

cpt code for emdr therapy

cpt code for emdr therapy is a crucial element for mental health professionals who provide Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy to their patients. EMDR therapy is a specialized psychotherapy approach designed to help individuals process traumatic memories and reduce distress related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other emotional difficulties. Accurate coding using the correct CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) code is essential for billing, insurance reimbursement, and maintaining thorough clinical documentation. This article will explore the appropriate CPT codes applicable to EMDR therapy, discuss billing considerations, and provide insight into how mental health providers can efficiently navigate coding requirements. Additionally, it will cover the related procedural codes for psychotherapy and how EMDR fits within the broader landscape of therapeutic services. Understanding these coding nuances ensures compliance with healthcare regulations and optimizes financial outcomes for providers. The following sections will offer a comprehensive overview of CPT codes for EMDR therapy and related billing practices.

- Understanding CPT Codes for EMDR Therapy
- Common CPT Codes Used in EMDR Therapy
- Billing and Documentation Requirements
- Differences Between EMDR and Other Psychotherapy Codes
- Insurance Coverage and Reimbursement for EMDR Therapy

Understanding CPT Codes for EMDR Therapy

CPT codes are standardized codes developed and maintained by the American Medical Association (AMA) to describe medical, surgical, and diagnostic services accurately. These codes are widely used for insurance billing, claims processing, and medical record documentation. EMDR therapy, as a psychotherapeutic treatment method, does not have a unique, standalone CPT code explicitly labeled for it. Instead, providers use existing psychotherapy CPT codes to bill for EMDR sessions. Understanding which codes apply and how to use them correctly is fundamental for mental health professionals who want to provide EMDR therapy in a compliant and financially sustainable manner.

What is EMDR Therapy?

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a structured therapy that encourages the patient to briefly focus on the trauma memory while simultaneously experiencing bilateral stimulation (such as side-to-side eye movements). This treatment helps to reduce the emotional impact of traumatic memories. Due to its specialized nature, EMDR is often integrated into traditional psychotherapy sessions rather than being billed separately.

The Role of CPT Codes in EMDR Therapy

CPT codes serve as the language between healthcare providers and payers. For EMDR therapy, providers must select the appropriate psychotherapy codes that correspond to the type and length of the session. Since EMDR does not have a dedicated CPT code, using standard psychotherapy codes with detailed documentation ensures that the sessions are recognized and reimbursed properly.

Common CPT Codes Used in EMDR Therapy

Mental health professionals typically use psychotherapy CPT codes to bill for EMDR therapy sessions. These codes vary depending on the duration and complexity of the session. Familiarity with these codes helps providers optimize billing and avoid claim denials.

Psychotherapy CPT Codes Relevant to EMDR

- **90832** - Psychotherapy, 30 minutes with patient
- **90834** - Psychotherapy, 45 minutes with patient
- **90837** - Psychotherapy, 60 minutes with patient
- **90839** - Psychotherapy for crisis, first 60 minutes
- **90840** - Each additional 30 minutes of crisis psychotherapy

These codes are the most commonly used for EMDR therapy sessions. Providers select the code that best matches the duration and nature of the session provided. For example, a typical EMDR session lasting 45 minutes would be billed under CPT code 90834.

Additional Codes That May Apply

In some cases, other codes might be applicable based on the service context. For example, if EMDR is provided in a group therapy setting or accompanied by psychological testing, different CPT codes may be required. It is essential to understand the specific circumstances to assign the correct codes.

Billing and Documentation Requirements

Proper billing for EMDR therapy requires thorough and accurate documentation. This documentation supports the chosen CPT code and justifies the medical necessity of the treatment. Insurance companies often scrutinize psychotherapy claims, so detailed records are vital.

Key Documentation Elements

- Start and end times of the EMDR session
- Details of the therapeutic interventions used
- Patient's progress and response to EMDR treatment
- Diagnosis codes supporting the need for EMDR therapy
- Any crisis interventions, if applicable

Documenting these elements helps demonstrate compliance with payer requirements and supports reimbursement claims. Without proper documentation, payers may deny claims or request additional information, delaying payment.

