



Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

How Processing Trauma Can Help Your Loved One Heal

What is EMDR?

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a structured, evidence-based psychotherapy designed to help individuals process and resolve traumatic memories that drive distress and destructive behavior. It uses bilateral stimulation (typically guided eye movements) while the client focuses on a disturbing memory, allowing the brain to reprocess what has become stuck, reducing its emotional charge and its power to fuel ongoing relapse.

How It Works: The Four Phases of EMDR

- 1) Stabilize and Prepare**
Build coping skills and emotional stability before trauma processing begins.
- 2) Identify the Target**
Pinpoint specific traumatic memories and their associated negative beliefs.
- 3) Reprocess with Bilateral Stimulation**
Use guided eye movements to reduce the emotional charge of traumatic memories.
- 4) Install and Integrate**
Replace distorted beliefs with adaptive perspectives and verify physical resolution.

Goals of EMDR

- Process traumatic memories fueling addiction and destructive behavior
- Reduce emotional reactivity tied to past experience
- Replace negative self-beliefs with new perspectives
- Develop tolerance for distress without substances
- Build psychological stability that supports lasting behavioral change

Therapeutic Benefits

- Reduced trauma symptoms, including intrusive thoughts and nightmares
- Decreased cravings linked to past experiences
- Emotional regulation and distress tolerance
- More authentic engagement in ongoing therapy
- Stronger foundation for long-lasting, sustainable recovery

EMDR is Highly Effective For Treating the Following Conditions:

- PTSD
- Anxiety Disorders
- Complex Trauma
- Substance Use Disorder
- Depression
- Phobias

EMDR at Burning Tree Ranch

Most programs introduce EMDR without completing the stabilization phases that make trauma processing safe and effective. For chronic relapsers with layered, complex trauma histories, this isn't just a limitation. Incomplete trauma processing can leave clients more destabilized, effectively increasing the risk of relapse.

Our **long-term, progress-based model** gives clinicians the time to complete every phase of EMDR as it was designed to be delivered. Clients are stabilized before trauma processing begins. They advance through reprocessing phases based on demonstrated readiness, not a discharge date. The result is genuine behavioral transformation rooted in resolved trauma.



“EMDR requires both the therapist and the client to go at the pace of the nervous system. Rushing that process is what leads to destabilization. Having months instead of weeks changes what’s actually possible in the work.”

 **Meghan Bohlman, LPC-S, LCDC, EMDR-Trained**
Executive Clinical Director, Burning Tree Ranch



Dual Diagnosis Treatment Using EMDR

EMDR has proven highly effective when integrated with other evidence-based therapies, particularly for chronic relapsers whose substance use is driven by unresolved trauma, PTSD, or mood disorders.

At Burning Tree Ranch, we integrate EMDR with CBT, individual therapy, and group modalities to create an individualized dual-diagnosis treatment plan. By addressing both trauma and addiction simultaneously, clients and families move toward lasting, sustainable sobriety.

Dual Diagnosis Defined:

The presence of **both a substance use disorder and a mental health condition** occurring together. Effective treatment for dual-diagnosis addictions must address both aspects simultaneously.



Have Other Treatment Programs Missed the Deeper Issues?

Burning Tree Ranch is the Nation's only authentic long-term treatment program for chronic relapse. Call us at (866) 287-2877 or visit us online at www.BurningTree.com.

Disclaimer: Burning Tree Ranch aims to enhance the quality of life for individuals battling substance use and mental health disorders through well-researched and professionally reviewed content. Our publications focus on the nature of behavioral health conditions, available treatments, and their outcomes. Reviewed by licensed experts, our material is informative but not a replacement for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the guidance of a licensed health provider for any medical or clinical concerns.