EMDR progress note templates

SOAP and BIRP

SOAP

The most widely recognized format, and the one most payers and EHRs expect.

```
EMDR PROGRESS NOTE (SOAP)
Date: [date]    Session: [#]    Length: [minutes]
Format: [in person / telehealth]
Treatment goal: [goal from the treatment plan]

S  SUBJECTIVE
Client reports [symptoms, changes and events since last session, in their words].
Reevaluation: last target "[a few words]" at SUD [ ]; [new material / none].

O  OBJECTIVE
Presentation: [affect, orientation, engagement].
EMDR phase(s) [ ]. Target "[a few words]". NC "[ ]", PC "[ ]".
[number] sets of [eye movements / tapping / tones]. SUD [start] to [end]. VoC [start] to [end].

A  ASSESSMENT
[What shifted during processing.] Client [stayed within window of tolerance / needed grounding].
Target [complete / incomplete]. Progress toward goal: [improving / stable / no change].

P  PLAN
Closed with [calm place / container / grounding]; client [settled and oriented].
Between sessions: [ ]. Next session: [ ].
```

BIRP

Often required in agencies and community mental health.

```
EMDR PROGRESS NOTE (BIRP)
Date: [date]    Session: [#]    Length: [minutes]
Format: [in person / telehealth]
Treatment goal: [goal from the treatment plan]

B  BEHAVIOR
Client presented [affect, engagement] and reported [symptoms and changes since last session].

I  INTERVENTION
EMDR phase(s) [ ]. [Reevaluated last target / assessed new target "[a few words]"]. Provided
[number] sets of [eye movements / tapping / tones]. [Interweave or resource, if used.]

R  RESPONSE
SUD [start] to [end]; VoC [start] to [end]. [What shifted.] Client [stayed present / needed
grounding]. Target [complete / incomplete].

P  PLAN
Closed with [calm place / container / grounding]. Between sessions: [ ]. Next session: [ ].
```

EMDR progress note templates

DAP and short note

DAP

Popular with therapists, since client report and observation often overlap in talk therapy.

```
EMDR PROGRESS NOTE (DAP)
Date: [date]    Session: [#]    Length: [minutes]
Format: [in person / telehealth]
Treatment goal: [goal from the treatment plan]

D  DATA
Client reports: [symptoms and changes since last session, in their words]
Reevaluation: last target "[a few words]" at SUD [0 to 10]; [new material / none]
EMDR phase(s): [ ]
Target: "[a few words]"   NC: "[ ]"   PC: "[ ]"
Start: VoC [1 to 7], SUD [0 to 10], [emotion], felt in [body]
Intervention: [number] sets of [eye movements / tapping / tones]; [interweave or resource, if
used]

A  ASSESSMENT
Response: SUD [start] to [end]; VoC [start] to [end]
What shifted: [memories, insight, emotion, body]
Stability: [stayed within window of tolerance / needed grounding]
Target: [complete / incomplete]
Progress toward goal: [improving / stable / no change], shown by [example]

P  PLAN
Closure: [calm place / container / grounding]; client [settled and oriented]
Between sessions: [notice and log dreams, memories, triggers]
Next session: [reevaluate and continue / install PC / next target]
```

Short note

For a free-text record, when a full format is not required.

```
EMDR, phase [ ]. Target "[a few words]": SUD [start] to [end], VoC [start] to [end]. [One
sentence on what shifted.] [Complete / incomplete]; closed with [calm place / container /
grounding], client settled. Next: [plan].
```

What every EMDR note needs

1. **The goal it serves.** Name the goal from the treatment plan that the session worked on.
2. **What you did.** The EMDR phase, the target in a few words, the type and number of sets, and any interweave or resource.
3. **How the client responded.** SUD and VoC from start to end, what shifted, and how stable the client was.
4. **How you closed.** The closure procedure, and how the client was when they left.
5. **What comes next.** The plan for the next session, so the next note can pick it up.

Leave out the full trauma narrative and graphic detail. A few words that identify the target are enough. Leave out other people's names, too.

EMDR progress note templates

Phrase bank

Preparation

Provided psychoeducation about EMDR and agreed on a stop signal. Client verbalized understanding.

Installed a calm place with short, slow sets. Client reported [feeling] in [body].

Practiced the container. Client was able to set material aside and reorient.

Assessment

Identified target "[a few words]". NC "[ ]", PC "[ ]", VoC [ ], SUD [ ], felt in [body].

Processing is moving

Processing moved through [memories / emotion / body sensations]. SUD decreased from [ ] to [ ].

Client maintained dual attention and stayed within window of tolerance.

Processing stalled

Processing looped at SUD [ ] for [ ] sets. Changed [direction / speed / modality].

Offered a cognitive interweave on [responsibility / safety / choice], after which processing resumed.

Strong emotion

Client experienced strong [sadness / anger / fear] while staying present. Processing continued without intervention.

Overwhelm or dissociation

Client showed signs of [overwhelm / dissociation]. Paused processing, used [grounding], and reoriented the client before closure.

Incomplete session

Target incomplete at SUD [ ]. Installation and body scan not done. Closed with [container / calm place]; client left settled and oriented.

Completed target

SUD 0. Installed PC "[ ]", VoC [ ]. Body scan clear.

VoC [6] accepted as fitting; client stated "[reason]".

Between sessions

Reminded client that processing may continue, and asked them to note dreams, memories and triggers.

Risk

Reviewed risk. Client denied [suicidal / homicidal] ideation. Safety plan [reviewed / not indicated].

Next session

Next session: reevaluate target and continue desensitization.

Next session: present trigger "[a few words]", then a future template.