Tips for Accurate Billing

Providers should:

- Use the psychotherapy CPT code that matches the session length
- Clearly indicate that the session included EMDR techniques in the clinical notes
- Include diagnosis codes that justify the use of EMDR therapy (e.g., PTSD, anxiety disorders)
- Verify payer policies regarding EMDR therapy coverage

Differences Between EMDR and Other Psychotherapy Codes

While EMDR therapy is a form of psychotherapy, it differs in technique and focus from traditional talk therapy. However, when it comes to coding, EMDR is billed under the same CPT codes as other psychotherapy services. It is important to understand the nuances to avoid confusion and ensure proper reimbursement.

EMDR vs. Traditional Psychotherapy

Traditional psychotherapy typically involves verbal processing and cognitive-behavioral techniques, whereas EMDR uses bilateral stimulation to facilitate memory processing. Despite these differences, the CPT codes for billing are uniform because CPT coding categorizes services by time and complexity rather than specific therapeutic methods.

Why There Is No Unique CPT Code for EMDR

The CPT coding system does not assign codes for specific therapeutic modalities like EMDR. Instead, it provides codes based on the nature of the service (psychotherapy) and session duration. This is because billing systems focus on service delivery rather than the specific therapeutic technique used.

Insurance Coverage and Reimbursement for EMDR Therapy

Insurance coverage for EMDR therapy depends on the payer and the clinical indication for treatment. Many insurance plans recognize EMDR as an evidence-based therapy for PTSD and other trauma-related disorders, but coverage policies may vary.

Factors Affecting Reimbursement

- Proper use of CPT codes for psychotherapy sessions
- Submission of accurate diagnosis codes
- Compliance with payer-specific documentation guidelines
- Verification of patient benefits and coverage for psychotherapy services

Providers should verify coverage policies with each insurance payer before delivering EMDR therapy to ensure services will be reimbursed. Some plans may require prior authorization or have specific limits on the number of sessions covered.

Maximizing Reimbursement for EMDR Therapy

To optimize reimbursement, mental health providers should maintain comprehensive records, use appropriate CPT and diagnosis codes, and stay informed about changes in coding guidelines and insurance policies. Training in billing procedures for psychotherapy, including EMDR, can help reduce claim denials and improve practice revenue.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the CPT code for EMDR therapy?

The most commonly used CPT code for EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) therapy is 90837 for a 60-minute psychotherapy session. Alternatively, 90834 can be used for a 45-minute session.

Is there a specific CPT code exclusively for EMDR therapy?

No, there is no specific CPT code exclusively for EMDR therapy. It is generally billed under standard psychotherapy CPT codes such as 90834 (45 minutes) or 90837 (60 minutes).

Can EMDR therapy be billed under CPT code 90834?

Yes, EMDR therapy can be billed under CPT code 90834, which covers a 45-minute psychotherapy session.

What CPT code should be used for a longer EMDR therapy session?

For longer EMDR therapy sessions lasting approximately 60 minutes, CPT code 90837 is typically used.

Are there any add-on CPT codes used with EMDR therapy?

Yes, add-on codes like 90785 for interactive complexity can be used if applicable, but EMDR therapy itself is billed under standard psychotherapy codes.

Can EMDR therapy be billed as group therapy using CPT codes?

EMDR therapy is typically provided individually and billed with individual psychotherapy codes. Group therapy has different codes such as 90853, but EMDR is rarely conducted in group settings.

Does insurance typically cover EMDR therapy using these CPT codes?

Many insurance companies cover EMDR therapy when billed under standard psychotherapy codes like 90834 or 90837, but coverage can vary depending on the insurer and plan.

How do you document EMDR therapy when billing with CPT codes?

Documentation should include the psychotherapy provided, duration of the session, and clinical notes supporting the use of EMDR techniques consistent with psychotherapy billing guidelines.

Can CPT codes for EMDR therapy be used for telehealth sessions?

Yes, CPT codes 90834 and 90837 can be used for EMDR therapy conducted via telehealth, following payer-specific telehealth billing guidelines and modifiers.

What is the difference between CPT codes 90834 and 90837 for EMDR therapy?

CPT code 90834 is used for psychotherapy sessions lasting approximately 45 minutes, while 90837 is for sessions lasting approximately 60 minutes. The choice depends on the session length during EMDR therapy.

Additional Resources

1. *Understanding CPT Codes for EMDR Therapy: A Practical Guide*

This book offers a comprehensive overview of the most relevant CPT codes used in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy. It breaks down coding procedures for billing and documentation, making it easier for therapists to navigate insurance requirements. The guide is ideal for both new and experienced clinicians seeking clarity on EMDR-specific coding.

