

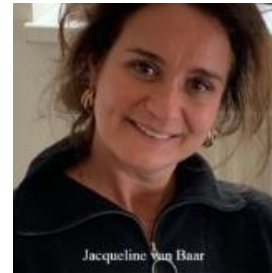
EMDR for Adolescents in the Forensic Mental Health System



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Danny on the street NPO
Documentary about problems and tensions in the Netherlands
in places and among groups
that are usually difficult to access.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWoeDd_DvR0

Trauma begets trauma, how did they grow up

- Families can be traumatized, generation after generation
- These generations have patterns of insecure, disorganized attachment relationships/ circles of distrust
- As a result children often have traumatic experiences at early age; where there is unavailability of one or both parents, it creates limited mentalizing ability and more vulnerability to experience relational trauma

These youngsters are not only perpetrator but also victim

What are they saying is not working:

- Speaking to them in a condescending manner (by agencies and psychologist)
- Endless questionnaires and questions
- Staying in Dutch youth prison with better circumstances than they are used to (healthy food, acces to sports and gaming facilities), but where they meet people with even worse criminal backgrounds
- Imposing fines on parents: they try to find money, not in a proper way, to pay their parents back
- Knife ban

What has a better change of working

- Trauma-focused treatment with EMDR embedded in a family context
- Restoration of communication within the family, developing a new narrative in which everyone is absolved of blame, and good intentions behind bad behaviour is explored.
- Inventory of traumatic situations within and outside the family
- Mutual attention to and acknowledgement of the damage done to one another.
- Creation of recovery moments

Thus creating: embedding of minimum of safety. There is a need to motivate the family for trauma treatment of their child and maybe treatment for other family members as well

This process takes time.

Ultimate Treatment goals

- Major traumatic events are processed, instead of “trying to forget”-avoidance
- More embedding of the healing process in family and community.
- They drop their mask, dare to show their face, dare to make other choices
- No more violations against others

Preparing youngsters

Decisive elements for building a good working relationship:

- Optimal alignment with the development phase of the youngster
- Authenticity in contact, honesty, humour
- Show patience and real interest (f.e. in their music/online behaviour)
- Give trust, say what you do and do what you say, predict mistakes
- Continuously create safety
- Reach out, no escape

Psycho education about trauma

- Fight, freeze en flight (fawning, pleases as a coping strategy in the peer group to stay alive)
- Window of tolerance
- Backpack metaphore: *'You've been carrying an overfilled backpack, heavy burdens, we are gonna start with the recent traumatic experiences which came into the backpack. It will be positive experience for you, the backpack will feel a little lighter'*

Key considerations for emdr protocol

- Establishing a safe space
- With severe attachment problems: use dyadic resourcing protocol
- Clustering the trauma's in themes: school, street, home

The advantage of emdr for them: they dont have to talk to you! They decide
It gives them control of the new narrative

Use Interweaves with extreme anger, fear, looping and blocking



- Interviewer is an interviewer
- Wishfull thinking: they want a normal life where they have forgotten everything
- We give psycho education about how you cant just forget things

Your mind and body is like a computer with a virus, you have to clean it up with emdr otherwise it will haunt and disturb you the rest of your life.

Closing each session

- Create an imaginary box where everything will be stored, left behind, until he/she comes back and is ready to open it up again. This will strengthen control, feeling in charge.
- Stay in touch, be available when relapse occurs

Young people seem hopeless, but are often more changeable and resilient than one thinks if and when they get the right treatment.

It is a joy to be hidden, and disaster not to be found.

-D.W. Winnicott

Thank you

Any questions?