

## Navigating Trauma and Emotions: The Power of Brainspotting

Brain-based therapy is becoming increasingly popular for improving mental health, especially trauma issues. It's known for quickly helping with problems that could otherwise take years to handle through regular talking therapy.

Trained in psychoanalytic and EMDR, Dr. David Grand provided trauma therapy after witnessing the tragedy of 9/11 and helped hundreds of survivors. In order to recover from the burnout, he came up with a creative solution: Brainspotting. It is a therapeutic approach that aims to help individuals process and heal from trauma, emotional distress, and other psychological issues by identifying and working with "brainspots," which are specific points in a person's visual field that correlate with unresolved emotional experiences and physiological responses. Brainspotting is often used by therapists as a tool to facilitate the processing of traumatic memories and to promote emotional regulation. The approach is considered a form of somatic psychotherapy and has gained recognition in the field of mental health therapy.

The core idea of Brainspotting is that "*Where you look affects how you feel.*" When something is bothering you, your feelings can actually change based on whether you look to your right or left. Our eyes and brains are tightly connected, and as humans, we use our vision to understand our surroundings. The brain processes the signals from our eyes deeply. It then automatically adjusts where we look, constantly and naturally. The brain is like an amazing processor that takes in and organizes all our experiences. But when trauma overwhelms the brain, bits of that trauma can get stuck without being fully processed.

Brainspotting utilizes what we see to locate these stuck traumas in the brain. Just as our eyes naturally explore the outside world for information, they can also explore our inner world—our brains—for information. Brainspotting flips this exploration process inward and guides the brain to find forgotten internal information. By keeping our gaze on a particular spot outside, we help the brain focus on the exact internal spot where trauma is stored. This focus encourages deep processing, which leads to releasing and resolving the trauma.

Unlike many forms of therapy, Brainspotting is specially designed to fit seamlessly into other approaches. The human brain and body are intricate and extensive, requiring personalized understanding and responses. No single method, including Brainspotting, can fully address every client's unique situation. Brainspotting can be particularly beneficial for individuals who struggle to verbalize their traumatic experiences. Brainspotting also offers an alternative approach that doesn't rely solely on verbal communication. Individuals who find it challenging to talk about their trauma can still engage in Brainspotting by focusing on eye positions and allowing their emotions and memories to emerge. This visual and sensory approach provides a nonverbal avenue for processing trauma, allowing individuals to work through their emotions without the pressure of articulating everything verbally. The therapist's guidance and the sensory focus of Brainspotting create a safe and supportive environment for those who have difficulty discussing their trauma to still engage in effective therapeutic healing.

Moreover, the techniques of Brainspotting aren't limited to the therapist's office. They can be used by anyone outside of therapy for relaxation, improving sleep, and expanding performance and creativity. And most importantly, Brainspotting is an adaptable therapy that can be customized to various cultures and languages.

### References

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