

# How do clients experience **intensive** EMDR for PTSD?

## An interpretative phenomenological analysis

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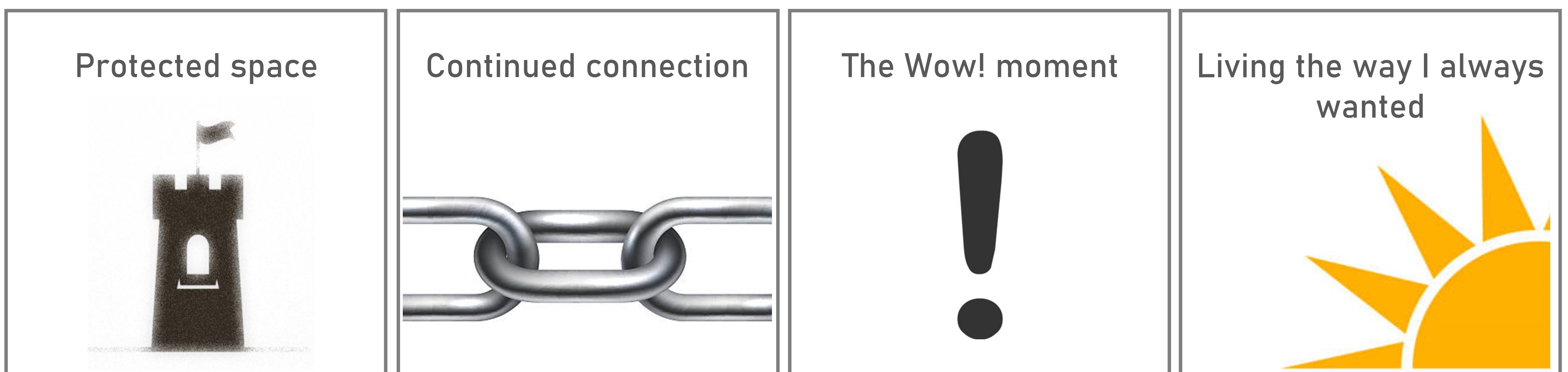
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### Background

- ❑ There are high rates of PTSD in the general population <sup>[1]</sup>
- ❑ Recent research indicates that intensive treatment for PTSD (multiple hours of therapy over consecutive days) may offer an improved client experience
- ❑ Intensive EMDR may offer a faster reduction in symptoms, greater symptom reduction, and reduced drop-out rates <sup>[2][3]</sup>
- ❑ There is a dearth of qualitative research exploring the benefits and challenges of intensive EMDR from the clients' perspective

### Aims

- ❑ To understand what might be lost and gained from intensive delivery of EMDR, from the participants' perspective
- ❑ Explore participants' experiences whilst considering social, contextual, and environmental factors
- ❑ To understand the clients experience of the therapeutic relationship, and how it worked best for them during intensive EMDR



### Method

- ❑ Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse data gathered
- ❑ 10 individual interviews with participants who had experienced intensive EMDR treatment for PTSD

### Analysis

- ❑ Two superordinate and four subordinate themes were identified:
  - ❑ 'the importance of psychological safety'
    - 'the protected space'
    - 'the importance of a continued connection'
  - ❑ 'the changing self'
    - 'the wow! moment'
    - 'living the way I always wanted'

### Conclusion

- ❑ Intensive EMDR is valued by participants
- ❑ Intensive EMDR can be experienced as safe, and affecting a significant change
- ❑ Findings concur with Shapiro's assertion that EMDR is a humanistic and integrative psychotherapy
- ❑ Findings correspond with established humanistic theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs



[1] R.C. Kessler et al., *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* **8**, (2017)

[2] A. Ehlers et al., *American Journal of Psychiatry* **171**, 294-304 (2014).

[3] A. Van Woudenberg et al., *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* **9**, (2018).