

The Intersection of EMDR and Play Therapy to Address Children's Trauma

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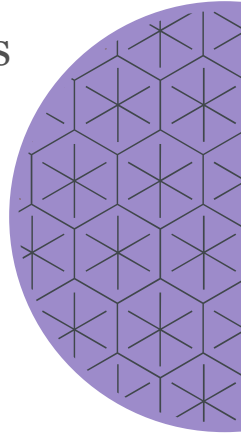
"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood." — Fred Rogers



What is Play Therapy?

The Association for Play Therapy defines play therapy as "the systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained play therapists use the therapeutic powers of play to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development."

So...what does this mean?

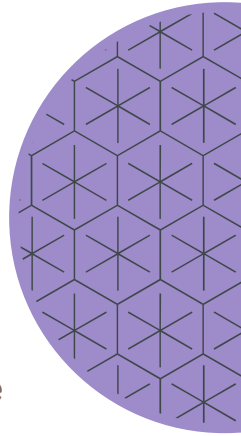


Basic Play Therapy Skills

1. Structuring
2. Empathic Listening
3. Imaginative Play
4. Limit Setting

What is EMDR?

- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing
- 8 phase protocol
 - History Taking
 - Resourcing
 - Assessment
 - Desensitization
 - Installation
 - Body Scan
 - Closure
- Phase 4 uses bilateral stimulation (BLS) to desensitize and reprocess the traumatic event
- BLS: eye movement, tapping, butterfly hug, buzzies, stomping, etc



How do they intersect?

Costumes!

Using your
body!

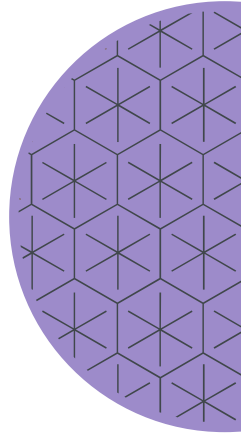
Storytelling!

Toys!

Metaphors!

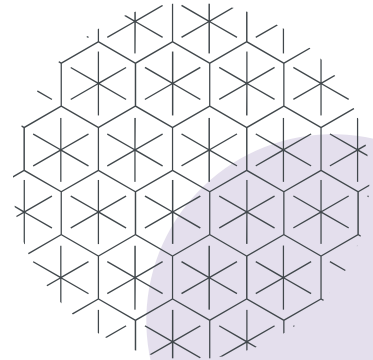
Mark

- Car accident
- Trouble sleeping and did not want to sleep alone, waking up with nightmares but could not explain them



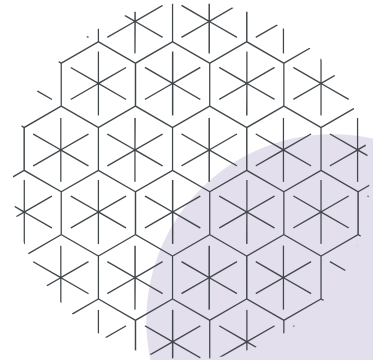
Flash Technique

- Developed by Dr. Philip Mansfield to use during the assessment phase of EMDR
- Client is asked to identify the traumatic incident and give it a SUDs rating
- Client is then asked to think of a person, pet, memory, or event that brings up a positive experience (Positive Engaging Focus)
- Bilateral stimulation is used while thinking about the PEF
- Client is told to blink three times quickly when therapist says “flash”
- At the end of 5 or 6 sets, SUD rating is taken again
- Over 900 studies have been done on the Flash Technique and ZERO have shown an increase in distress



