

# Practical Applications of Adult Education into EMDR Training

**EMDRIA Trainer Day**

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## Adult Learning (Chen, 2014; Arghode et al., 2017)

- Andragogy - facilitation of learning for adults
- Adult learners:
  - are self-directed
  - have an innate desire to learn
  - life experience becomes the medium through which content is learned
  - value problem-solving based learning
- Teacher is a facilitator - guide learners, co-create environment for self-directed learning

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## Theories of Adult Learning

- 3 primary learning theories (Khalil & Elkhider, 2016):
  - Behaviorism - acquiring new behavior, passive learner, teaching methods are lecture, simulation, and demonstration
  - Cognitivism - acquisition and reorganization of cognitive structures, active learner, teaching methods are problem-solving, concept mapping
  - Constructivism - search for meaning, active learner, teaching methods are reflections, problem-based learning, collaborative learning

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## Five Principles of Instruction That Promote Learning

- Learners are engaged in solving real-world problems
- Existing knowledge is activated as a foundation for new knowledge
- New knowledge is demonstrated to the learner
- New knowledge is applied by the learner
- New knowledge is integrated into the learner's world

(Khalil & Elkhider, 2016, p. 149)

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## Generational Influence on Adult Learning

- **Current US Six Generations** (Twenge, 2023):
  - Based on major events and technology, “e.g., wars, terrorist attacks, economic cycles, pandemics, natural disasters, crime waves, impactful people and other factors” (p. 16)
  - 1. Silents (1925-1945): Great Depression
  - 2. Boomers (1946-1964): Vietnam War
  - 3. Generation X (1965-1979): Fear of nuclear war
  - 4. Millennials (1980-1994): 9/11
  - 5. Generation Z (iGEN or Zoomers , 1995-2012): COVID-19
  - 6. Generation Alpha, Polars or yet to be named (2013-present)

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## Generational Influence on Adult Learning

- **Generations: Learning differences** (Twenge & Donnelly, 2016)
  - Overconfidence “leads to greater failure”: Provide more feedback to counteract overconfidence
  - Younger generations (born after 1980):
    - believe that they just need to try and receive special consideration for explaining they tried hard
    - Convenience is most important, and it cannot interfere with personal activities—leisure time is most important
    - Self-reliance is lower, but self-esteem is higher
    - Structure and precise directions are essential
    - Ambiguous instructions are stressful

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## Generational Influence on Adult Learning

- Generations: Learning differences (Twenge & Donnelly, 2016)
  - Younger generations:
    - Fewer students read books
    - Prefer doing than sitting and listening to lectures
    - Incorporating modern technology helps with learning
    - Multi-tasking is a hinderance to learning, depleting cognitive resources
    - There is no appeal to duty—they want to feel the impact they will have on the outcome—this is the selling point

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## Teaching Strategies

- Research shows the effectiveness of case material embedded in realistic presentations to motivate and accelerate acquisition of learning - learners are more interested in something that is clearly applicable to their lives (Savery & Duffy, 1995)
- This is best achieved through a problem-based learning (PBL) approach

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## Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

- Relies on the adult learning principle of active learning
- Learners are presented with real life client situations. They assume responsibility for identification of the knowledge they need to solve the problem or address the situation, and for searching and obtaining that knowledge.
- Primary skills developed with the PBL approach are critical thinking and self-directed learning
- PBL was found to be superior to traditional learning methods in enhancing learners' social and communication skills, as well as advancing their problem solving and self-learning skills (Trullas, et al., 2022).

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## Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Approach

(Altshuler & Bosch, 2003)

- Introduce cases for practice that
  - Lack sufficient detail for solving the problem
  - Have the problem change as new facts become known
  - Allow for multiple solutions
  - Have no correct answers
- Encourage collaborative construction of knowledge
  - Small group activities
  - Instructor facilitates learning versus provides answers

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## Engaging in PBL in EMDR Training

Small group exercises to foster engagement and participation – if virtual training, use breakout rooms or chatterfall :

