

Everyone Can Benefit From EMDR Therapy at



By Kelly O'Horo, LPC, Founder of Infinite Healing and Wellness



My Experience With EMDR Therapy

New Year's Eve 2017 was extremely traumatic for me. I was rushed to hospital with appendicitis. The whole experience was one of the worst in my entire life. It stems back to when I was eight years old and went to girl's camp. I was woken up in the middle of the night by one of my friends screaming. I got up to use the bathroom and saw her writhing around in extreme pain with the adult helpers all around her. This memory has stayed with me for 44 years. Ever since then, I had been afraid of stomach pains and was convinced that I would have whatever she had.

So on that day, my worst nightmare happened. For the following four weeks I was in pain from the surgery. I had my appendix removed laparoscopically and my anxiety went through the roof. I couldn't go out, was extremely anxious all day long, was shaking and crying. I completely lost my appetite and lost 22 pounds. I even got to the point where I didn't want to go on any more, which was very scary. I eventually saw a psychotherapist who suggested that I go and see an EMDR therapist to help me get over the trauma of the surgery. I had never heard of EMDR, so I went home and researched it. My psychotherapist also gave me a list of EMDR therapists who I researched. I chose Deana Charter from Infinite Healing and Wellness and booked an appointment.

I was extremely skeptical to say the least, but I thought I didn't have anything to lose. My first appointment with Deana was basically the "get to know you" phase. I explained everything that I had been going through and she explained what EMDR was about. I then had my first EMDR session a few days later, which lasted two hours. I think I experienced an absolute miracle. I came out of that session feeling like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I felt elated. I still don't know exactly how it works, but it worked for me! I had another session two days later, another two hours. This time the experience was very traumatic. I did a lot of crying and was extremely upset, but at the end of the session, I was surprisingly calm. The following day I woke up feeling happy, which I hadn't for a long time.

I had a total of nine hours of EMDR therapy, and it's the best thing I have ever done. It has turned my life around. My appetite returned and I'm eating again and gaining some of the weight I lost. I'm actually able to go out to the shops again and am no longer scared. I am now the person that I always wanted to be. I'm enjoying life once more.

Counseling is the classroom for the "life stuff" that we did not learn correctly from our parents or primary caregivers. It's not always about having a bad childhood; it's about unlearning the things we had to learn at the time to navigate our family systems that are no longer necessary. Our parents learned from their parents, and I have yet to meet perfect parents. We adapt to be like them or we tip the scale in the opposite direction, making different errors. I believe that most of the time, they all did the best they could with what they knew, but a lot of the times it wasn't enough to prevent their children from having symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD. The truth is, "we don't know what we don't know." As a trauma expert, and spokesperson for EMDR therapy, I have the privilege of explaining adaptation to my clients so that they really understand why they show up today the way they do, thus providing insight to change their futures for the better. The cause-and-effect cycle of less-than-nurturing parenting, any type of abandonment, or any life-threatening experience, likely created a response that is used for the rest of their life, even when the event is long over and the person has reached adulthood. There is a good reason for this, and I'd like to explain through the eyes of an amalgamation of clients with whom I have had the honor to walk alongside for part of their healing journey.



Meet Jeff, a successful lawyer and father of two with a beautiful, loving wife. He volunteers for nearly every event for his children, takes on more than his share of work at the firm, continues to take classes at night, and still can't assert himself with his parents. He is struck by the injustice when his efforts go unnoticed and is angry when he does not get praised and credit for his tireless efforts. He works himself to death, his self-care is compromised, and he feels as though "every waking hour is spent doing things for others." He feels guilty about this because he wants to be the father that shows up for his kids, as his never did. He can't seem to understand why his fuse is so short, he is irritable a lot, and is impatient, lashing out at his kids for over even the most minor things.

Jeff grew up the only son of an immigrant father and a mother who was the daughter of a farmer. His mother was loving but in the family system, "what his dad said goes" and "his way was the only right way." You didn't dare disagree with him. This left his mom passive, never standing up for him when he was a young boy. It was easier just to "go along and get along" so as not to "poke the bear."

This left Jeff feeling as though nothing he ever did was right or good enough and made him feel sad and anxious, which drove him to "be perfect," tirelessly trying to prove to his parents that he is worthy of their love and acceptance. Seeking his parents' approval became the primary motivator for most of his actions. The only problem was, it was never about him. His primary work in therapy is to process why his parents' approval is not necessary anymore to keep him safe and loved. His need for approval is a childhood need and as a grown up, he can give to himself the validation and love he never felt from his parents.

