

## **Grief and E.M.D.R.**

**Q.**

Has E.M.D.R. been successful in treating P.T.S.D. or complicated grief from loss of a child from suicide?

*Karen Schreiber, Palo Alto*

### **Dr. Shapiro responds:**

With the sudden loss of a child from any cause, a parent can be troubled by intrusive thoughts and images. Many times these include images of the deceased in pain, or the scene of death — real or imagined. The negative emotions can often involve feelings of sorrow about things the grieving person now wishes he or she could have done, or guilt about mistakes or things not done. These feelings can be overwhelming. In addition, people are often unable to remember the person at all without the intrusion of such thoughts and imagery.

E.M.D.R. therapy has been very successful in addressing these grief-related issues. In a [multi-site study published in the journal \*Research on Social Work Practice\*](#), E.M.D.R. significantly reduced symptoms more often than cognitive behavior therapy on behavioral measures, and on four of five psychosocial measures. E.M.D.R. was more efficient, inducing change at an earlier stage and requiring fewer sessions. After treatment, those who had received E.M.D.R. could remember the deceased in a positive way, without the negative emotions. The heartfelt connection was still there, but without the pain.

### **Read more from Dr. Shapiro about EMDR at:**

[http://consults.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/16/expert-answers-on-e-m-d-r/?\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&\\_r=0](http://consults.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/16/expert-answers-on-e-m-d-r/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0)

[www.emdr.com](http://www.emdr.com)