

THE TREATMENT OF NEGLECT AT THE CORE OF DEPRESSION

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Childhood Neglect is associated with the emotion regulation strategies that are most strongly related to depression, like rumination and repetitive negative thinking, social avoidance, difficulties to feel emotions in the body and low persistence of positive experiences; the lack of self-compassion mediates the vulnerability to shame in interpersonal relationships. In simple words, reduced ability to feel alive and to love. The EMDR treatment may be challenging, we must apply an integrated approach. We need to process a relatively small number of crucial episodes but at deeper level, to reach the child's pain, affecting the interpretation of self, others and of the world. We must combine processing with nurturing, helping the person's adult part to take care of the child one. The key words are slowness, space, rhythm, tenderness, emphasis on receptivity and compassion. The most delicate moment, at the top of the ascent towards childhood pain, is the emergence of sadness, the feeling of loss and transformation. A hard law of life states that the basic needs of early childhood, that have not been met, can no longer be recovered, because any attention the person may receive as an adult can never compensate for them. Many of the acts of the "coercion to repeat" arise from this unresolved grief, trying to "get back" what was lost. Paradoxically, we must help the person to feel that sadness, very close to them, not hurry to go over it, supporting the mourning process. The therapist's inner setting is very important: a lot of work can be done inside, especially in those precious moments without words during Bilateral Stimulation, when we are very close to each other, physically and emotionally. We can open our receptivity to the patient's virtual image evoked inside us, containing sufferance and transforming it; we can sustain the patient's process with Loving Kindness silent intentions; we can be sensitive to the patient's human positive qualities, letting us be nurtured by them, with the Loving Presence approach. This connection with the deprived child part is one of the deepest we can have in our therapist's life; when transformation takes place, session after session, we are enriched too; we feel grateful towards the patients and our awareness of human value increases.