Now, meet Sally, the mother of four children, is married to a hardworking accountant. They participate in a religion where the culture creates a lot of pressure to "be perfect" and "look like everything is just great," often leaving Sally feeling inadequate and alone. She works hard to make sure she shows up for her children, but with the financial stress of raising four kids, her husband works a lot to provide. She feels "responsible for the parenting since he is at work." He offers to help her when he gets home from work, but she regularly refuses as "it is her job." She is anxious that she is not doing enough and resentful that she does most of it without her husband's help. She does not share with her friends what it's like for her as she doesn't want to look weak to them. She says, "they don't have the problems she does, and they make everything look so easy." She compares herself to many other moms and notices comparing her kids to other kids. She even goes so far as to complete projects in school for her kids so that they are impressive. She believes her kids' accomplishments are a reflection her. Sally grew up in a family system where she was the youngest of four. Her mom was most often overwhelmed, and her dad was never home as he worked two jobs to support the family. She felt resented by her older siblings in many ways and is closer to her older sister than her mom, as "she was the one who did most of her parenting since mom's hands were full." Her father was not emotionally present at all, and her mom was easily irritated and controlling. She was more concerned that the house was clean than if her kids had enough hugs, kisses, and validation. Her mom was controlling because she felt so powerless about so many things about her life. Sally grew up believing that women were to be responsible for all parenting and men would not be emotionally available. All the emotional needs should be kept inside. Her primary adaptations are to be perfect, keep all her emotions inside, and "not need anything" because no one would be there for her if she did. Her primary work in therapy will be to let go of the belief that men can't be part of the parenting even when they work and that women who look like "they have it all together" do not really exist and we all struggle with imperfection, self-judgment, and emotional needs that go unmet as we are afraid to rely on others when we could not rely on our parents. Her primary negative belief is "I can't count on anyone."



Welcome to the classroom of life stuff

In both cases, there are prominent features of perfectionism, creating anxiety, sadness, and aloneness that lead to depression. Over time, if the feelings and experiences aren't acknowledged, the symptoms can become pervasive and worsen.

Did you feel a connection with Jeff or Sally or recognize similarities in their story and yours? When we talk about our stories and bring life to our emotional experiences, we can become

empowered to rewrite our endings. With EMDR Therapy we can address the physiology of our stored traumas, leaving us free to show up like the adults we were really meant to be without the "baggage" from our childhoods.

At Infinite Healing and Wellness we are all extensively trained in EMDR Therapy, which is one of the two treatments for trauma recognized by the World Health Organization. EMDR Therapy, as defined by the EMDR Institute is explained on the next page:

What is EMDR?

“Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a comprehensive, integrative psychotherapy approach. It contains elements of many effective psychotherapies in structured protocols that are designed to maximize treatment effects. These include psychodynamic, cognitive behavioral, interpersonal, experiential, and body-centered therapies.

EMDR is an information processing therapy and uses an eight-phase approach to address the experiential contributors of a wide range of pathologies. It attends to the past experiences that have set the groundwork for pathology; the current situations that trigger dysfunctional emotions, beliefs, and sensations; and the positive experience needed to enhance future adaptive behaviors and mental health.

During treatment, various procedures and protocols are used to address the entire clinical picture. One of the procedural elements is “dual stimulation” using either bilateral eye movements, tones, or taps. During the reprocessing phases, the client attends momentarily to past memories, present triggers, or anticipated future experiences while simultaneously focusing on a set of external stimulus. During that time, clients generally experience the emergence of insight, changes in memories, or new associations. The clinician assists the client to focus on appropriate material before initiation of each subsequent set.”

If you would like to learn more about how to embrace your story, please join us for an upcoming Daring Way Workshop, based on Brene Brown’s research and her book, *Daring Greatly!* Facilitated by Kelly O’Horo, Certified in the Daring Way.

Kelly O’Horo

I believe in lifelong learning and understand that we all are just doing the best we can with what we know! Formerly a teacher, I am able to assist with the education that must take place in order to better see the adaptive patterns present in your life. The process is about learning, then unlearning, and relearning something more



helpful! Each person is unique, and I will work to provide a nurturing atmosphere to help you facilitate healing, strength, accountability, forgiveness, and boundary setting, allowing you to experience “limitless opportunity for growth.”

Kelly O’Horo is a Licensed Professional Counselor, EMDR facilitator, approved consultant, certified EMDR clinician, certified Daring Way facilitator, and Emotion-Focused Couples Therapist. She is the founder of Infinite Healing and Wellness with specialized training in attachment and trauma. She can be reached by email at: Kelly@infinitehw.com.

The Infinite Healing and Wellness Team: Located in Gilbert, Infinite Healing and Wellness is a practice dedicated to providing comprehensive treatment to address various mental health concerns. From intake to treatment completion, our clients feel that they are valued, become empowered and know that they are cared for by our team. The benefits clients gain are immeasurable. When a person heals from trauma, gains healthy coping skills, improves communication, and learns healthy ways to adapt to stressful life circumstances, the person’s life is not all that improves. All of those who come in to contact with someone who has resolved maladaptive ways of living and interacting benefit, thus improving families, work environments, neighborhoods, and ultimately society in general.

The clinicians at Infinite Healing and Wellness are ready to assist. Learn about our incredible team, upcoming groups, and follow our positive and encouraging Instagram and Facebook pages. Infinite Healing and Wellness LLC, is a collaborative counseling practice designed to serve children, families, teens, adults, couples, first responders, and military veterans.



Infinite Healing and Wellness LLC is located at 2563 S. Val Vista Drive #108, in Gilbert. Contact them at 480-488-1076 or on the web at Infinitehealingandwellness.com.