

Guidelines to practice EMDR Therapy online

Generally, EMDR Therapy is not encouraged to be practiced by Skype, Zoom, Facetime, Whatsapp, etc. for treating patients, since by these platforms it is not always possible to grant a therapeutical setting with all its complexity, as you can achieve in our office. It is possible that the client could not perceive the therapist's empathic closeness and his/her therapeutical presence. On the other hand, the client could feel this setting as distant or aseptic; therefore, these problematics can block the processing and/or make it more difficult.

In addition, the typical processing that happens during EMDR sessions is deep, rich and it opens important channels that are not only associative and cognitive, but also emotional and somatic.

Since there is an exceptional emergency situation regarding the Coronavirus and since these platforms are our present mean of communication, we have thought about offering guidelines to practice EMDR Therapy online only for the duration of the emergency. Many clients need continuity in their therapeutical programme.

Therefore, it is possible to use EMDR only with known clients that you have been already treating, with whom you have a good therapeutical relationship. You could encounter no big difficulties practicing EMDR online with those clients with whom you have already used EMDR before, and as a consequence you know well his/her processing mechanisms and processes.

It is advisable to avoid practicing EMDR with:

- New clients
- Clients with whom you never used EMDR before
- Clients with aspects of dissociative disorders or dissociative mechanisms
- Clients with processing blocks and resistances
- Complex clients (for instance, at risk of suicide)

In all those cases where the use of EMDR online is not advisable, what do we do?

- Stabilisation and grounding
- Psychoeducation
- Interventions at a cognitive level
- Safe place
- Resource installation and enhancement



What protocol do we use online?

- Recent events protocol
- Individual sessions with standard EMDR protocol (many clients need to continue with their therapy without necessarily focusing on Coronavirus)

You can use the butterfly hug as a way of bilateral stimulation. The client can do that on his own during the online session, since it stimulates not only the processing but it also facilitates grounding. Clients can also tap on their knees during the online EMDR session as a bilateral stimulation.