2. *EMDR Therapy Billing and Coding Essentials*

Focused specifically on the intersection of EMDR therapy and medical billing, this book provides detailed explanations of CPT codes, modifiers, and common billing challenges. It includes case examples and tips for minimizing claim denials. Therapists and billing specialists will find it an invaluable resource for accurate and efficient reimbursement.

3. *The CPT Coding Handbook for EMDR Clinicians*

Tailored for mental health professionals, this handbook simplifies the complex world of CPT coding related to EMDR therapy sessions. It outlines which codes to use in various therapeutic contexts, along with guidelines for session documentation. Helpful for clinicians aiming to optimize their practice management and compliance.

4. *Mastering EMDR Therapy Documentation and CPT Coding*

This resource emphasizes the importance of thorough documentation in EMDR therapy alongside correct CPT code application. It offers strategies for recording therapy progress and linking it to appropriate billing codes. The book is especially useful for therapists wanting to improve both clinical and administrative accuracy.

5. *Insurance and CPT Codes: Navigating EMDR Therapy Claims*

A guide designed to help EMDR therapists understand insurance policies and how CPT codes affect claim approvals. It provides insights into common pitfalls and how to address insurance questions related to EMDR treatments. This book is a must-read for those dealing with complex reimbursement environments.

6. *CPT Coding Strategies for Trauma Therapists Using EMDR*

This book focuses on CPT coding from the perspective of trauma specialists employing EMDR therapy. It discusses specific codes for trauma-related interventions and offers advice on coding multi-modal treatment plans. A valuable tool for improving billing accuracy in trauma-focused clinical settings.

7. *EMDR Therapy and CPT Codes: A Beginner's Handbook*

Perfect for clinicians new to EMDR therapy or coding, this handbook introduces the fundamental CPT codes relevant to EMDR practice. It explains coding concepts in straightforward language and provides sample billing scenarios. An excellent starting point for therapists building their billing knowledge.

8. *Effective Use of CPT Codes in EMDR Clinical Practice*

This book explores the practical application of CPT codes in day-to-day EMDR therapy, emphasizing efficiency and compliance. It includes checklists and coding flowcharts to aid therapists in selecting the correct codes. The text supports clinicians in streamlining their billing processes without sacrificing accuracy.

9. *Advanced CPT Coding for EMDR Therapy Professionals*

Targeting advanced practitioners and billing experts, this book delves into complex CPT coding situations encountered in EMDR therapy. It covers code bundling, modifier usage, and audit preparation, helping clinicians and administrators tackle challenging billing scenarios. A comprehensive resource for maximizing reimbursement and reducing errors.

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cpt code for emdr therapy: Essentials Of Private Practice Holly A Hunt, 2005 Hunt, a psychologist in private practice, outlines strategies that will help mental health professionals establish and maintain their private practices. She guides readers through fundamental issues, from choosing an office to dealing with insurance carriers. The strategies presented involve reducing overhead, streamlining routine procedures, and implementing efficient client policies. Annotation : 2004 Book News, Inc., Portland, OR (booknews.com).

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cpt code for emdr therapy: Handbook of Clinical QEEG and Neurotherapy Thomas F Collura, Jon A. Frederick, 2016-11-03 This book is an essential resource describing a wide range of approaches and technologies in the areas of quantitative EEG (QEEG) and neurotherapy including neurofeedback and neuromodulation approaches. It emphasizes practical, clinically useful methods, reported by experienced clinicians who have developed and used these approaches first hand. These chapters describe how the authors approach and use their particular combinations of technology, and how clients are evaluated and treated. This resource, which is encyclopedic in scope, provides a valuable and broad, yet sufficiently detailed account, to help clinicians guide the future directions in client assessment and neurotherapeutic treatment. Each contribution includes literature citations,

practical information related to clinical interventions, and clinical outcome information.

