

Getting Ready for EMDR

A steady foundation for deeper healing



EMDR works best when you have a steady foundation under you. Before we process any painful memories, we spend time in the preparation phase: building stability, coping skills, and a sense of safety in your body. You don't need to have everything figured out to start. Building readiness is part of the work we do together.

- 1 A stable base in your life right now.**
EMDR can stir things up, so it helps to begin during a relatively steady season. If you're in the middle of a move, a job change, a financial crisis, or an unsafe relationship, we may focus on stabilizing first. If you're having thoughts of hurting yourself, please tell me. That doesn't take EMDR off the table. It means we start with safety.
- 2 Ways to take care of yourself that you actually use.**
Think about what helps when you're anxious or low. That might be a walk, a warm drink, cooking something nourishing, music, or texting a friend. If your list feels short, we'll build it together. These become your go-to supports between sessions.
- 3 Being able to come back to calm.**
EMDR sometimes brings up strong feelings. Before we begin processing, I'll teach you grounding and calming tools so you can bring yourself back to steady, both in session and on your own.
- 4 People in your corner.**
You don't have to share details, but letting a trusted friend, partner, or family member know you're doing deeper work can help. They can check in, spend time with you, or simply be there if you need to talk.
- 5 Willingness to notice what comes up.**
During EMDR, feelings, images, and body sensations may shift quickly. You don't have to explain or fix them. Noticing them and telling me what you notice is enough.
- 6 A clear head for sessions.**
Alcohol, cannabis, and other substances can dull the emotions and sensations EMDR works with. I'll ask you to avoid alcohol and recreational drugs for about two days before and after processing sessions.
- 7 One foot in the present.**
In EMDR, you look at a memory while staying anchored in the here and now, as the adult you are today rather than reliving it as if it's happening again. This is called dual awareness, and we'll practice it before processing begins.
- 8 Room in your schedule.**
Deeper work deserves some breathing room. When you can, plan a lighter schedule around sessions. Give yourself time to rest and to notice the changes as they start to unfold.

Preparing for EMDR is about you feeling safe enough to heal, not about being "perfect" first. If you're wondering whether EMDR is right for you, let's talk.