



Asociación Mexicana para Ayuda Mental en Crisis

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THE BUTTERFLY HUG

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This protocol should only be used by licensed mental health clinicians who have completed supervised EMDR training which meets EMDR Institute & EMDRIA (EMDR International Association) standards.

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The Butterfly Hug was originated and developed by Lucina Artigas, M.A., M.T. (Founder of our association), during our work performed with the survivors of Hurricane Pauline in Acapulco Mexico (1997).

For the origination and development of this technique Lucina Artigas was honored in 2000, by the EMDR International Association, with the Creative Innovation Award.

The butterfly hug is a Dual Attention Stimulation (DAS) that consists on *crossing your arms over your chest, so that with the tip of your fingers from each hand, you can touch the area that is located under the connection between the clavicle and the shoulder.*

The eyes can be closed or partially closed looking toward the tip of the nose.

Next you alternate the movement of your hands, simulating the flapping wings of a butterfly.

You breathe slowly and deeply (abdominal breathing), while you observe what is going through your mind and body (cognitions, images, sounds, odors, affect and physical sensations) without changing, repressing or judging. You can pretend as though what you are observing is like clouds passing by.

This exercise should be done for as long as the person wishes to continue.

This method could be used in various contexts, for example:

- As an anchor to install the “safe place” technique.
- To anchor positive affect, cognitions and physical sensations associated with images produced by the technique of “guided imagination”.
- During the EMDR standard protocol some clinicians have also used it with adults and children to facilitate primary processing of a fundamental traumatic memory or memories. It is thought that the control obtained by the patient/client over his/her contra lateral stimulation, may be an empowering factor that aids their retention of sense of safety while processing traumatic memories.
- During *in vivo* exposure to process the experience. In the Quiche’s region of Guatemala the persons that are witnessing the burial of their relatives, use the Butterfly Hug to be self-comforted and to cope with the experience.
- In the EMDR Integrative Group Treatment Protocol (EMDR-IGTP) used to work with children and adults who have survived traumatic events, to process primary traumatic memory or memories, including the death of family members. During this process the children and adults are under the close supervision of mental health professionals, who form the “Emotional Protection Team.”
“The Butterfly Hug has been successfully used to treat groups of traumatized children in Mexico, Nicaragua and Kosovar refugee camps” (Shapiro, 2001. Page 284. EMDR Basic Principles, Protocols, and Procedures. Second Edition).
- Use of the Butterfly Hug in session with the therapist has been seen to be clearly a self-soothing experience for many trauma-therapy clients.
- Once the patients/clients (children or adults) have learned the Butterfly Hug in session, they can be instructed to take this method with them to use between sessions, whether to modulate any disturbing affect that arises, to regroup with their Safe Place or simply to help them get to sleep more easily.
- Some professionals use this method simultaneously with their patients/clients, as an aid to prevent secondary traumatization.
- Others professionals have used this method as substitute for touching patients/clients, saying: “Please give yourself a butterfly hug for me.”
- Professionals report that they have used the BH with clients with debilitated egos because produces less abreaction than other bilateral stimulation techniques.
- In a Centro America's orphanage they tell to the children: "You can feel the love of God when you make the Butterfly Hug"

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