cpt code for emdr therapy: Fundamentals of the Science and Treatment of Psychological Disorders, with eBook Access Code Sheri L. Johnson, Ann M. Kring, 2025-10-21 A REFINED, FOCUSED APPROACH TO LEARNING PSYCHOPATHOLOGY Adapted from the 16th edition of Kring and Johnson's popular text, *The Science and Treatment of Psychological Disorders*, this Fundamentals version offers a streamlined textbook that maintains the strengths of the traditional text. Johnson and Kring continue to bring to light cutting-edge research, which they balance against clinical understanding. Throughout, they strive to provide clear prose, helpful examples of clinical cases to illustrate symptoms and treatments, and up-to-date scientific coverage of issues that are front and center in current media such as opioids and vaping, and digital mental health. With a shorter, more focused text, the authors give learners a solid foundation in psychopathology. They emphasize an integrative approach, showing how psychopathology is best understood by considering multiple perspectives—biological, cognitive, behavioral, and socio-emotional—and how these varying perspectives can provide us with the clearest accounting of the causes of these disorders. For each disorder, they provide learners with an understanding of the best supported biological and psychological treatments, so that learners come away with the latest science on what “works” and for whom. Critical issues in how race, culture, and country of origin are considered. The final chapter of the book covers important legal and ethical issues in the mental health field. The importance of stigma and mental illness is discussed throughout the book—never is this more important than now when many social ills are too easily blamed on mental illness (e.g., gun violence) while we continue to warehouse people with mental illness in jails at an astonishing rate. AN INTERACTIVE, MULTIMEDIA LEARNING EXPERIENCE This textbook includes access to an interactive, multimedia e-text. Icons throughout the print book signal corresponding digital content in the e-text. Case Study Videos and Pause and Ponder Activities: A collection of fourteen 7- to 10-minute Case Study Videos presents an encompassing view of a variety of psychological disorders, featuring people experiencing these disorders and their family members describing symptoms from their own perspective. In addition, each video provides concise information about the available treatment options and commentary from a mental health professional. Each video is presented in the context of a Pause and Ponder activity with the following elements: Part I: Pause: Readers are asked to read several short examples of everyday life situations facing a person, or people, with a particular disorder and assess their own ability to empathize. Part II: Learn: Readers are directed to view the Case Study Video and answer a series of questions with interactive self-scoring. Part III: Ponder: Finally, readers are asked to respond to one or more open-ended questions and to reassess their ability to empathize. Concept and Topic Videos: In early chapters, short videos complement the reading with broad overviews of important concepts like the scientific method, the importance of reliability and validity in research, etc. In later chapters, these short videos are designed to draw students in and provide a general overview of the disorders and treatments they will read about and study. Instructor's Resources include brief, open-ended question sets for use with these videos that ask questions to stimulate students' curiosity like “What did the video confirm about your prior understanding of...? What did the video challenge about your prior understanding of...? Did anything surprise you, if so, what? What are you curious to learn more about concerning...?” Interactive Figures, Charts & Tables: Appearing throughout the enhanced e-text, interactive figures, process diagrams, and tables facilitate the study of complex concepts and processes and help students retain important information. Even many of the simplest figures are interactive to encourage online readers to pause and absorb the information they present before scrolling on to additional reading. Interactive Self-Scoring Check Your Knowledge Questions and Practice Quizzes: Students can check their answers to the Check Your Knowledge questions at the end of each major chapter section instantly, and each chapter includes a self-scoring Practice Quiz to help prepare for graded assignments and exams.

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depending on their recent work history and current income and assets. Disabled workers might also receive benefits from other public programs such as workers' compensation, which insures against work-related illness or injuries occurring on the job, but those other programs have their own definitions and eligibility criteria. Selected Health Conditions and Likelihood of Improvement with Treatment identifies and defines the professionally accepted, standard measurements of outcomes improvement for medical conditions. This report also identifies specific, long-lasting medical conditions for adults in the categories of mental health disorders, cancers, and musculoskeletal disorders. Specifically, these conditions are disabling for a length of time, but typically don't result in permanently disabling limitations; are responsive to treatment; and after a specific length of time of treatment, improve to the point at which the conditions are no longer disabling.

