

# Am I Ready to Start EMDR?

## A simple readiness guide

EMDR Guide Series • Page 9 of 10



PEOPLE HEAL • LIVES CHANGE • HOPE GROWS

### Signs you may be ready



You have a therapist you trust.



You can use at least a few coping or grounding skills.



You can get back to the present when upset.



You want to work on a memory, trigger, or belief.



You feel willing to go at a steady pace.

### Reasons to slow down first



You are in immediate crisis or not safe.



You feel overwhelmed most of the time.



You need more stabilization first.



Substance use or sleep problems are making therapy hard.



You are not sure you have enough support yet.



### Questions for your therapist

- How do you decide whether someone is ready?
- What coping skills should I practice first?
- How will we handle strong reactions?
- What would tell us to slow down?



**Ready does not mean perfect.**  
**It means supported enough to begin carefully.**

#### Selected references

1. Shapiro, F. (2018). *EMDR Therapy: Basic Principles, Protocols, and Procedures*.
2. World Health Organization. (2013). *Guidelines for the Management of Conditions Specifically Related to Stress*.
3. VA/DoD. (2023). *Clinical Practice Guideline for PTSD and Acute Stress Disorder*.