



Storytelling Guidelines

When something traumatic has happened to your child, it may be challenging for them to share their story. Your child may have been too young to remember the incident, or it may simply be too stressful for them to talk about. The storytelling technique, originally created by Joan Lovett, can be helpful in the EMDR therapy process with your child. This technique allows you to become a storyteller who creates a narrative that your child can use to process what happened to them. The following guidelines and worksheet will help you create a narrative for your child. Your child's EMDR therapist can also support you in creating this story.

Guidelines for Creating the Story

1. The story is written prior to the EMDR session so that you can be present and focused on your child's emotional response.
2. The story is written from the perspective of your child.
3. The story is told in a fairy-tale format, in third person, with the main character having similar qualities to your child (e.g., similar age, hobbies, dislikes).
4. The story will include your best guess for your child's unhelpful thought (e.g., I am not safe, I am dumb, I am bad) and helpful thought (e.g., I am safe, I am smart, I am a good kid) for the traumatic memory.
5. The story will include a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning of the story will focus on your child's strengths. The middle of the story will include details of the traumatic event and your child's unhelpful thought. The end of the story will provide a happy ending—how your child overcame the traumatic event and the helpful thought they have now.
6. Provide your story to the EMDR therapist prior to the therapy session for possible suggestions and adjustments.
7. During the EMDR therapy session, you and your child will decide on what type of back-and-forth movement you'd like to use while you tell the story. The most commonly used back-and-forth movement is to tap on your child's

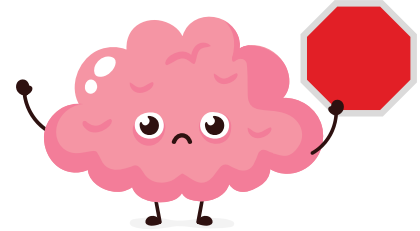


Adapted from Lovett (1999)

hands, shoulders, knees, or toes while you look at them. You can also have your child sit in your lap and use the butterfly hug. Use whatever type of back-and-forth movement is most comfortable for you and your child during the storytelling.

8. Before you begin telling the story, let your child know that the story will have a happy ending.

9. Remind your child that they may use their stop sign if they want to take a break or if they get out of their zone. You can choose to use a stop sign if you get out of your zone too!



10. There are several other techniques that can be added to enhance the storytelling technique during a joint EMDR session. For example, after you are finished sharing the story, you can ask your child what their favorite part was. If your child shares something positive, you can do additional back-and-forth movements with your child to strengthen this positive resource. You can also ask your child how they could make the story better, including what the character in the story might have been feeling or thinking. After updating the story with your child's input, you can retell the story and apply additional back-and-forth movement. You can also use toys or props in the therapy office to tell the story and do back-and-forth movement.





Storytelling Worksheet

The Beginning (This section includes your child's strengths, positive supports, and experiences.)

Once upon a time, there was a _____ named _____.
(Pick one: child, animal, or magical creature) (Different name from your child's)
_____ lived with _____.
(Main character's name) (Types of relatives your child lives with, like parents, siblings, or grandparents)
_____ was really good at _____.
(Main character's name) (Your child's strengths)
They loved to spend time _____.
(Hobbies your child enjoys)

The Middle (This section includes details about your child's traumatic experience.)

One day, a _____ thing happened to _____.
(Pick one: scary, confusing, unfair, sad, or hard-to-understand) (Main character's name)

(Describe the traumatic event using all five senses if possible)

_____ began to think _____.
(Main character's name) (Unhelpful thought)
and felt _____. As the scary thing was
(List 1–3 negative emotions or feelings your child may have felt)
happening, their body _____.
(List 2–4 body sensations your child may have felt during the traumatic experience)
Since the _____ thing happened, _____.
(Scary, confusing, unfair, sad, or hard-to-understand) (Main character's name)
has had trouble with _____.
(List 2–3 things your child has trouble with, like sleeping, nightmares, or feeling scared)

The End (This section includes a resolution for your child's traumatic experience.)

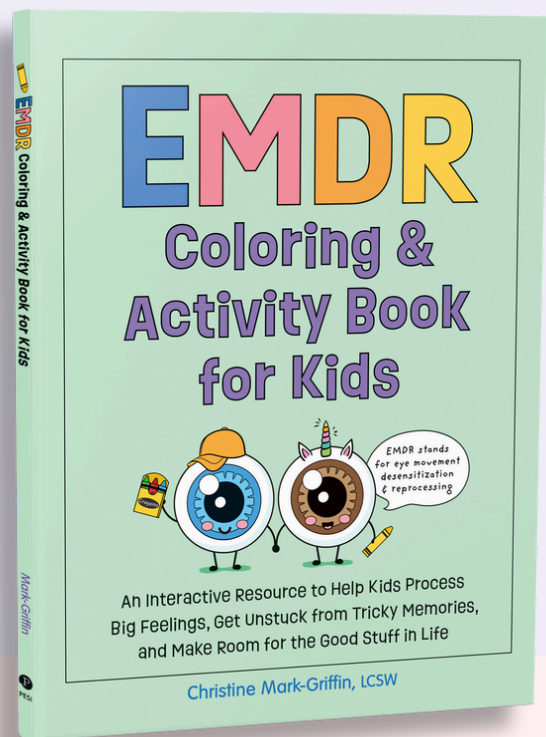
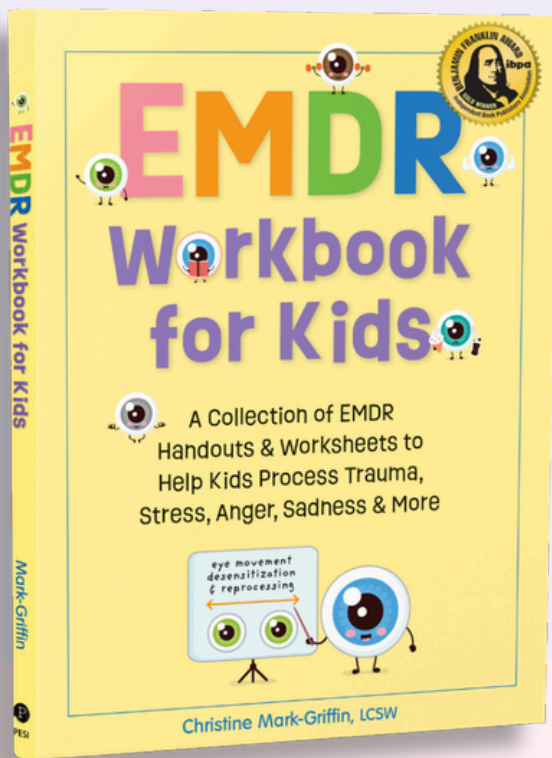
Ever since the _____ thing happened, _____.
(Scary, confusing, unfair, sad, or hard-to-understand) (Main character's name)
has felt better when _____.
(List 1–3 things that have helped your child cope or feel better)
They know that they have the support of _____.
(List of people or things that can help them if they become triggered)
_____ has learned that _____ and
(Main character's name) (Helpful thought)
now they can begin to _____.
(What can your child begin doing now that the traumatic experience does not bother them)

And they lived happily ever after.

The End.

**Help kids get unstuck from
scary and traumatic thoughts,
memories, and emotions.**

Award-winning!



Buy Now!

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