

Medical Policy



An Independent Licensee of the
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Title: Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) for Acute Stress Disorder and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Professional

Original Effective Date: November 1, 2006
Revision Date(s): June 5, 2007
Current Effective Date: November 1, 2007

Institutional

Original Effective Date: November 1, 2007
Revision Date(s):
Current Effective Date: November 1, 2007

DESCRIPTION

Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy is a complex method of psychotherapy that combines a range of therapeutic approaches with eye movements or other forms of rhythmical stimulation (e.g., sound and touch) in ways that stimulate the brain's information processing system. Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing was introduced in 1989 as a treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Since then, it has been proposed as a treatment of various psychiatric and behavioral disorders including phobias, panic and anxiety disorders, as well as eating disorders.

POLICY

EMDR is considered a valid therapy component when provided during a psychotherapy session for Acute Stress Disorder or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

EMDR is considered experimental / investigational as a stand alone service.

CODING

CPT code 90806 should be used when EMDR is used as a therapy component provided during a psychotherapy session for Acute Stress Disorder or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. When billed on a CMS-1500 claim form, if 90899 is billed with 90806 it will be considered content of service.

CPT code 90899 should be used when EMDR is used as a stand alone service.

CPT/HCPCS

90806	Individual psychotherapy, insight oriented, behavior modifying and/or supportive, in an office or outpatient facility, approximately 45 to 50 minutes face-to-face with the patient
90899	Unlisted psychiatric service or procedure

DIAGNOSIS

These diagnoses are otherwise subject to medical policy as stated above

308.3 Other acute reactions to stress
 309.81 Post traumatic stress disorder

REVISIONS

Effective 11-01-2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Converted from an experimental / investigational policy to the web policy format due to coverage changes.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy liberalized to reflect coverage for EMDR when provided during a psychotherapy session for Acute Stress Disorder or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References were updated.

REFERENCES

1. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Behavioral Health Liaison Committee, June 6, 2006.
2. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Medical Advisory Committee (MAC), August 2, 2006.
3. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Behavioral Health Liaison Committee, June 5, 2007.
4. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Medical Advisory Committee (MAC), August 2, 2007.

Government Agency; Medical Society; and Other Authoritative Publications

1. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Blue Shield Report, MAC 02-06.