

What To Expect in a Brainspotting Therapy Session

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Monique Porter

If you've not heard of brainspotting, check out my page on brainspotting therapy to learn a little about what brainspotting is. This post is designed to help people understand what they can expect during a brainspotting session.

What's a brainspotting therapy session like

When you first meet with a brainspotting therapist, they will initially want to learn a little about your reasons for seeking this type of therapy and the specific issues you'd like to work on. You might not do actual brainspotting your first session as your therapist gets to know more about you and the specifics of what you need help with. Once you and your therapist are ready to start working, she will ask you where in your body you will feel the most activated when discussing the specific area of concern. It's important to note here, that the key focus must be specific for best results. For example, sharing a problematic relationship between you and your parent might not be specific enough, but an actual incident between the two of you likely will get better results.

Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/sUbwAroT9po>

Working from activation

Once you've determined where in your body you feel this activation (some people report tingling sensations, pain in their stomach, tension in their shoulders, pressure on their chest, etc.) your therapist will likely ask you to rate the intensity of this sensation on a scale of 0 – 10 (10 being most intense). This gives us a baseline to work with so that we know where we started.

Working from a resource

For some people with complex trauma, working from activation might be too overwhelming. Instead, we can focus on where in your body you feel most calm or grounded while processing the specific area of concern. Your therapist will instruct you to scan your body for areas of calmness and relaxation when working from a resource.

Finding the brainspot

Once we determine if we are working from activation or a resource spot, your therapist will then assist you in finding the brainspot. She will use a pointer and scan your visual field both horizontally or vertically by moving the pointer up and down while also being attuned to unconscious cues in your facial expressions, eye movements and body movements. When

working from activation, we are looking to find the spot where you are most activated or heightened. When working from a resource spot, we are looking for the place where you feel most calm. Once the spot is located, your therapist will ask you to focus your gaze on that spot by keeping your eyes on the pointer while you process.

Your therapist can guide you to finding the brainspot

Finding the brainspot can be accomplished in 2 ways, what we call outside window or inside window. For outside window, the therapist is utilizing their own observations of your facial expressions and other non verbal cues like eye twitching, blinking and facial muscle movements to find where you are most activated or most calm for a resource spot.

You can guide your therapist to the brainspot

For inside window, you will be asked to stay focused on your sensations while the therapist scans your visual field and report which spot makes you feel most activated (or calm for a resource spot). Your therapist will ask for your input and instructions on where to move the pointer to help find a spot. If you feel unable to identify the spot or uncertain, the therapist can use outside window to help you locate the brainspot.

Music

In brainspotting therapy, bi-lateral music can help stimulate processing. It works by stimulating both sides of your brain through sound. Your therapist will likely offer you to wear headphones and play this specific type of music designed to help your brain process. This is completely optional, but can enhance the experience.

During the actual brainspotting therapy & how it is different

It is important to understand that brainspotting therapy is different than traditional talk therapy. Once the spot is located, you continue to focus on the specific area of concern while keeping your gaze focused on the pointer. Your therapist will not talk as much as might be typical in traditional talk therapy. Her job is to allow the space for your brain and body to do the work. Too much talking from the therapist can disrupt this process and interrupt your brain's processing. You can talk as much or as little as you would like during this process either keeping the processing internal or sharing verbally as things comes up. Your therapist might check in with you from time to time to see what is happening in your body. She might start to offer reflections more towards the end of the session to start to bring your awareness back to the present.

Ending the brainspotting therapy session

When it is time, she will remove the pointer, headphones if you chose to utilize the music and there will be brief processing at the conclusion of the session to see how you are feeling physically and mentally. She might offer some grounding if it is needed to help bring you back to the here and now.

Stay tuned for a post in the coming weeks on what to expect after your first brainspotting therapy session.