

# **The impact of attachment in EMDR Therapy Working with the effects of emotional abuse, severe neglect and invisibility**

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The effects of emotional abuse, feeling like a burden for others or unwanted have a profound effect on the child and future adult. In early childhood, caregivers' affective signals and lack of contingent availability present a more common perceived threat to the child's development of a secure sense of self than the actual level of physical danger or risk for the child's survival. These "hidden traumas" of neglect, related to the caretakers' inability to modulate affective dysregulation, result in deactivating responses to attachment cues. Children who learn to deactivate automatic responses never develop basic abilities such as co-regulation, emotional regulation, and self-care. In addition, in some households, having needs or expressing them may be dangerous and children are neither given the chance to trust others nor themselves. Experiencing other types of additional traumatic events will complicate the picture even more.

Since children must adapt to survive, victims of severe emotional abuse and neglect must develop strategies to deal with their experiences. These survival strategies become automatic and may be difficult to identify in adults. Clients often learn to ignore their emotions and their most basic needs, which makes them feel invisible, unseen, and neglected. As adults they keep seeing themselves through the eyes of the people who have hurt them and tend to treat themselves in the same way they were treated as children.

In this workshop, participants will learn practical tools to work with the effects of early attachment disruptions and neglect, including feeling invisible, avoidance, distrust, and lack of self-acceptance. As therapists, modeling a new way for clients to learn look at themselves through empathy and compassion becomes crucial.

Videotaped clinical case examples will be shown.

# Program

## Day 1.

1. Relevant concepts for the therapeutic work in attachment related issues
2. The AIP Model in severe traumatization
3. Understanding the impact of attachment related difficulties in EMDR Therapy
  - a. Frequent difficulties with avoidant attachment styles
  - b. Frequent difficulties with preoccupied attachment styles
  - c. Frequent difficulties with unresolved/disorganized attachment
  - d. Examples we might encounter during different moments of therapy
4. The different faces of maltreatment and abuse
  - a. Over and covert maltreatment
  - b. Frequent problematic areas
5. The effects of attachment related issues, including severe neglect
  - a. Clinical manifestations
  - b. Frequent problematic areas

## Day 2.

6. Identifying and understanding internalized toxic messages
7. Attachment to the perpetrator
8. Difficulties with positive affect
  - a. Working with clients who get triggered when they feel good
  - b. Dysfunctional positive affect.
  - c. Working with idealization related issues
9. Attachment and Self-care
  - a. The relevance of self-care
  - b. Self-care EMDR protocol
  - c. Self-care EMDR protocol for destructive behaviors
10. The effects of being invisible
  - a. Frequent presentations
  - b. Specific procedures to work with invisibility issues

## Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to describe at least 5 difficulties related to attachment issues in EMDR Therapy
2. Participants will be able to describe overt and covert maltreatment
3. Participants will be able to describe at least 4 procedures for the treatment of attachment related issues with EMDR Therapy
4. Participants will be able to describe diverse difficulties with positive affect, including dysfunctional positive affect and how to work with it
5. Participants will be able to describe at least 4 complicated issues around severe neglect and invisibility