

EMDR Milestones: The First 20 Years

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This article provides an overview of significant milestones in EMDR history over the first 20 years. A chronological outline lists key events, documenting important publications, conferences, and humanitarian efforts. This is followed by a list of countries in which EMDR currently has an active presence.

EMDR Milestones

1987

- Shapiro recognizes the effects of eye movements on memory quality and develops eye movement desensitization (EMD)

1988

- Shapiro conducts research on EMD
- Shapiro begins presentations on EMD at universities, agencies, and professional organizations in Israel and the United States

1989

- Shapiro publishes two articles on her EMD research (Shapiro, 1989a, 1989b)
- Shapiro begins working at the Mental Research Institute (MRI)

1990

- Shapiro starts presenting workshops to licensed mental health professionals in the United States
- Shapiro trains the first two research teams in the United States (university-based and Veterans Affairs-based)
- An invited training is provided to workshop participants at the annual conference of International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies
- Training restrictions are incorporated after hearing that those who had attended trainings in California had trained nonlicensed health workers and that their clients were reporting negative experiences

- Introduced by Joseph Wolpe, who declares her work a “breakthrough” in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Shapiro presents her EMD research at the annual conference of the Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy

1991

- Wolpe publishes an independent case report stating that EMD is a “more rapidly effective technique” than exposure therapy and that it has “dramatically improved” the prognosis for PTSD (Wolpe & Abrams, 1991, p. 39). He notes “its use by a substantial number of behavior therapists, with highly gratifying results” (p. 43), and cites the forthcoming series of 78 cases by Marquis (1991)
- EMD is officially renamed EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing), reflecting Shapiro’s recognition that effects extend beyond those accounted for by desensitization and are better explained by information processing theories (Shapiro, 1991)
- The EMDR Institute is created
- The EMDR Network association is formed and begins to publish and disseminate the *EMDR Networker*, the first publication to focus specifically on EMDR clinical issues
- The EMDR ethics and professional issues committee, composed of clinicians at the MRI, strengthens and oversees training requirements and restrictions
- Specialized protocols are created for using EMDR with dissociative disorders and critical incidents
- The first EMDR trainings in Paris, Amsterdam, and El Salvador occur

- The first EMDR humanitarian training is provided to local clinicians in Nicaragua

1992

- Controversy over EMDR training begins in letters to the *Behavior Therapist*, variously stating that specialized training should not be needed for a behavioral treatment, or protesting the training restrictions
- The EMDR Network holds the first EMDR conference in San Jose, California, with clinical presentations teaching application of EMDR for various populations and presenting problems
- The first EMDR training in Australia is held

1993

- The EMDR Institute is incorporated, with many trainings and workshops being held nationally and internationally
- The first randomized clinical trial of EMDR is published (Boudewyns et al., 1993) using a veteran sample with PTSD
- Shapiro receives the Distinguished Scientific Achievement in Psychology Award presented by the California Psychological Association
- The first EMDR training in Canada is held

1994

- Humanitarian trainings are provided by institute trainers to local clinicians in Bosnia-Croatia, during the war
- The first EMDR training in England is held

1995

- Shapiro's (1995) textbook is published. This explicates her theory, the accelerated information processing model
- The first randomized clinical trial on EMDR treatment of civilian PTSD is published (Wilson et al., 1995), providing evidence of EMDR's efficacy
- EMDR Institute training restrictions are removed because of the independent research support and the published clinical standards articulated in the textbook
- The response of the EMDR community to the Oklahoma bombings results in the creation of the EMDR Humanitarian Assistance Program (EMDR-HAP)
- The EMDR International Association (EMDRIA) is formed, replacing the EMDR Network, with 473 charter members
- The first EMDR training in Germany is held

1996

- The first issues of the *EMDRIA Newsletter* are published
- The first EMDR trainings in Argentina and South Africa are held
- The first EMDRIA Conference is held in Denver

1997

- The EMDR Integrative Group Treatment Protocol (butterfly hug) is developed by members of HAP and Asociacion Mexicana para Ayuda Mental en Crisis (AMAMECRISIS), after hurricane Pauline ravaged the western coast of Mexico (Jarero et al., 1999)
- The first EMDR trainings in Brazil, Japan, and Chile are held
- The first HAP training in Belfast, Northern Ireland is held, bringing Catholic and Protestant clinicians together to learn EMDR
- Research investigating EMDR treatment of a somatoform disorder, body dysmorphic disorder, is first published, showing elimination of diagnosis in one to three sessions with EMDR treatment of etiological event (Brown et al., 1997)

