

EMDR and Eating Disorders: a manualized protocol for the treatment of Anorexia Nervosa

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During the past thirty years, research on Eating Disorders has been increasing, finding links with histories of traumatic life events (Theander, 2004). In this perspective, the development of Eating Disorders is best understood as emerging from a series of emotional reactions and coping strategies (Schwartz & Gay, 1996), and as an attempt to manage overwhelming trauma-related emotions, memories, and stressors Dansky *et al.*, 1997; McFarlane, McFarlane, & Gilchrist, 1988; Root, 1991). Moreover, numerous researches emphasize the effectiveness of EMDR in the treatment of Eating Disorders, body image perception (Bloomgarden and Calogero, 2008), as well as enhancing the effectiveness of the proposed treatment and in repairing trauma (Omaha, 2000).

In the light of the above, this workshop will present an innovative EMDR protocol of intervention for Eating Disorders, particularly for Anorexia Nervosa (AN). The EMDR protocol will be illustrated through the explanation of clinical cases. Particular attention will be given to specific parts of the protocol that focus on essential notions, such as attachment relationships and dissociation of personality. In fact, attachment relationships can be traumatic and contribute to the development of maladaptive affect regulation strategies, which in turn may represent risk factors for the development of future psychopathology. We will present preliminary data from a research study conducted on a sample of 30 women with diagnosis of AN according to DSM V criteria, with the objective of evaluating the effectiveness of the EMDR therapy on AN symptomatology, compared to cognitive behavioral therapy.