

Beyond resistance. Learning from impasses, ruptures, and inadequacy in EMDR therapy

Andrew M. Leeds, Ph.D.,

Abstract

This presentation will explore experiences of clinical impasses, ruptures in the alliance, and therapist feelings of inadequacy in delivering EMDR therapy. These clinical experiences will be normalized and explored through reviews of theory, research, clinical vignettes, and small group discussions.

We will consider options when familiar strategies do not lead to clinical gains. When ruptures occur, we will consider how clinical stances impact repair of the alliance. We will explore strategies for coping with countertransference experiences of inadequacy when feelings of shame cloud reflective function. Participants will have opportunities to participate in interactive exercises to discuss their own and others' experiences of impasses, ruptures, and inadequacy.

Among these challenges are those with survivors of profound emotional neglect who may progress so slowly as to induce countertransference doubts and frustrations. Survivors of early emotional neglect struggle to tolerate and integrate current, real-life positive interpersonal experiences. These deficiencies produce and maintain profound psychological, medical, and social problems that limit their ability to progress in psychotherapy.

Particular attention will be given to the foundations and procedures of the Positive Affect Tolerance and Integration (PAT) protocol. The PAT protocol will be covered in detail. This will include providing informed consent, a three-step behavioral exercise practiced in the office and then assigned as homework. The PAT reprocessing procedural steps will be reviewed and clarified in detail. A series of case vignettes will illustrate potential challenges of implementing PAT and the potential gains from the PAT protocol.