



EMDR With Couples The SAFE Approach

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What is the SAFE Approach?

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What is the SAFE Approach?

Safety and attachment focused EMDR is an **expansion** of the original EMDR adaptive processing model.

The Principles of the SAFE Approach



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Nonviolence

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Nonviolence is acting with the awareness that we all have choices.



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Mindful Awareness

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Mindful awareness is a principle that is a practice of **seeing what is here now** and takes us out of our thinking/analyzing mind.



Creates an opportunity to be in the **present moment**.

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Compassion

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Compassion is most difficult to give to ourselves.



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Healthy Boundaries

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Healthy Boundaries are a result of all of the above principles.



When we see clearly, recognize where our rights begin and end and the rights of others begin and end, we are naturally honoring and creating healthy boundaries.

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All 4 Pillars are needed and they work together



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The Concepts of the SAFE Approach

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The Answer

Vulnerability

The Answer is the main concept that we use in the SAFE and EMDR approach.

Our Answers are created by the following:

- Genetic makeup or predisposition
- Bootcamp or early developmental environment
- Experiences of trauma or overwhelm



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Vulnerability is required for true healing to occur.



Vulnerability is also what the **Answer** or the defense is an attempt to protect the vulnerability.

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- Strength
- What we do when under stress
- Our habit pattern that we have strengthened by repetition
- Our go-to-way of managing situations



The 5 C's of Working with the Answer

- Catch It
- Curiosity
- Collaborate/Celebrate
- Contacting
- Connecting



Character Types Chart

The Answer Questionnaire

Arrows Sheet

The Character Types Chart



Phase 1 History Taking EMDR with Couples

What are we doing in phase 1?

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Learning and beginning to get a treatment plan

What are current resources? (Answers)

What do they want from therapy?

What is their story?

What is needed to be prepared and developed in phase 2?

We are connecting and investigating.



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What is the Unspoken Agreement?

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Examples of Agreements

One closes
up and one
ramps up

One walks
on
eggshells
and one
blows up

What is the **cycle** they keep repeating?

This will reflect their attachment patterns.

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Understanding Regulation

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Polyvagal Theory and Couples



How to stop trying to change other people including your partner

Embodied Approach



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Assessing Repair/Missing Experience

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What is needed

Catching the experience and
savoring it

Co-creating the experience in
various stages



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Phase 2 EMDR with Couples

Preparing and Predicting

Setting the rules and creating boundaries.

Developing needed resources.

Preparing and planning for reprocessing.



We are building on what we learned in Phase 1.

What Resources are Needed?

What resources are needed for them to be safe and able to move forward to Phases 3-7?

Examples of Resources:

- The Scarf Exercise
- Without words
- Left hand Right hand
- Relational Mindfulness



Finding the Targets

We **start** with the thing that bothers them most with the partner. That is usually **the presenting issue**.



Finding the Problem Sheet





Thank You

