

THE CLIENT GUIDE TO EMDR



What you need to know about Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing

AN EVIDENCE BASED TREATMENT FOR TRAUMA & MORE

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The mind can often heal itself naturally, in the same way as the body does. Much of this natural coping mechanism occurs during sleep, particularly during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. Francine Shapiro developed Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) in 1987, utilizing this natural process in order to successfully treat Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Since then, EMDR has been used to effectively treat a wide range mental health problems.

In addition to its use for the treatment of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, EMDR has been successfully used to treat:

- anxiety and panic attacks
- depression
- stress
- phobias
- sleep problems
- complicated grief
- addictions
- pain relief, phantom limb pain
- self-esteem and performance anxiety

What is EMDR?

Can anyone benefit from EMDR?

EMDR can accelerate therapy by resolving the impact of your past traumas and allowing you to live more fully in the present. It is not, however, appropriate for everyone. The process is rapid, and any disturbing experiences, if they occur at all, last for a comparatively short period of time. Nevertheless, you need to be aware of, and willing to experience, the strong feelings and disturbing thoughts, which sometimes occur during sessions.

What is an EMDR session like?

EMDR utilizes the natural healing ability of your body. After a thorough assessment, you will be asked specific questions about a particular disturbing memory. Eye movements, similar to those during REM sleep, will be recreated simply by asking you to watch the therapist's finger moving backwards and forwards across your visual field. Sometimes, a bar of moving lights or headphones is used instead. The eye movements will last for a short while and then stop. You will then be asked to report back on the experiences you have had during each of these sets of eye movements.

Experiences during a session may include changes in thoughts, images and feelings. With repeated sets of eye movements, the memory tends to change in such a way that it loses its painful intensity and simply becomes a neutral memory of an event in the past. Other associated memories may also heal at the same time. This linking of related memories can lead to a dramatic and rapid improvement in many aspects of your life (from: www.getselfhelp.co.uk www.get.gg).

Will I remain in control and empowered?

During EMDR treatment, you will remain in control, fully alert and wide-awake. This is not a form of hypnosis and you can stop the process at any time. Throughout the session, the therapist will support and facilitate your own self-healing and intervene as little as possible. Reprocessing is usually experienced as something that happens spontaneously, and new connections and insights are felt to arise quite naturally from within. As a result, most people experience EMDR as being a natural and very empowering therapy.



What happens when you are traumatized?

The Adaptive Information Processing (AIP) model is a theory that states experiences automatically connect to memory networks. That means that senses from the memory attach to attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors that already exist.

Distress and problems happen when memories attach in destructive ways or don't process all the way. This can result in beliefs such as "I am not worthy," or "It's my fault."

EMDR takes these traumatic memories and helps to create a more adaptive memory association to form. Triggers and memories linked with the negative beliefs are examined and then are re-created into positive beliefs such as "I am worthy," or "I did my best."

Think of the AIP theory like an injury. If you cut yourself, your body automatically starts to heal without any conscious effort from you. But if something is blocking the healing, such as a splinter, your body will try to heal around or over it and create infection and pain. Once the splinter is removed, the body can start doing its job.

EMDR works the same way- when a memory or trigger blocks healing, it needs to be removed to heal and reprocess memories. Once removed, you can create new associations that are helpful and positive.

In your daily life you are constantly managing and processing new experiences and information without even knowing. But when something out of the ordinary happens, your natural systems of coping become overwhelmed and the traumatizing and distressing experience can become stuck in your brain.

