

What is Brainspotting and How Does it Work?

Brainspotting is a new treatment approach which works by identifying, processing, and releasing stored negative or traumatic experiences from the brain to help affected individuals heal from within. It also promotes healing for individuals suffering from physical pain.

Brainspotting Theory

Brainspotting theory suggests that the brain can heal itself from inside. It aims to stimulate the brain's healing ability by evoking and releasing the negative emotions and experiences that have been stored in it. It does this by identifying an eye position that triggers and releases these emotions.

This procedure is based on a concept that an individual's direction of gaze can affect how they feel. It lends to the theory that the eyes have an intense relationship with the brain. Furthermore, brainspotting is based on the fact that trauma is stored in the body and can be activated or triggered at a certain eye position.

The brainspotting therapist uses a pointer to direct the gaze of people in therapy across their field of vision until an eye position is reached that activates a certain traumatic memory or emotion. This helps the therapists to assess an individual's emotions on a much deeper level and evaluate the psychological effects of a traumatic experience on an individual.

Brainspotting may be done with one or both eyes. It is performed by a trained brainspotting therapist who, moving a pointer in front of the patient's eyes, slowly guides the gaze of the person in therapy across the length of their visual field, to identify the brainspot. When the pointer comes across the brainspot, the deep brain will reflexively send signals to the therapist that a brainspot has been detected. These reflexive signals occur without the patient's knowledge and may include an eye twitch facial tic, pupillary dilation or constriction, yawns, swallows, foot movement, or coughs. However, changes in facial expressions are the strongest signals of a brainspot.

By finding the brainspot, the therapist triggers the somatosensory experiences in the patient. The therapist then tells the patient to hold that eye position while focusing on the experiences and emotions invoked. The therapist and the patient work closely to determine the brainspot. The patient lets the therapist know when he or she feels a heightened intensity during the brain scan, which corresponds to the brainspot. Over time, accessing these experiences in a safe environment in a therapy session helps the brain release the traumatic emotions and memories, and initiate a self-healing process.

Source: Depression Alliance <https://www.depressionalliance.org/brainspotting/>