

ADAPTIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING AT A GLANCE

Adaptive Information Processing is the 'cornerstone' of EMDR – Familiarise yourself with the points below...

1. Within each person is a physiological information processing system through which new experiences and information are normally processed to an adaptive state.
2. Information is stored in memory networks that contain related thoughts, images, emotions, and sensations.
3. Memory networks are organised around the earliest related event.
4. Traumatic experiences and persistent unmet interpersonal needs during crucial periods in development can produce blockages in the capacity of the adaptive information processing system to resolve distressing or traumatic events.
5. When information stored in memory networks related to a distressing or traumatic experience is not fully processed, it gives rise to dysfunctional reactions.
6. The result of adaptive processing is learning, relief of emotional distress, and the availability of adaptive responses and understanding.
7. Information processing is facilitated by specific types of bilateral stimulation. Based on observational and experimental data, Shapiro has referred to this stimulation as bilateral stimulation (1995) and dual attention stimulation (2001).
8. Alternating, left-right, bilateral eye movements, tones, and kinaesthetic stimulation, when combined with the other specific procedural steps used in EMDR, enhance information processing.
9. Specific, focussed strategies for sufficiently stimulating access to dysfunctionally stored information (and in some cases, adaptive information) generally need to be combined with bilateral stimulation in order to produce adaptive information processing.
10. EMDR procedures foster a state of balanced or dual attention between internally accessed information and external bilateral stimulation. In this state the client experiences simultaneously the distressing memory and the present context.
11. The combination of EMDR procedures and bilateral stimulation results in decreasing the vividness of disturbing memory images and related affect, facilitating access to more adaptive information and forging new associations within and between memory networks.

Reference (from which the above is verbatim):

Dworkin, M., (2005) EMDR and the relational imperative. New York: Routledge pp223-4.

Other reference:

Shapiro, F., (2001) EMDR: Basic principles, protocols and procedures. New York: Guilford Press