

## EMDR treatment gives hope to soldiers with PTSD

By [Cris Ornelas](#)

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COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO. -- A well-known treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is showing promise in helping soldiers deal with the horrors of combat.

It's estimated that 20 percent of all soldiers returning from combat are at risk for PTSD. Soldiers with the condition tend to re-live the trauma they were exposed to in combat.

But a treatment that has been around since the early 1990s, called EMDR -- or [Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing](#) -- is being used to fight PTSD from war experiences, and so far the results are very promising.

It essentially gets a soldier to be able to remember the war without reliving the emotional pain of it.

Many soldiers suffer PTSD after being in combat.

FOX21 News talked with one soldier who asked to remain anonymous. He retired from the Army after two tours in Iraq. He says for a few months after coming home, the crippling effects of PTSD gripped his life.

"I'd cry a lot and I didn't know why and at random times...I'd be out with my friends and some random comment about Iraq would immediately draw up tears," the former soldier said.

Experts say PTSD sufferers have trouble remembering trauma without also reliving it.

"Any human being that is put into a situation where they are continually exposed to threats and life-threatening situations is going to have a psychological impact from that situation," said clinical psychologist Valerie Anderson.

At the Warrior Support Center they use EMDR to help soldiers deal with the horrors of war.

Psychologists use sound or movement to trigger the brain.

"It simulates the mind's natural processes for dealing with trauma," Anderson said.

"It's a process that you go through to deal with all the images and emotions that you had that you never dealt with that you are currently dealing with," the soldier added.

And for him it made all the difference in the world.

"It's not as bad. I can talk about it. I can share my experiences and I don't have to be biting my tongue the whole time and fighting back tears," the soldier said.

He understands the stigma attached to seeking psychological help. But he encourages his fellow soldiers to get treatment for their PTSD.

"I would just recommend biting the bullet and doing it because that's the only way you are going to get better," the soldier said.

Experts say EMDR can be used to cope with all sorts of trauma, including serious car crashes and childhood abuse.