1998

- EMDR Association of Australia and EMDR Association of Canada are formed
- EMDR is recognized as "probably efficacious" for civilian PTSD by the Clinical Division of the American Psychological Association (Chambless et al., 1998, p. 9)
- A randomized clinical trial on EMDR treatment of military veterans is published, showing that 12 sessions resulted in 77% remission of PTSD diagnosis (Carlson et al., 1998)
- First of several meta-analyses that have compared EMDR and exposure therapy (and other cognitive behavioral therapies) are published, reporting equivalent effects and possible greater efficiency (Van Etten & Taylor, 1998)
- HAP provides EMDR training for disaster response in Bangladesh

1999

- EMDR Europe (which currently has 14 member countries) is formed
- EMDRIALatinoamérica is formed
- EMDRIA launches professional development programs including EMDRIA Credit Programs, Therapist Certification Program, and Approved Consultants

- The first EMDR training in India after Gujarat earthquake is held
- HAP training in Turkey is held after earthquake at Marmara
- The first randomized clinical trial with adult survivors of child sexual abuse is published, showing that EMDR is superior to routine treatment (Edmond, Rubin, & Wambach, 1999)

2000

- The Practice Guidelines of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies state that EMDR is an efficacious treatment for PTSD
- The first HAP training of Palestinian clinicians in Gaza is held, led by Israeli HAP volunteers
- The first EMDR Europe Conference is held in Utrecht, The Netherlands

2001

- Release of the second edition of Dr. Shapiro's (2001) text, *Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing: Basic Principles and Procedures*, in which she explains the change from the accelerated information processing model to the adaptive information processing model.
- Major HAP initiative in New York serves hundreds of 9/11 survivors and first-responders and the first model of a trauma recovery network attempted

2002

- Shapiro receives the *International Sigmund Freud Award for Psychotherapy* presented by the City of Vienna in conjunction with the World Council of Psychotherapy
- EMDR is one of three therapies recommended for treatment of terror victims by the Israeli National Council for Mental Health (Bleich et al., 2002)
- The first randomized study of EMDR with children diagnosed with PTSD (Chemtob et al., 2002) is published, reporting positive treatment effects with elementary school children who were victims of Hurricane Iniki
- A study showing that EMDR processing of trauma histories in conduct disordered boys may reduce behavioral problems is published (Soberman, Greenwald, & Rule, 2002)
- The EMDR resource development and installation protocol is first published, showing preliminary evidence for effectiveness in the stabilization phase of complex PTSD treatment (Korn & Leeds, 2002)

- Maxfield and Hyer's (2002) methodological meta-analysis is published, showing that more rigorous EMDR studies produce larger effects and that treatment fidelity is correlated with effect size
- Randomized clinical trials comparing EMDR to cognitive behavioral therapies (CBT) for adult PTSD are first published (Ironson, Freund, Strauss, & Williams, 2002; Lee, Gavriel, Drummond, Richards, & Greenwald, 2002). Results showed relatively equivalent effects, with some superiority for EMDR and with EMDR requiring no homework time. Power et al. (2002) reported that EMDR participants used fewer treatment sessions

2003

- EMDR is listed as one of the treatments of choice for PTSD in practice guidelines in Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, and Stockholm, Sweden (Clinical Resource Efficiency Support Team, 2003; Dutch National Steering Committee Guidelines Mental Health Care, 2003, Sjoblom et al., 2003)
- HAP begins major expansion of training in U.S. nonprofit agencies

2004

- EMDR is recommended as an effective treatment for trauma by the American Psychiatric Association (2004)
- EMDR placed in the "A" category as "strongly recommended" for the treatment of trauma by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense (2004).
- HAP expands training for VA and Defense Department therapists in the United States
- A study of the use of the EMDR group protocol (Fernandez et al., 2004) is first published, reporting positive treatment effects with 236 children traumatized by a plane crash in Italy
- A randomized clinical trial with sexually abused girls is published, comparing EMDR and cognitive behavioral therapy. Both treatments were effective; preliminary findings suggest EMDR may be more efficient (Jaberghaderi et al., 2004)

2005

- National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2005) in England states that EMDR is one of the empirically supported treatments of choice
- Tsunami in South Asia leads to HAP training projects in India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, then a later project in Indonesia

- Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastate U.S. Gulf Coast; HAP trains 240 new clinicians and serves 600 first-responders

