

Group Protocols for Children and Adults

- For children, remember the larger social system. First provide the school authorities, teachers and parents with psycho-education, giving them information about PTSD symptoms. If possible, administer the **Impact of Events Scale** to measure their level of stress and administer the **EMDR Integrative Group Treatment Protocol** to the adults to assist in their recovery.
- With parents also provide psycho-education, informing them of how to best deal with any emotional symptoms their children might show, followed by a debriefing session to receive a first hand account of the degree of suffering they had been through. Explain EMDR very briefly and ask for their consent to work with the children.
- A typical intervention is able to attend to children in groups of 10-20. One clinician leads the group while three others stand by acting as the Emotional Protection Team (they help the leader, watch the children's reactions and needs very closely, giving them support or individual attention when necessary).
- Protocols adapted to the local language and customs.
- The single session treatment with children over 7 years old includes the Basic Protocol, administering the Child's Reaction to Traumatic Event Scale (CRTES), helping them to share their experience of the flood, doing the EMDR Integrative Group Treatment Protocol and closing with the Container Bag exercise.
- With children under 7 years old -- the Basic Protocol, the Free Drawing Protocol and the Container Bag closure and the Butterfly Hug.

Basic Protocol with the Butterfly Hug and the Safe Place techniques

- The **Basic Protocol** is used to establish rapport, to help the children recognize and connect with their emotions and to teach them resources to feel safe and calm.
- To establish rapport use a puppet and play simple games, which included moving around the room to make them feel at ease.
- To recognize and connect with emotions use a puppet to express different feelings like looking sad, happy, angry, frightened, etc. which the children imitated.

- Teach the **Safe Place Exercise** to find an imaginary place where the child feels safe and comfortable and the
- Teach the **Butterfly Hug**: crossing the arms across the chest and tapping gently on the shoulders, in alternate form, like the flapping of the wings of a butterfly.

EMDR Integrative Group Treatment Protocol

- The **EMDR- IGTP** is used to reprocess the disturbing emotions related to the traumatic event.
- Teach children the **SUD Scale** with numbers for the older children and faces for the younger ones.
- This EMDR-IGTP protocol consists of four drawings: the first one (drawing A) represents the worst moment of the traumatic event. Once the drawing is completed the child is asked to write down the disturbing emotion and the SUD rating.
- While looking at the picture, the child the Butterfly Hug or taps alternately on his/her knees for about 1 minute.
- The therapist then asks for another drawing (drawing B) of “whatever comes into your head”. The procedure is repeated (write down the emotion, the SUD rating and then do taps) with this drawing, as well as with the third and fourth drawing (drawings C & D).
- The child is then asked to go back to the first drawing, or to the drawing with the highest SUD level, and rate the level of disturbance they feel at that moment on the back of the paper. Then the child is asked to draw a picture of the future and write a word or phrase that explains this drawing.

Free Drawing Protocol

This protocol is used for children under 7. The traumatic material is processed through successive drawings that express the child’s emotions.

Container Bag Protocol of emotions, adapted for older children

The Container Bag is a closure exercise, where the children throw away, in the form of scraps of coloured paper, the disturbing feelings that might still remain. The Container Bag is then punched and kicked (a form of DAS) so as get rid of these disturbing emotions.

A COMPREHENSIVE EMDR GROUP INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN AFTER A NATURAL DISASTER IN ARGENTINA

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CASE STUDY: MARIANO

Mariano is 17 and graduating from High School at the end of the year. The family left their home during the flood, except for the father, who like many others, stayed on the rooftop of his flooded house to guard it from looters.

