



# ATTACH

Teaching the World to Heal

Association for Training  
on Trauma and  
Attachment in Children  
[www.attach.org](http://www.attach.org)

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Editor: Craig Clark

## The ATTACH Connection

### What is EMDR and How Can it Help?



EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing and is a set of strategies developed by Dr. Francine Shapiro for the treatment of trauma. Dr. Shapiro made a chance observation in 1987 that eye movements seemed to lessen the intensity of intense feelings. She then studied this phenomenon and reported on the first successful

treatment results using EMDR with survivors of trauma in 1989 in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*.

EMDR was thought to be a quack therapy for a period of time but once the strategies were manualized and taught in a methodical fashion, outcome studies began documenting that it was useful and effective in helping traumatized individuals work through traumatic events and the effects that trauma exercised in their lives. EMDR is now one of the most recommended forms of therapy for traumatized individuals. It is listed on the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices.

Even though EMDR was initially done by having the individual shift their eyes back and forth while holding his or her head still, now we know that rather than the eye movements being the factor that released the hold of the trauma on the person that it was the bilateral stimulation of the brain that was important. Professionals started trying other forms of bilateral stimulation such as sound, tapping and other body movements.

In the therapy that I do with traumatized attachment challenged children, I often have them beat on a drum with alternating hands while we are working on traumatic memories that they are recollecting and this becomes a fun way to do the dual attention that is needed (the trauma memory and the alternating stimulation by beating on a drum) for resolution.

There are numerous theories about how EMDR works in resolving trauma. One theory is that through the use of the alternating bilateral stimulation while the person is recollecting a *(cont'd)*

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- From Chaos to Calm, Online Training Part 2 June 9
- Parent Support Call June 9
- Parent Support Call June 15
- Healing Trauma in Families Online Training Part 1 June 16
- Healing Trauma in Families Online Training Part 2 June 23
- Growing Healthy Family Relationships in Foster & Adoptive Families Online Training Part 1 July 11
- Parent Support Call July 14
- Attachment Therapy: Key Practices for Treating Children & Families Online Training Part 1 July 19
- Parent Support Call July 20
- Growing Healthy Family Relationships in Foster & Adoptive Families Online Training Part 2 July 25

[Click here for more](#)

### LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Welcome to The ATTACH Connection Newsletter. During my five-year tenure as Executive Director, I have been fortunate enough to meet many of you at our conferences and other events. Since ATTACH was first organized *(cont'd)*

## What is EMDR and How Can It Help? (cont'd)

specific traumatic event that the fragments and energy of the trauma get unstuck from the limbic system of the brain and travel up to the frontal lobe area of the brain where the individual can gain more clarity and perspective.

EMDR is used within a framework of a comprehensive trauma informed approach where first there is a great deal of assessment and exploration including the development of a trauma list. The therapist takes time to help the client to gain clarity about all the various areas of his or her life. The next phase is called the preparation phase towards the goal of engaging in the basic protocol for trauma processing. The EMDR therapist explores everything that is going on with the traumatized individual and then identifies what needs to be done to assist the client in acquiring stronger resources which will help the individual tolerate and work through the trauma reduction work. This preparation phase could include helping the client visualize a safe and strong resource space so that he or she can remain grounded and centered, teaching the client how to recognize, affirm and then express feelings appropriately or develop skills of self-soothing or self-nurturance. Clients can also begin identifying internal resources that they may have that can help them in the processing of the trauma such as the characteristics of perseverance, or compassion. The preparatory phase of EMDR includes what is called in EMDR Therapy Resource Development.

Once the EMDR trained therapist feels that the client's internal resources have been developed and used effectively by the client then the basic protocol of trauma processing begins and the clinician and client begin working methodically through the items that are on the client's trauma list.

If you are checking out EMDR as a possibility for yourself or your family member it is important that you make sure that the therapist is fully trained by either the EMDR International Association (EMDRIA) or the EMDR Institute.

*Lois A. Ehrmann PhD is a Registered ATTACH Therapist, ATTACH Board Member, and the Executive Director/Owner of the Individual and Family CHOICES Program in State College, PA*

## CONFERENCE NEWS

September 22 - 25, 2016  
St. Louis, Missouri

**Registration is open!**

[Check out our conference event page for all details including workshops and how to book your hotel room.](#) (cont'd)

## LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (cont'd)

28 years ago, we have served to assist the fields of mental health and child advocacy to stay at the forefront of the many changes and improved methods of understanding the genesis and treatment of trauma and attachment disorders. It is our mission to be the primary resource to the many professionals and parents who support, treat, and advocate for the welfare of children and their families through outreach and training. Parent and/or professional, we look forward to supporting you. Please feel free to contact us at [questions@attach.org](mailto:questions@attach.org)

*Mary M. McGowan*

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS FOR ATTACH



Over the past few years, ATTACH has promoted the use of sensory based therapies utilized by Occupational Therapists that know about trauma and attachment focused work. I

serve on the board of directors for ATTACH and am also spearheading a group of international OTs to come together around this important body of work. The group recently selected their name, OTTAC (Occupational Therapy Trauma and Attachment Collaboration) and is currently working on a mission statement. Their vision is to inform other OTs with regards to attachment and trauma focused work, create webinars, and write papers and collaborative books. So many OTs have already been doing work in this area and the meetings have been a veritable feast of information, dedication, and inspiration as we work together towards a common goal.

The ATTACH conference in Missouri will carry full CE credits for Occupational Therapists! This would be a seminal year to attend the conference as Sheila Frick, OTR/L will be a keynote speaker, and Teresa May Benson presenting on the Safe Space that was first introduced by Jane Koomar, among other great speakers such as Dr. Jon Baylin. I will also be conducting a workshop on DIR/Floortime Method as a way to integrate trauma and attachment (cont'd)



focused work with sensory oriented play. The OT group is also planning to meet on the **Friday evening** of the conference. Join us to be a part of something larger in our community of OTs!

*Maude Le Roux, OTR/L  
ATTACH Board Member*

**Hurry!**

Early bird conference registration prices end August 1 and hotel reservations must be made by August 22 to take advantage of the special ATTACH rate.

## PARENT'S CORNER



"I wish I knew then what I know now" (when I adopted my child with Attachment Disorder). I have heard this statement countless times over the past two years on my journey to understanding our two children with attachment disorder and trauma behaviors. I was a first-time attendee at last year's 27th Annual Conference in Minneapolis,

Minnesota. I learned I am not alone and I am not going crazy. I attended many workshops specific for caregivers dealing with attachment and trauma issues in their children, including self-care, building relationships with schools, and helping families understand different behaviors.

Networking with other caregivers who have children with attachment issues was so valuable. Leaving the conference, I truly felt there is always hope that these children will have fulfilling lives with our guidance and understanding.

The 28th Annual ATTACH Conference will be held in St. Louis this September, and I highly recommend attending for any caregiver dealing with these issues and behaviors.

*Tom Jones, Parent Committee Co-Chair*

### STAY IN TOUCH

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