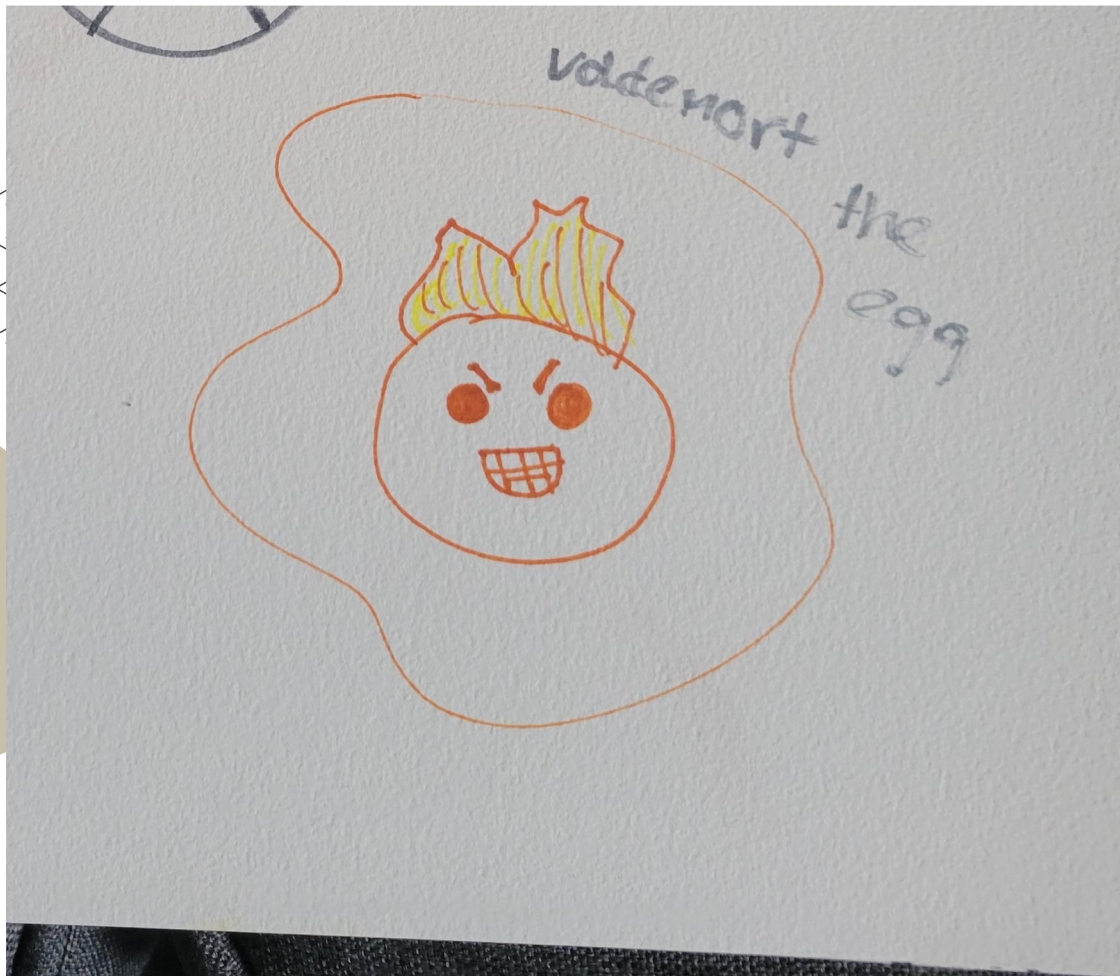
Julie

- Living with paternal grandmother, mother has SUD, father is deceased
- Witnessed physical altercation between mother and grandmother
- Struggled with attachment, highly dysregulated whenever startled
- Dinosaur Hunt!



Savannah

- Severe food allergy
- Panic and extreme fear around food that she did not see prepared
- Unable to eat with friends or away from her parents
- Very well resourced, unnecessary to do resourcing formally



Resources

- [emdr.com](https://www.emdr.com)
- [emdria.org](https://www.emdria.org)
- [Flashtechnique.com](https://www.flashtechnique.com)
- Ana Gomez: [anagomez.org](https://www.anagomez.org)
 - Dark, Bad Day, Go Away
 - The Thought Kit for Kids
- Sandra Paulson: [paulsonpsychology.com](https://www.paulsonpsychology.com)
 - When There Are No Words
 - The Many Colors of Me
- A Terrible Thing Happened by Margaret M. Holmes
- Brave Bart by Caroline H. Sheppard