First Intervention

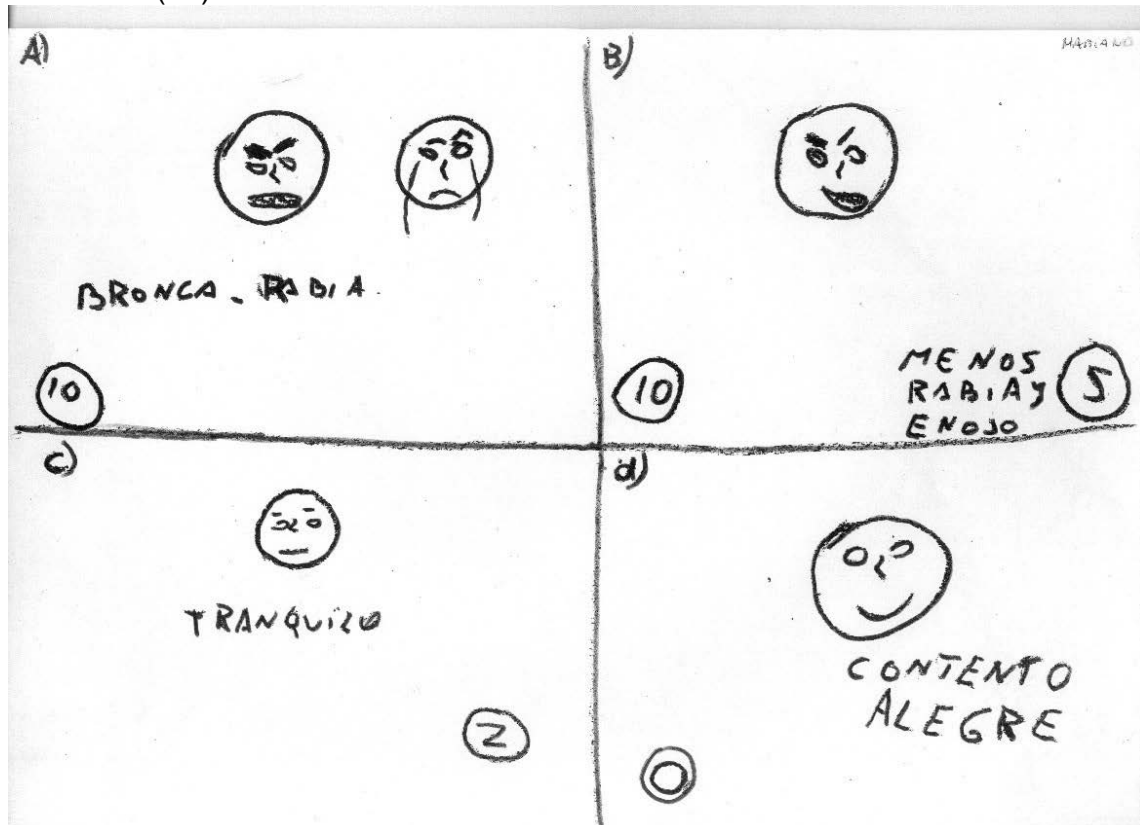
Child's Reaction to Traumatic Events Scale (CRTES: Jones, 1994)

Mariano's total score of 27 indicates a high level of distress (cut off: 19), with a higher incidence of avoidance (score 19) than intrusive (score 8) symptoms.

EMDR Integrative Group Treatment Protocol

SUD rating in the four drawings (A, B, C & D) and back to target (F)

A: 10 B: (10) - 5 C: 2 D: 0 F: 2



Drawing A: SUD = 10

Mariano declares anger and fury while drawing a face that expresses these emotions. After the Butterfly Hug (BH) he can connect with his grief and adds a sad face with tears to his original drawing.

Drawing B: SUD = (10) – 5

He again draws an angry face. The repetition of the face and the fact that he rates a SUD of 10 on the left margin of the page without waiting for the clinician's instructions, show that his processing is blocked.

A member of the EPT asks him to locate his anger in his body. He says he feels it in his hands. "I want to hit all those who didn't help". The clinician tells him to "stay with that" while doing tapping (DAS) on his shoulders. Mariano declares that his fury has diminished. He writes: "LESS ANGER AND FURY" on the right margin and rates a SUD level of 5.

Drawing C: SUD = 2

He draws a more relaxed face. After the BH, he says he feels CALM and rates a SUD level of 2.

Drawing D: SUD = 0

He draws a smiling face and after the BH declares feeling "JOY AND HAPPINESS". The SUD level is 0.

Back to target (F): SUD = 2

The clinician requests him to go back to the drawing with the highest SUD level (Drawing A) and rate the intensity of his feelings at that moment. His SUD level is 2 and he does not specify the emotion he feels. When he comes back to target his SUDS level goes up to 2 compared to drawing D (SUD= 0). This means that some traumatic material is still being reprocessed.

Drawing of the future

He draws himself as an adult with a house and family. Without being asked he writes SUD = 0 which means he has reached an adaptive resolution. His drawing shows a confident outlook with hope for the future where he has what he feared losing: a home and a family in a safe place.

Follow up three months later

Child's Reaction to Traumatic Events Scale (CRTES, Jones, 1994)

The total score went down to 8, indicating a sub-clinical level of distress, compared to his score of 27 in the first application.

The sub-scales show a slightly higher score in the intrusive (score 5) than in the avoidance (score 3) reactions.

Debriefing

Mariano comments that the first time he went back to his home he cried, his father didn't even want to go, as he had spent many nights on his rooftop and had seen very disturbing things. However he now feels that what happened is over. He goes to his club, plays rugby and is thinking of going to College next year. His mind is on the future; the flood is a thing of the past.