2006

- Two EMDR studies evaluating large-scale treatment after natural disasters are published, reporting the positive effects of the group protocol with 200 children after a flood in Mexico (Jarero, Artigas, & Hartung, 2006) and of the individual protocol with a representative sample of 1,500 adult earthquake victims in Turkey (Konuk et al., 2006)
- First published, study of the EMDR treatment of victims of a terrorist attack (Silver et al., 2006), reporting successful outcomes in the immediate aftermath of 9/11
- A single case study provides preliminary evidence that EMDR may be effective in treating borderline personality disorder (Brown & Shapiro, 2006)

2007

- The EMDR Iberoamerica Association, with 15 member countries, is formed
- EMDR is identified as an efficacious treatment for PTSD in the *Cochrane Review* (Bisson & Andrew, 2007)
- The first issue of the *Journal of EMDR Practice and Research* is published
- The first study comparing EMDR to pharmacological treatment for PTSD (van der Kolk et al., 2007) shows EMDR to be more successful in achieving sustained reductions in PTSD symptoms
- EMDRIA implements new curriculum requirements for basic EMDR training

2008

- The Francine Shapiro Library, a comprehensive electronic resource for articles and references related to EMDR, hosted by Northern Kentucky University, is established (http://library.nku.edu/emdr/emdr_data.php)

2009

- Dr. Shapiro receives the American Psychological Association Division 56 Award for Outstanding Contributions to Practice in Trauma Psychology
- The first issue of the *Japanese Journal of EMDR Practice and Research* is published
- During the EMDR-Europe Association annual meeting, plans are made for the establishment of an EMDR-Asia Association in 2010

- HAP launches expanded initiatives in Africa and the Middle East

EMDR Around the World

The following list of countries indicates each country in which there are known to be licensed EMDR practitioners. Some countries have formed national EMDR professional associations (e.g., EMDR France), and some of these associations have joined together to create international associations (e.g., EMDR Europe). The list provides the names of these associations. It should be noted that the list may not be complete and that changes are ongoing as this issue goes to press. (See also Luber, 2009).

Africa

- Kenya
- South Africa EMDR South Africa/Africa

Asia

- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- China—Mainland
- Hong Kong EMDR Association of Hong Kong
- India EMDR Association of India
- Indonesia EMDR Indonesia
- Japan Japan EMDR Association
- Korea Korean EMDR Association
- Pakistan EMDR Pakistan
- Palestine
- Philippines
- Singapore EMDR Singapore Coordinating Committee
- Sri Lanka EMDR Sri Lanka
- Thailand EMDR Thailand Coordinating Committee
- Vietnam

Australia

- Australia EMDR Association of Australia

Central and South America

- Argentina EMDR Ibero-América Argentina, EMDRIA Latinoamérica
- Brazil EMDR Ibero-América Brasil
- Chile EMDR Ibero-América Chile
- Columbia EMDR Ibero-América Colombia
- Costa Rica EMDR Ibero-América Costa Rica
- Ecuador EMDR Ibero-América Ecuador
- El Salvador EMDR Ibero-América El Salvador
- Guatemala EMDR Ibero-América Guatemala
- Nicaragua EMDR Ibero-América Nicaragua

Panama	EMDR Ibero-América Panama
Peru	EMDR Ibero-América Peru
Puerto Rico	EMDR Ibero-América Puerto Rico
Uruguay	EMDR Ibero-América Uruguay
Venezuela	EMDR Ibero-América Venezuela

Europe

Austria	EMDR Europe, EMDR-Netzwerk Österreich
Belgium	EMDR Europe, EMDR Belgium
Denmark	EMDR Europe, EMDR Denmark
Germany	EMDR Europe, EMDR Deutschland
Greece	EMDR Europe, EMDR Greece
Finland	EMDR Europe, Suomen EMDR-vhdistys
France	EMDR Europe, Association EMDR France
Israel	EMDR Europe, EMDR Israel Association
Italy	EMDR Europe, EMDR Italie
Netherlands	EMDR Europe, Vereniging EMDR Nederland
Norway	EMDR Europe, EMDR Norge
Portugal	EMDR Ibero-América, EMDR Portugal
Serbia	EMDR Europe, EMDR Serbia
Spain	EMDR Europe, Asociacion EMDR Espana
Sweden	EMDR Europe, EMDR Sverige
Switzerland	EMDR Europe, EMDR Schweiz-Suisse-Svizzera-Switzerland
Turkey	EMDR Europe, EMDR Turkiye
United Kingdom and Ireland	EMDR Europe, EMDR Association United Kingdom and Ireland

North America

Canada	EMDRIA, EMDR Canada
Mexico	EMDR Iberoamérica, EMDR Mexico
United States	EMDRIA (EMDR International Association)

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