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Awake Mind EMDR Newsletter Summer 2012



Dear Julie,

This quarterly newsletter looks at some interesting research and potential treatment issues related to **EMDR and dementia**.

Many of you already know Norman Doidge's book "*The Brain that Changes Itself*". I highly recommend it regarding neuroplasticity of the aging brain ([link to Amazon](#)).

Please note that my **new work phone number is 303-641-4997**. Thanks.

Happy Summer!
Julie Greene

EMDR and Dementia Summary

In years past, when asked about using EMDR with symptoms of dementia, I said that EMDR is unlikely to be helpful with this type of organic brain disease. Recent advances are showing otherwise.

On the brain research front, James Kowal (2008) shows that qEEG's of PTSD and dementia look alike (slow wave movement in the occipital lobe). Research with military vets conclude that those diagnosed with PTSD were twice as likely to develop dementia (Yaffe, 2010). And clinicians are finding that when dementia is related to traumatic memories, treatment with EMDR has positive outcomes.



Research & Publications

- Yaffe, K. et al. (2010). **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Risk of Dementia Among US Veterans**. Arch Gen Psychiatry, 67(6):608-613. ([Link to free article](#))

A retrospective study of 181,093 military veterans showed that those diagnosed as having PTSD were at a nearly 2-fold-higher risk of developing dementia compared with those without PTSD. Mechanisms linking these important disorders need to be identified with the hope of finding ways to reduce the increased risk of dementia associated with PTSD.

- O'Shea, K., Goeller, J. & Goeller, G. (2010). **A wounded mind?** Paper presented at the 25th Annual Alzheimer's Conference, Seattle, Washington. ([Link to free PDF](#))

A presentation by Katie O'Shea discusses: (1) Is learning more important in the treatment of Alzheimer's than we've thought?; (2) The impact of trauma, the importance of beliefs, the role of emotion, and how trauma processing might benefit those with Alzheimer's and their caretakers.

- Tamaki, A. and Masaya, I. (2009). **Treatment of behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD) with EMDR**. Japanese Journal of EMDR Research and Practice, 1(1),



24-33.

Two cases of BPSD believed to be caused by traumatic memories and treated by EMDR are discussed: the first with a 67-year-old female patient suffering from early-onset Alzheimer's disease, and the second with an 85-year-old male patient suffering from vascular dementia. As a result of processing traumatic memories with EMDR, the female patient's chronic cursing decreases and she smiles more often, and the male patient's restlessness and loud voice are drastically reduced. These results indicate EMDR as an effective psychotherapy for some BPSD cases which are caused by traumatic memories.

- Kowal, J. (2008). **QEEG analysis of EMDR in the treatment of childhood trauma.** Paper presented at the EMDRIA Conference, Phoenix, AZ.

Quantitative electroencephalogram (qEEG) of patients with PTSD that reveals high amplitude low frequencies in the posterior region of the brain. After EMDR treatment there is a marked improvement in the brain wave abnormalities. Analyzing the brain patterns of various psychological disorders reveals similarity in brain wave activity that interferes with memory.

- Hyer, L. (1995). **Use of EMDR in a "dementing" PTSD survivor.** Clinical Gerontologist: The Journal of Aging and Mental Health, Vol 16(1), 70-73.

Presents a case study of a 72-yr-old woman with dementia to examine the usefulness of EMDR in treating PTSD in "dementing" elderly. Prior to treatment the client had symptoms of PTSD, depression, anxiety, and borderline dementia. After 3 sessions of EMDR, significant improvement was seen in the client.

Mindfulness, Meditation & EMDR

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