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cpt code for emdr therapy: Healing Addiction EMDR Therapy Jamie Marich, Stephen Dansiger, 2021-08-09 There are just so many things that I love about this book that I simply don't know where to begin! Marich and Dansiger take an approach that is comprehensive, integrative, relational, and deeply hopeful. They share their wisdom and lived experience as skilled clinicians AND as vulnerable human beings who themselves have struggled with addiction, benefiting in profound ways from EMDR therapy... - Deborah Korn, Psy.D. Co-Author of Every Memory Deserves Respect: EMDR The Proven Trauma Therapy with the Power to Heal This must-read volume, offers clinicians a road map to navigate the often convoluted and intricate journey of accompanying clients suffering the aftermath of trauma and addictions. Clinicians will find in this book the guidance, foundational and advanced skills, as well as an incredibly rich repertoire of stabilization strategies... - Ana M. Gomez, MC, LPC Author of EMDR Therapy and Adjunct Approaches with Children: Complex Trauma, Attachment and Dissociation Healing Addiction with EMDR is tailored to support therapists along the different phases of EMDR Therapy. It focuses on understanding each individual case,

through case conceptualization and treatment planning, and avoiding the simplistic ;What protocol should we use? question. People need to be understood as individual beings since this is the essence of EMDR Therapy... - Dolores Mosquera, Co-Author of EMDR and Dissociation: The Progressive Approach INTRA-TP, A Coruña, Spain Offers a holistic, comprehensive approach to addiction treatment that combines standard EMDR therapy with specialty protocols This innovative and brand new EMDR therapy guide for healing addiction is the first book to underscore the efficacy of EMDR therapy as a primary modality for treating trauma and addiction. Targeting the trauma lurking beneath the addiction, the resource presents a comprehensive collection of best practices and strategies for using EMDR therapy to treat addictive disorders, and guides practitioners in incorporating their protocols of choice into EMDR treatment. While illuminating underlying theory, the book focuses on practice knowledge and how therapists can translate this knowledge into clinical settings in order to provide clinicians with a fully-integrated approach to the diagnosis, treatment, and management of addiction across populations Written in user-friendly language by two prominent practitioners and trainers of EMDR therapy, the book helps therapists to address the complexity of addictive disorders by providing a comprehensive guide to the standard eight-phase protocol and adaptive information processing model as groundwork for case conceptualization and treatment. Chapters contain case studies with commentary on relevant decision-making points along with discussion questions to enhance critical thinking. Abundant "Tips and Tricks" learned in the trenches make the text come alive with clinical relevance, and references to many of the best specialty protocols and strategies for treating clients suffering from addiction due to trauma, guide readers to choose the best protocol for each situation. Purchase includes digital access for use on most mobile devices or computers. Key Features: Authors' lived experience brings a wealth of real-world application Introduces the standard EMDR therapy protocol as a modality of choice for treating trauma and addiction disorders Rates popular specialty protocols for addiction and provides guidance on how to integrate them into treatment Delivers a wealth of best practices and strategies for working with clients with addiction issues Addresses effectively working with dissociation in EMDR therapy Focuses on best practice informed by a thorough review of up-to-date scholarly literature Uses abundant case studies, "Tips and Tricks from the Field" and practical exercises to reinforce knowledge

cpt code for emdr therapy: *Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy Scripted Protocols and Summary Sheets* Marilyn Luber, 2015-08-20 EMDR Therapy is a psychotherapy approach based on standard procedures and protocols. Using EMDR Therapy's standard procedures and protocols as its template, this book presents step-by-step scripts that enable new practitioners and seasoned EMDR clinicians, trainers, and consultants alike to incorporate EMDR Therapy into their case conceptualizations and treatment plans while working with patients who have issues related to trauma- and stressor-related conditions. These scripts can be put to use immediately and retain the complete integrity of EMDR Therapy by presenting the three-prong protocol (past memories, present triggers, and future templates) and the 11-step procedure essential to the standard practice of EMDR Therapy. They reinforce the specific parts, sequence, and language used to create an effective outcome, and illustrate how clinicians are using this framework to work with a variety of therapeutic difficulties and modalities while maintaining the integrity of the Adaptive Information Processing (AIP) model. This text covers the use of EMDR Therapy with such conditions as reactive attachment disorder, PTSD, acute stress disorder, and persistent complex bereavement disorder, as well as with traumatized patients with psychosis, trauma in emergency (911) telecommunicators, and compassion fatigue. Scripts and summary sheets simplify the gathering of information and ensure documentation in clients' charts in a consistent format. This facilitates quick retrieval of the essential issues and components needed by clinicians to create appropriate treatment plans and easy access to client information. Key Features: Describes how to use EMDR Therapy based on its standard procedures and protocols Addresses working with issues related to patients with trauma- and stressor-related conditions such as reactive attachment disorder, PTSD, acute stress disorder, and persistent complex bereavement Provides

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