

EMDR

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL SUPPORT GROUP

Newsletter

No.3 May 2024

For all comments, submissions or questions:

please email: mail@emdrwestmids.org.uk

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Letter from the chair

Hi everyone,

Feedback

This item is about feedback because a) I am trying to learn how to write a useful newsletter and b) to ask the question: can anyone learn anything effectively without feedback? It is certainly not the only way to learn but it speeds things up no end to have it. In other words, I would love some input from you to enable our committee to tailor this, and any events we might put on, to your needs. If you feel moved to do so, let us know what you need, it would be most welcome.

There is a lot of competition for attention out there so let me flag up one of the ways that feedback has enabled me to control myself that is relevant to how I work with clients and relevant to the material I shall be presenting later this year:

I was recently able to consistently lower my blood sugar levels by using the feedback from a continuous glucose monitor. I bought it myself because my diabetic nurse would only prescribe it after the damage was done (with no hope of recovery). The concept of my system learning how to cope with the changes going on and sort itself out, given the right conditions, is not part of her medical vocabulary. I think the theory she was using was one of damage prevention because she had been told that my pancreas was going to give up on me and she did not want me to die. Obviously, I could have helped her out here by accepting her offers of medication, but because I am a researcher and wanted to know if I could do it myself without any, I refused them. Her anxiety levels must have gone up, which is not the effect I tend to get in my practice. I appreciate her intention and concern but, in my experience, conditions thought impossible to heal (Medically Unexplained Symptoms, MUS) can respond to EMDR in the right hands. They not only respond but reveal the mechanism that created them in the first place. We have a window into the soul here. Do not get me wrong, insulin and other drugs have saved many lives and has made life liveable for so many, including some of my ancestors who considered it our 'family disease'. This is because there seemed to be no alternative at the time and, if you have got something that actually works and saves lives, why look further? You would have to be mad to go against the orthodoxy, yet the new orthodoxy is always based on people who went out on a limb a while ago. Thankfully the history of medicine is full of historic figures who just noticed and then tried stuff out, often only getting to the theory afterwards (eg germ theory built on 1,000s years of medical practice but then led to infection control with demonstrable results quite rapidly). It is the discoveries where theory and practice both hold up that get through. There are plenty of wonderful theories that get spoilt by an ugly fact (Thomas Henry Huxley, 1870). It needs both: theory and practice. Hopefully I can show this to be the case with EMDR and MUS later this year.

In 2 weeks I progressed from blood sugars in a state of chaos, where real damage was predicted, to relatively stable blood sugars. Working with my body and my mind to control the stress I was under and using an objective feedback measure rather than the relative and unreliable data from my feelings made this possible. It was almost as if my body was learning what to do when I provided the data, changed a few variables but then got myself out of the way. Remind you of anything?

I have been doing this with my clients and using EMDR with conditions like Chronic Pain, Meniere's disease, Migraine, Heart Attacks and even physical Brain Damage for many years (by the way, I am not a Diabetes specialist and have not worked with any) and have focussed on their own stress management theories rather than their medical treatment. It can work really well. I am not so naïve to think that what I did means that I am out of the woods, and I will become 19 again, or that I have a miracle cure for all disease, it would be easy to come a cropper over that one, but it has given me some control again over my own health, without medication, despite the suggestions to the contrary. And I would not have achieved that if I had just believed everything I was told.

So, objective feedback helps sharpen up performance and improve things. I would love it if anyone reading this has either a personal story that discusses these themes or has found similar results with any of their clients. I have a huge amount of respect for Doctors for acute conditions and I have not hesitated to use them when I needed to, but chronic or genetic conditions with a high stress component, then I am not so sure – and neither are they (I do talk to them regularly).

Do you have any succinct definitions of stress? One of mine is that it occurs 'when you want to kill someone but have to stop yourself'. Too simplistic or rooted in neurobiology? I shall publish the best ones here.

Other news

I shall be attending the EMDR Europe Annual Conference, 'Pathways to Peace', in Dublin in June. Not many of you will know that any paid-up member of EMDR UK can register and, if you want to go further in bridging our potential divide there is also a reciprocal arrangement between EMDR All-Ireland and UK whereby we in the UK can join them for €28 and have access to their resources. I do not need to remind you that Irish EMDR Practitioners know a great deal about trauma from first-hand experience, with much still to be done to get past their past.

View from the garden

My last drop-in lead to some very fruitful discussions about using, or not using, NC, PC and VOC.

This month I would like to focus on collaboration with other organisations in the West Midlands. Many of our people work with survivors of abuse, veteran's organisations or other charities where EMDR practitioners do not have much access to training monies. This makes attending conferences, workshops or even supervision difficult to afford. We would be interested in providing experienced EMDR practitioners to facilitate collaborative ventures, perhaps using your premises, at a low cost. I do have a vision of local 'chapters' around the region serving their local community or organisations. Can I bring this into being? Not on my own I can't, so if anything here strikes a chord with you, please get in touch (mail@emdrwestmids.org.uk).

I am sorry for the short notice; it can be repeated later, on the fourth Friday, if there is a demand.

I am also happy to talk individually to anyone who would like to discuss anything Regional Support Group, just email me with your questions, cases or comments:

chair.emdrwestmids@gmail.com).

Planned Events:

A view from the garden: Chair's drop-in Zoom meeting to answer questions and listen to your suggestions. This is your opportunity to tune in to what is happening with our Regional Support Group, ask questions about any of the technical aspects of EMDR and share what you are finding in your practice. People new to EMDR are particularly welcome.

Each meeting has a starter theme for discussion, and the discussion can go anywhere EMDR, Psychological Therapy and West Midlands related.

Open to all levels of EMDR expertise and also to all Psychological therapy practitioners, including those without EMDR experience. Any questions/suggestions sent in advance are most welcome (mail@emdrwestmids.org.uk).

There is no charge for these meetings and this direct link should get you in:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9954341418?pwd=enpkdi9FU25EYlVTLzRNNGVweHdBUT09&omn=82143072473>

4pm on the second Friday of the month (except May).

These may be repeated on the 4th Friday if there is a demand – email:

chair.emdrwestmids@gmail.com

- May 3rd (first Friday)
 - *Collaboration with other services in the West Midlands*
- June 14th (second Friday)
 - *The future of EMDR Regional Support groups*
- July 12th (second Friday)
 - *EMDR developments worldwide*

There will also be a one-day hybrid workshop on ‘*How EMDR explains (and can heal) Medically Unexplained Symptoms*’ presented by myself (A Chronic Pain specialist). Date and venue (Central Birmingham) will be confirmed shortly. Expressions of interest in attending welcomed, please email us: (mail@emdrwestmids.org.uk).

Next Steps

Feel free to forward this to any professional colleagues who might be interested, especially anybody who would like to understand what EMDR is about.

I wish you all well and look forward to hearing from you or seeing you at my drop-ins.

Many regards

David Pike

Clinical and Health Psychologist

01/05/2024