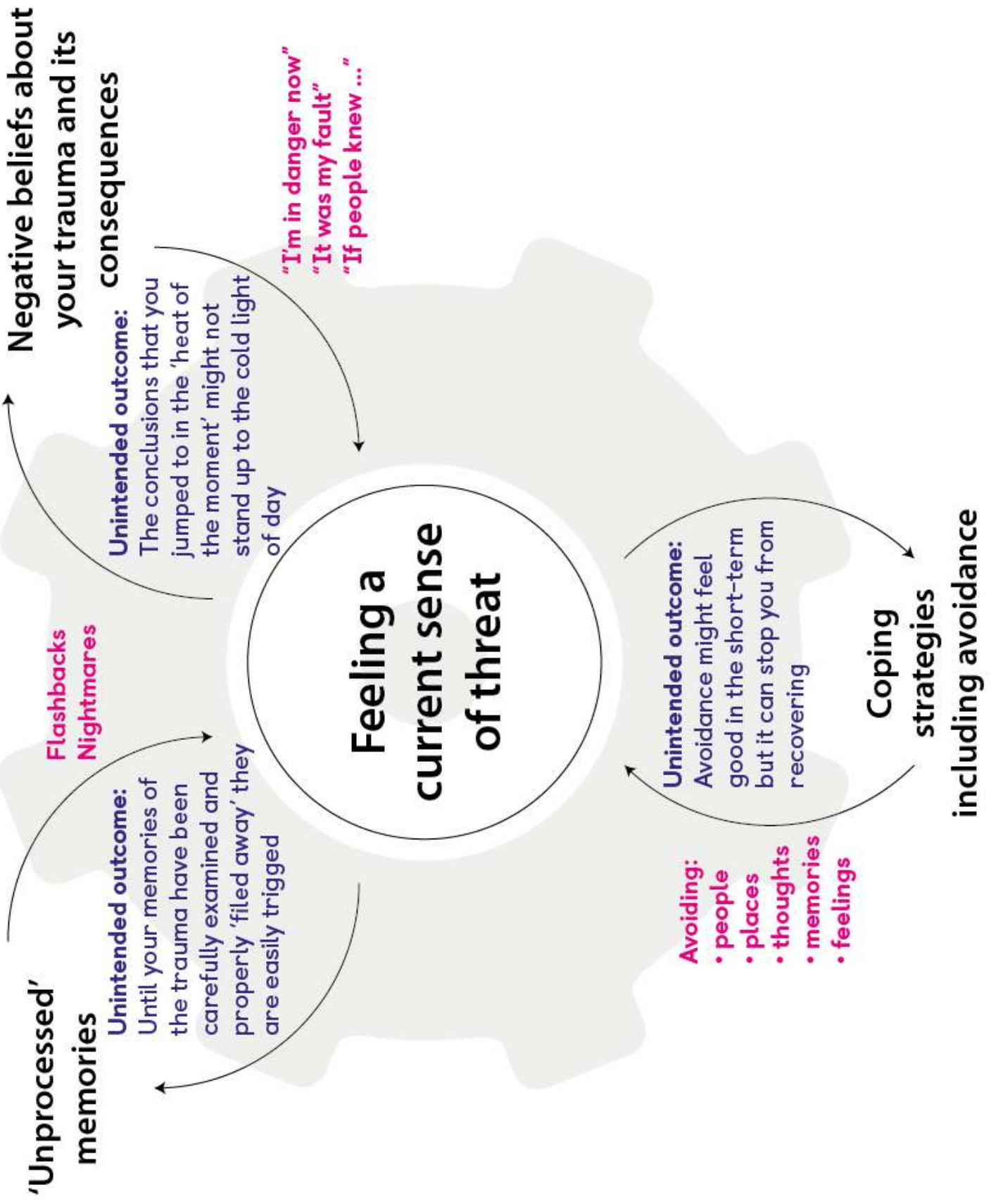


“LONG-LASTING RESPONSES TO TRAUMA RESULT NOT SIMPLY FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF FEAR AND HELPLESSNESS BUT FROM HOW OUR BODIES INTERPRET THOSE EXPERIENCES.”—RACHEL YEHUDA

This can happen with a single event or continual distress that happen over a period of time. These experiences are stored in the emotional center of your brain (the limbic system) in sensory form rather than a verbal story.

The limbic system's traumatic memories can be continually triggered when you experience events similar to the distressing events you have been through. Even when the actual memory is forgotten, feelings such as fear, anger or disgust associated with the memory can be triggered.

EMDR helps create new connections between your brain's memory networks, enabling your brain to process the traumatic memory in a very natural and healing way.



