

BUTTERFLY PROTOCOL

Shula Brin, an EMDR facilitator, sent in her version of the butterfly protocol to our journal. The butterfly hug was first developed as a self-soothing technique by Lucy Artigas in 1997, while she was working in Acapulco with groups of survivors of hurricane "Paulina". A development of the "butterfly hug" was presented at the international EMDR conference in Toronto, 2000, by Judith Boel.

You can read more about the development of the butterfly hug in an article in www.emdrportal.com.

In the butterfly hug protocol that Shula Brin presents here, she uses a technique from work with children: "the problem," "the solution," and "the bridge" between the two. Milles, J.C. & Crowley, R.J. (1986). *Therapeutic metaphors for children and the child within*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

The protocol presented here includes bilateral stimulation that Shula has added, and enables clients to describe the "path" between the problem and the solution in several stages/drawings. This protocol is suitable for individual as well as group work, with children and with adults. It also seems to work well with pregnant women with whom we tend to work more cautiously when using the standard EMDR protocol.

We'll describe the stages of the process, which will be followed by a case example.

There are 7 steps:

1. **Drawing of the Negative Cognition** (drawing no.1)
The client and therapist decide together what she wants to work on, and what the Negative Cognition is that goes with this problem. The client is then asked to draw whatever comes to mind while she focuses on the Negative Cognition.
2. **Drawing of the Positive Congition** (last drawing)
The client chooses the Positive Cognition and is then asked to draw anything that comes to mind.
3. **Preparation for the processing – the metaphor of the “path”**

The therapist tells client that there is a path which starts with the first drawing and ends with the second drawing she has done. (The metaphor of the path is a positive suggestion to perceive the problem as a path that has a beginning and an end!) The therapist lets the client know that when she starts processing, she is free to use as much paper as she likes for the drawing of the path between the first drawing and the last one . She also asks the client to let her know when she notices any changes in her physical sensations and what this is like for her.*

4. The beginning of the processing – DAS (drawing no.2)

The client looks at her drawing with the Negative Cognition, draws the first drawing of the path and gives herself a butterfly hug, or any other bilateral stimulation, such as self-tapping. The length of stimulation is approximately 10 taps. The therapist can stop her after about ten taps so that the client does not have to be busy with the counting herself.

5. Continuation of the path (drawing no.3 etc...)

The therapist asks her to continue along the path with her next drawing and then give herself a butterfly hug. The therapist asks her what she notices in her body. The client continues doing as many drawings as she needs to.

6. Closure

Frequently clients end with a new, more optimistic drawing of the Positive Cognition, which is the closure of the protocol. In this case they place their previous drawing of the Positive Cognition before the new one. The client focuses on the last drawing of the Positive Cognition and gives herself a butterfly hug.

7. Explanation of the drawings

Client is asked to explain the drawings she has done. The explanation is given at the end of the work in order not to interrupt the processing.

Shula commented on her experience: “It's really amazing how fast this tool works!

(*Yvonne Tauber suggested asking for the emotions too.)

The client's mood improves very fast. You discover how accessible person's resources can be, regardless of how bad they may be feeling.

EXAMPLE

This is a case of a bereaved father who has lost his daughter. He complains of a 'heavy feeling' and difficulty functioning.

Step 1. Drawing of the Negative Cognition.

Drawing..

N.C. "I have no motivation."

Physical Sensation: "Pressure and sadness in my chest".

Explanation of the drawing: " It's a straight line that does not curve up, that has no vitality, just aimless boredom."

Step 2. Drawing of the positive cognition.

P.C. "I have energy."

Drawing...

Stage 4. The Path.

Drawing...

Physical sensation: "I feel less pressure."

Explanation of the drawing: "I am trying to pick myself up."

Drawing...

Physical Sensation: "Improving."

Explanation of the drawing: "I'm beginning to think of my kids and my wife."

Step 5. Continuation of the path

Drawing...

Physical sensation: "I feel that my thinking is getting clearer and more focused."

Explanation of the drawing: "I thought how helpful it would be for my wife if I had more motivation, and how important my family is to me".

Drawing...

Physical sensation: "OK."

Explanation of the drawing: "It's a palm tree, it gives me a sense of strength."

At this stage, the bereaved father said that he now understood what he drew in his first drawing (the meaning of the flower under the ground in the drawing of the Positive Cognition.) He noted that he now experienced the positive cognition ("I have energy") much stronger, and with more optimism.

Step. 6 closure

Drawing..

Physical sensation: good.

Explanation of the drawing: "This is how I want to see my wife and children bloom and grow upwards." The bereaved father explained that he experienced the first drawing of the Positive Cognition as "a surge to rise up". He related to the position of the flower and said: "The flower is below the line, perhaps that's Shosh_?" (not real name) Finally he added that perhaps Shosh, his daughter of blessed memory, supports the family from below and helps them grow. This is a wonderful integration of the two drawings and an expression of his ability to derive a fruitful connection to resources from the process he has been through. This connection is likely to serve him well in his future journey.