

## **LOOKING THROUGH THE EYES: EMDR AND EGO STATE THERAPY ACROSS THE DISSOCIATIVE CONTINUUM**

Dissociative clients present unique challenges for EMDR practitioners, who may learn the hard way that the standard protocol is not safe for complex cases, including previously undiagnosed DID. Ego state and other methods such as hypnosis and somatic therapies increase affect and soma tolerance, enable stabilization and containment, and offer essential interweaves for stuck complex processing.

Ego State Therapy was originated by Dr Jack Watkins and the late Helen Watkins. They found that giving a voice to disowned or dissociated aspects of self enabled resolution of long-standing internal conflicts. Although it is sometimes practiced with formal hypnotic induction, it need not be. Dr Paulsen uses an imaging method called Dissociative Table (George Fraser's) to access ego states. Dr Paulsen has also collaborated with Dr Watkins, presenting on EMDR and ego state therapy in several international professional venues, including the Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing International Association (EMDRIA), the American Society for Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH), the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis (SCEH) and the International Society for the Study of Dissociation. Ego state therapy typically involves identifying key parts of self engaging in internal dynamics related to resistance to change, inner conflict, self-sabotage, child-like behavior, avoidance, criticalness, and/or many other presenting problems (certainly, anxiety, depression, anger, shame, trusting others, attachment, are all on the list). Using a powerful method called dissociative table and other methods (hypnosis is sometimes used), it is possible to identify and work directly with the young parts that are mobilized around these long-standing issues. Ego state therapy honors those functions and their reason for being, hears their concerns, needs, and fears, appreciations their survival function, and when indicated, helps them update their "job description" to be more in current time. We don't get rid of parts, though they often integrate with other parts as the work progresses. This workshop reviews specific ego state and other techniques and presents them in the context of how they may be appropriately combined with EMDR while maintaining the integrity of EMDR. Paulsen's ACT-AS-IF and ARCHITECTS methods enable the integrity of EMDR to be maintained while fractionating the work and emphasizing stability and safety.