POLYVAGAL THEORY

Too Much Energy

Survival Mode

**SYMPATHETIC
NERVOUS SYSTEM**
(MOBILIZATION)

RAGE
PANIC
FEAR

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

HYPERAROUSAL

yelling · defensive · pacing · hyperalert
run away · uncomfortable

· can't register
consequences

I DON'T CARE

↑ **DYSREGULATION** ↓

Optimal Energy

COMMUNICATION | CONNECTION

Self-Control

**PARASYMPATHETIC
NERVOUS SYSTEM:**
VENTRAL VAGAL
(SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
& CONNECTION)

FEEL FEELINGS
LOVE · JOY · PEACE
PATIENCE · KINDNESS
GENTLENESS

SAFE

**WINDOW of
TOLERANCE**
(REGULATION)

aware of:
self · time · space · others

RELATIONSHIPS

· consider
consequences
· focus
· logic
· reason
· problem solve
· curious

↑ **RESILIENCE** ↓

↓ **DYSREGULATION**

Lack of Energy

Survival Mode

**PARASYMPATHETIC
NERVOUS SYSTEM:**
DORSAL VAGAL
(IMMOBILIZATION)

FLAT AFFECT
NO FEELING
NUMB

FREEZE
SHUT DOWN

HYPOAROUSAL

exhausted · slow · tired · enduring

DISSOCIATION

· blank
· check-out
· trance
· long pause
· feel far away

I GIVE UP

CharissaFry.com

Common Beliefs That Develop From Trauma & the New Positive Belief

Negative Cognitions

I am not good enough
I am a bad person
I don't deserve love
I am not lovable
I am inadequate
I am worthless
I am weak
I am permanently damaged
I am shameful

I should have done something
I should have known better
I should have done more
I did something wrong
It is my fault

I am not safe
I can't trust anyone
I am in danger
I can't protect myself
I am going to die

I am not in control
I am powerless
I am helpless
I am weak
I cannot be trusted
I cannot trust myself

Positive Cognitions

I am good enough
I am a good person
I deserve love
I am lovable
I am adequate
I have value
I am strong
I am healthy (or can be)
I have honor

I did the best I could
I do the best I can
I did my best
I learned from it
I did my best

I am safe now
I can choose who to trust
It's over, I am safe now
I can (learn to) take care of myself
I am safe now, I am alive

I am in control now
I have choices now
I control my destiny
I am strong
I can be trusted
I can trust myself (or learn to)

“TICES” =
Triggers/Images/Cognitions/Emotions/Sensations

Use this sheet to help work through distressing memories

TRIGGERS (what/who/when/where “started the ball rolling” causing you to experience an image-cognition-emotion-sensation?)

IMAGES (What pictures/visual scenes are appearing in your mind’s eye?):

COGNITIONS (what thoughts and beliefs are coming to mind?):

EMOTIONS (what feelings, positive and negative, are you aware of?):

SENSATIONS (what are you experiencing through your senses-physical sensations, smells, sounds, and tastes):

Shapiro, F. (2001). Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing: Basic Principles, Protocols, and Procedures (2nd edition). New York: Guilford Press.

Get to Know Your Emotions



Joy or happiness can *motivate us* to join in, take part, share



Fear can *motivate us* to get away



Sadness can *motivate us* to withdraw, brood, ruminate



Anger can *motivate us* to attack, lash out, stand up for ourselves



Guilt can *motivate us* to repair what we have done
Shame can *motivate us* to hide away, to keep things secret



Disgust can *motivate us* to withdraw, keep a distance, get clean



Compassion, empathy, or sympathy can *motivate us* to offer comfort, be with



Embarrassment or humiliation can *motivate us* to hide



Confusion can *motivate us* to check things out (or paralyze us with indecision)



Powerlessness can *motivate us* to give up



Indifference can *motivate us* to ignore



Affection can *motivate us* to give love, get close to



VISUALIZATION IS A POWERFUL TOOL IN EMDR THERAPY. PRACTICE VISUALIZING A COMFORTABLE AND SECURE SPACE, A CONTAINER TO HOLD EVERYTHING NEGATIVE, AND EVEN RECEIVING ADVICE FROM A WISE AND TRUSTED FIGURE.

THE FOLLOWING "LIGHT STREAM" SCRIPT CAN BE USED FOR PAIN, ANXIETY AND ANY OTHER DISTRESSING FEELINGS.

Ask yourself: "what emotions am I feeling right now, and where do I feel it in my body?". Then imagine that those feelings are an object. Mentally ask yourself these questions about the object: "If it had a shape, what shape would it be?" "If it had a size, what size would it be?" "If it had a colour, what colour would it be?" "If it had a temperature, what temperature would it be? Hot or cold?" "If it had a texture, what texture would it be?" "If it had a sound, what kind of sound would it make? High or low pitch?"

Next pick a colour that you most associate with healing. Imagine that there is a stream of light in this color that is coming from the center of the universe. This is a magic light, because the more you need of it, the more of it is available to you. Allow this light to flow into your head, and focus it down on the object. Let the light vibrate and resonate like a laser beam in and around this object.

Allow yourself to just notice what happens to the object. Remember that the more light or energy that you need the more is available to you. Allow yourself to feel the light enter your mind, and allow the healing light again to vibrate and resonate in and around the object and notice what happens to the object.

When you notice that the object is gone or feels that it is contained, allow yourself to let the energy from the light flow into your body. Allow it to reach the tips of your finger, and the tips of your toes.

