Shapiro, E., & Laub, B. Early EMDR intervention following a community critical incident: a randomized clinical trial. Journal of EMDR Practice and Research (2015).
- 3** Jarero, I., & Artigas, L. The EMDR integrative group treatment protocol (IGTP) for early intervention following critical incidents. European Review of Applied Psychology (2012).

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