

TREATMENT FOCUS: BRAINSPOTTING

While June 27 was PTSD Awareness Day, conversations about trauma don't have to be limited to just one day—or one diagnosis. Trauma can affect every part of our lives, and the way our brains and bodies respond to difficult experiences often extends far beyond Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

While PTSD is commonly associated with military service, it can affect anyone who has experienced or witnessed a traumatic event. Survivors of abuse, violence, accidents, medical trauma, natural disasters, childhood adversity, and many other life experiences may develop symptoms such as intrusive memories, anxiety, hypervigilance, difficulty sleeping, emotional numbness, or avoiding reminders of the traumatic event.

The good news is that effective treatments are available—and healing doesn't always have to begin with finding the "right words."

What is Brainspotting?

Brainspotting is an evidence-informed therapeutic approach developed by Dr. David Grand, whose research demonstrated the powerful connection between where we look with our eyes and how the brain and body process emotional experiences.

Many people who have experienced trauma know it isn't simply a memory—it can feel as though the experience remains "stuck" in the body. Brainspotting is based on the understanding that emotional pain, trauma, and stress are often stored in parts of the brain and nervous system that aren't always easily accessed through conversation alone.

By identifying specific eye positions, therapists help clients safely access and process those experiences while remaining grounded and supported throughout the session. Rather than focusing solely on talking through an experience, Brainspotting creates space for the brain and body to do what they were designed to do: heal.

More Than a Trauma Therapy

Although Brainspotting has become well known for helping individuals living with PTSD, it is also used to support treatment for a wide range of concerns, including:

- Anxiety and panic disorders
- Depression
- Grief and loss
- Childhood trauma and attachment wounds
- Chronic stress and burnout
- Emotional regulation difficulties
- Performance anxiety for athletes, musicians, and professionals
- Low self-esteem and negative self-beliefs

Because every person's experiences are different, Brainspotting is often integrated into a broader treatment plan alongside traditional talk therapy and other evidence-based approaches.

Understanding the Nervous System

Rachel Hemken, one of The Center's Brainspotting-trained therapists, explains it this way:

"The nervous system builds walls of protection inside of you to keep you safe; however, it does not know the difference between the then child-

hood threat and the present you who continues to feel unsafe and functions in a state of fear. The pathway to your power is exploring and understanding where the fear originated and release it."

This understanding is at the heart of Brainspotting. Our brains are incredibly effective at protecting us—but sometimes those protective responses continue long after the danger has passed. Therapy can help the nervous system recognize that what once kept us safe may no longer be necessary, creating space for healing and growth.

Brainspotting at The Center

At The Center for Counseling & Consultation, we're proud to offer Brainspotting as one of the many therapeutic approaches available to our clients.

Rachel Hemken has specialized training in Brainspotting and works with individuals experiencing trauma, PTSD, anxiety, and other emotional challenges. She is passionate about helping clients discover a path toward healing that honors their unique experiences and goals.

You Don't Have to Carry It Alone

Whether you're living with PTSD, struggling with anxiety, working through grief, or carrying the weight of experiences that still affect your daily life, healing is possible.

Seeking help is not a sign of weakness—it's an investment in your future. At The Center, we're committed to helping people move beyond survival and toward a life filled with greater hope, resilience, and healing.



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