Allow yourself to be engulfed, and overwhelmed by the energy, count to three and open your eyes.

AM I READY FOR EMDR?



If you are unsure, ask yourself the following questions. If all or most are a "yes" then you may be ready.

In terms of your relationship with your therapist:

- Do you feel safe if your therapist learns that you feel upset?
- Do you feel safe disagreeing with them, and saying things that risk disapproval?
- When distressed, is your therapist's voice something that you consider comforting?
- If your therapist asked you to do something that was uncomfortable to imagine, would you be willing to try it and see if it works?

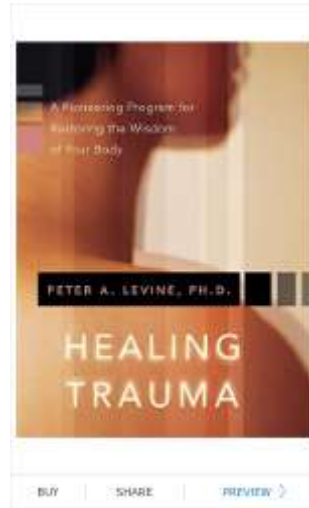
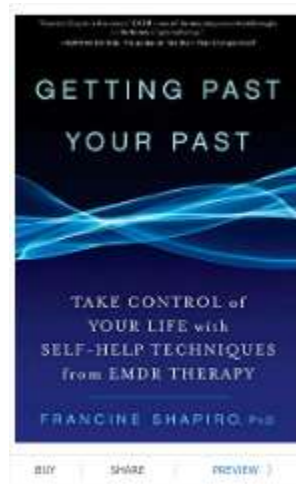
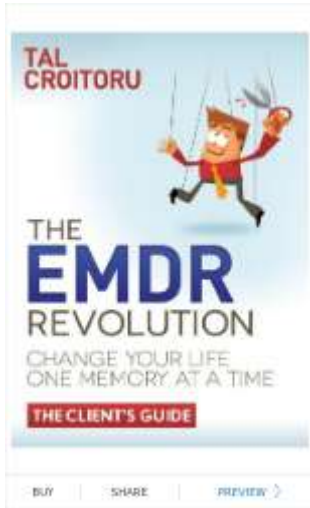
In terms of trigger coping:

- While triggered, are you able to receive good advice from a trusted source?
- While triggered, are you able to refrain from acting on dangerous impulses?

In terms of getting value out of breaking down barriers:

- At your best, are you able to receive kindness?
- At your best, are you able to offer kindness to others?
- At your best, are you able to acknowledge other perspectives without feeling threatened?

RESOURCES



Go to
www.emdr.com
for more info

Frequent Questions
EYE MOVEMENT DESENSITIZATION
AND REPROCESSING THERAPY
emdr.com

Sanvello



Home

The #1 app for stress and anxiety with over 3 million users. Digital sel...
sanvello.com

Stress, anxiety, and depression are caused by an ongoing cycle of negative thoughts, which can influence our physical feelings, emotions, and actions. Sanvello works to break this cycle with techniques that help you shift perspective in the moment and feel better over time.

Anxiety Release



Anxiety Release based on EMDR - Apps on Google Play
Anxiety Release based on EMDR shows you how to release anxious thoughts and feelings naturally, by harnessing the power of your brain. It does this by...

Anxiety Release shows you how to release anxious thoughts and feelings naturally, by harnessing the power of your brain. It does this by combining guided instructions and focused attention with bilateral brain stimulation. Bilateral stimulation is a treatment element of EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing), a revolutionary treatment which is based on the use of sensory stimulation to alter anxiety-provoking memories and responses.



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Using gentle, alternating micro-vibrations called BLAST (bilateral alternating stimulation tactile), TouchPoints give the user a gentle vibration that affects the brain and alters the body's stress response to restore calm. This also relieves the associated body sensations that often accompany stress (i.e. stomachaches, headaches, or tightness in the chest).

5 WAYS TO PREPARE FOR EMDR



Practice grounding and coping skills.

Reprocessing disturbing and distressing events can be tough. It is important that you have learned and practiced the skills to calm emotions, communicate effectively, and stay in the present.



Create a timeline of important events.

Along with your EMDR therapist, create a timeline of the best and worst events in your life. This is helpful to look for current patterns, identify the good parts, and know triggers.



Get meditating!

Meditation is the art and science of seeing things as they are. The more you practice, the more effective you will be at living in the present and putting the past in the past.



