



## What is Radical Exposure Tapping?

RET is a form of exposure therapy that can be used to quickly and effectively resolve memories of disturbing events that fuel PTSD, anxiety, fears, emotional reactivity and patterns of escalating conflict. RET draws from the methodology of a well-researched form of therapy called Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and combines it with the tapping sequence of the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) to produce an intervention that is more flexible than EMDR, provides greater theoretical and methodological rigor than using the EFT technique alone and can be effective in a single session.

Laurie MacKinnon developed RET by taking elements of EMDR, EFT and imagery rescripting, and combining them in a unique way. She analysed and improved her effectiveness with this new method by video recording and then reviewing dozens of RET therapy sessions. She also focussed on developing methods for teaching RET effectively to other therapists, delineating specific skills and developing protocols for therapists to use as guidelines for effective intervention.

### Why is it called Radical Exposure Tapping?

It is radical because compared to exposure therapy, reduction in distress is rapid often resolving in one session. Compared to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy CBT, change in thinking is rapid and spontaneous.

It is a form of exposure therapy because the focus is on imaginal exposure to specific disturbing memories. Tapping is used as the sensory input once the memory network is activated.

### How is Radical Exposure Tapping different from the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)?

EFT does not have a therapeutic protocol for eliciting the traumatic memory network. Radical Exposure Tapping uses the protocol developed by Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) for eliciting the memory.

EFT does not have a credible explanation of why people change. It is said that EFT works because tapping on the meridian points has an effect on the body's energy field. There is no scientific evidence to back up this claim and there are research studies that show that tapping on particular points on the body, or even tapping on the body at all, is not a necessary component of effecting change. Radical Exposure Tapping relies on the available scientific research to disprove these hypotheses and to try to understand how memories can change rapidly. The best science based explanation so far relies on theories of how memories are reconsolidated. When clients have to concentrate on two things at once – on an activated memory and on copying a complicated tapping sequence – they overload their brain's working memory which prevents reconsolidation of the traumatic memory in its same form. The result is that clients can say what happened but they no longer have the distressing feelings which had previously accompanied the memory.

### How is Radical Exposure Tapping different from EMDR?

Although most of the research done with EMDR involves eye movements, EMDR practitioners do often use other forms of sensory input such as sound, tactile vibration, and tapping. However, the distinguishing feature of EMDR is that sensory input is bilateral (i.e. both sides of the body). Research, however, has shown that is not important for tapping to be bilateral. Radical Exposure Tapping uses the tapping sequence of EFT which is not bilateral.

During the sensory input EMDR therapists are silent. During Radical Exposure Tapping, the therapist repeats back the client's words and maintains an eye contact with the client, which contributes to a strong interpersonal connection between the client and therapist.

### Will Radical Exposure Tapping work for me?

RET does not work for everyone, but it does work for many people who:

- feel upset or distressed about something that has happened
- do not want to continue to feel the upsetting feelings
- are willing to follow the therapist's directions and try something unusual
- are open to allowing themselves to ride the wave of emotion that may surface

The good thing is that RET works very fast. If it is going to work for you, it is the fast road. You will know whether it works for you because you feel the benefits early. You will achieve more in your therapy in fewer sessions.