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Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry

Volume 20, Issue 3, September 1989, Pages 211-217

Eye movement desensitization: A new treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/0005-7916\(89\)90025-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0005-7916(89)90025-6)

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Abstract

The use of saccadic eye movements for treating post-traumatic stress disorder is described. The procedure involves eliciting from clients sequences of large-magnitude, rhythmic saccadic eye movements while holding in mind the most salient aspect of a traumatic memory. This results in (1) a lasting reduction of anxiety, (2) changes in the cognitive assessment of the memory, and (3) cessation of flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, and sleep disturbances. The procedure can be extremely effective in only one session, as indicated by a previous controlled study and a case history presented here. It does not require a hierarchical approach, as in desensitization, or the elicitation of disturbingly high levels of anxiety over a prolonged period of time, as in flooding. Some speculations are offered concerning the basis for the effectiveness of the procedure.



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repels.

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