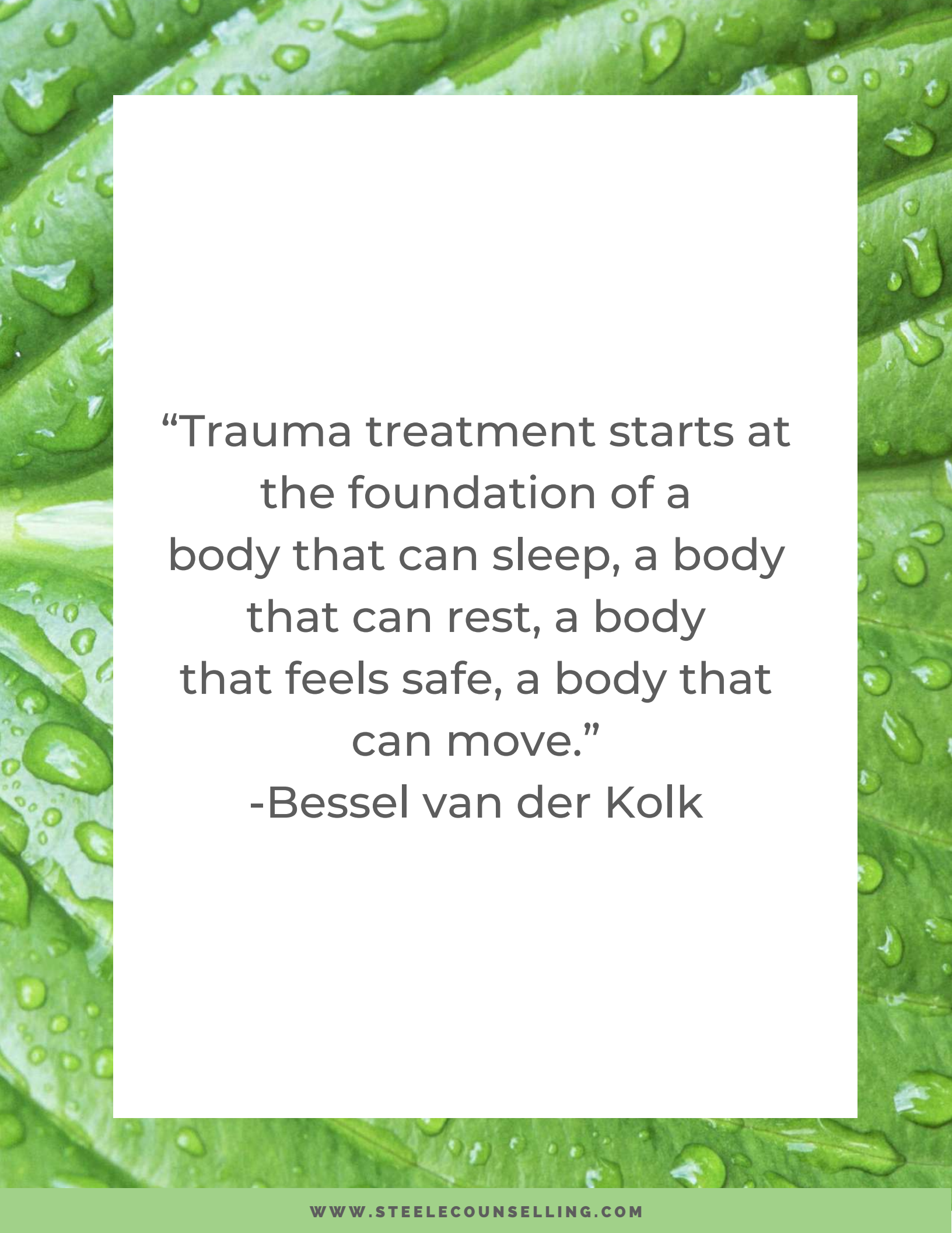
Listen to your body.

Listen to how your body responds to situations and then name the emotion. Practice body awareness with gentle activity such as stretching or walking.



Plan to relax after the EMDR session.

EMDR is hard work! Sometimes you may have strong emotions, physical reactions, and deep insight. Plan to practice self care and relaxation after your session.

A close-up photograph of vibrant green leaves, likely from a plant like basil or mint, covered in numerous clear water droplets. The droplets are of various sizes and are scattered across the surface of the leaves, which are slightly out of focus in some areas, creating a sense of depth. The overall color palette is a rich, natural green with highlights from the water.

“Trauma treatment starts at
the foundation of a
body that can sleep, a body
that can rest, a body
that feels safe, a body that
can move.”

-Bessel van der Kolk



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