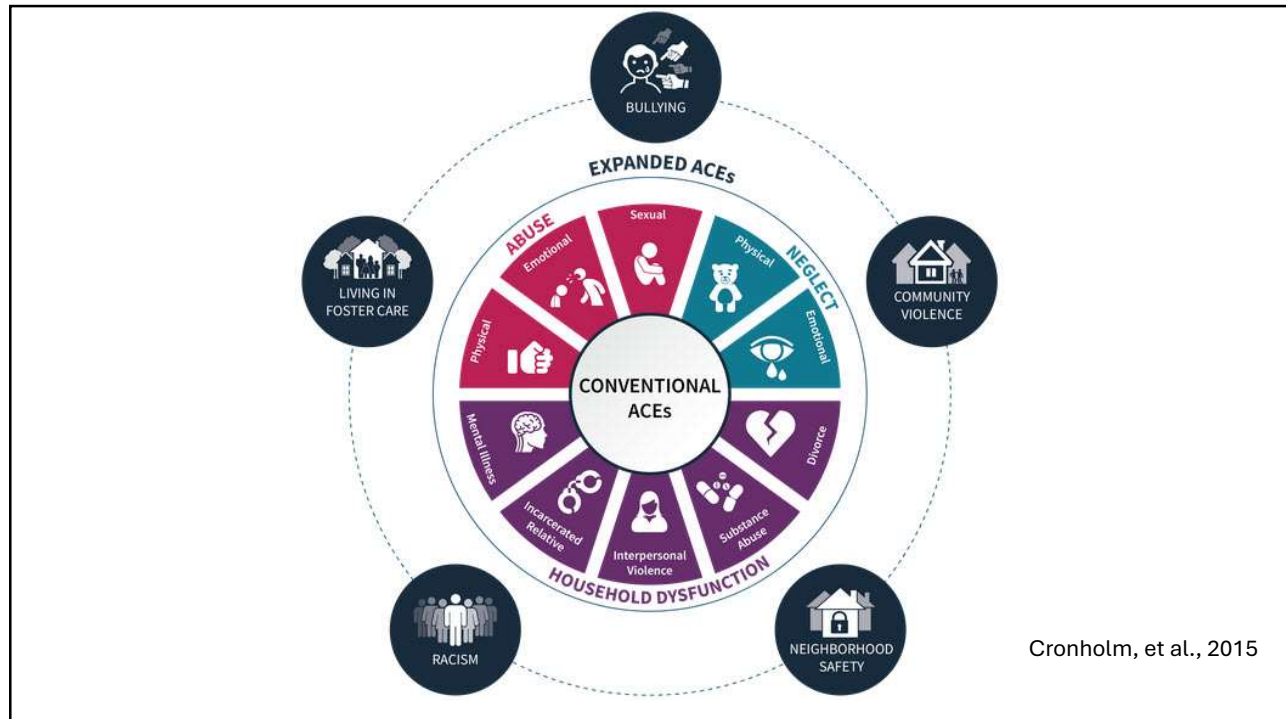
- Case conceptualization vignettes
- Cases to practice treatment planning/order of targets for reprocessing
- Cases to practice Phase 3 target assessment
- Cases to practice cognitive interweave

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## Trauma & Stress in EMDR Trainees

- It is estimated that more than half the population has at least one ACE
- Expanded ACE includes additional adversities: community violence, neighborhood safety, racism, living in foster care, bullying (see next slide)
- Gender, race, and poverty associated with higher risk for expanded ACEs (Cronholm et al.,2015)
- Chronic stress changes structure and function of hippocampus (Goldfarb, 2017)

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## Stress, Trauma, & Learning

(Buzick, 2019; Vogel & Schwabe, 2016)

- Memory encoding
  - Noradrenaline and cortisol secretion increase encoding of memory in hippocampus and amygdala
  - Stress long before encoding impairs memory formation, but stress shortly before learning new info enhances memory
- Memory retrieval
  - Stress before memory retrieval impairs recall
  - Stress impairs integration of new information into existing knowledge structures, which is essential to learning

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## Stress, Trauma, & Learning (cont.)

(Marsch et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024)

- Cognitive Load Theory - brain has a limited capacity for processing info
- Perceived high stress results in cognitive resources being used to regulate emotions
  - Increases cognitive load
  - May result in use of maladaptive coping strategies
  - Interferes with learning
- Stress lingering from one week into the next can impair learning

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## Improving Learning Outcomes

- Since we cannot control whether trainees pursue consultation after completing Basic Training, we need to focus on strategies that optimizing learning during our trainings
- Mindfulness and relaxation response techniques, as well as social support, help to mitigate stress and improve learning outcomes (Lampe & Muller-Hilke, 2021; Marsch et al., 2024)

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## Improving Learning Outcomes

- Self-Efficacy and Knowledge are not linear as they used to be
- Sense of community in-person and online makes a difference
- Learning styles matter, especially in light of younger generations
- Engage and re-engage using technology—use more interactive learning
- Using foreshadow as engagement
- Younger generations prefer less supervision but do not mind having peer review feedback

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## Intervention Strategies

- Safety and environmental culture are crucial to acceptance and empathy
- Begin each training day with a short centering exercise
- Take breaks (more frequent if virtual)
- Before beginning practicum, lead trainees through a mindfulness/relaxation response exercise
- Provide time for debrief/reflection
- Provide opportunities for peer interaction – breaks, small group activities, discussion boards on LMS

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