Mindful Awareness and the Role of Resonance within the EMDR Protocol

Irene R. Siegel, Ph.D.
**Mindful Awareness:** The experience of bringing one’s awareness within, to a moment-by-moment experience of being present and nonattached to outcome, in which each thought, feeling, and experience is accepted for what it is.
Resonance: makes two a part of one system, at least temporarily. Attuning to ourselves within mindful states, we have the observing and experiencing self in resonance. Attuning to others, we open ourselves to the profound adventure of linking two as part of one interactive whole. This joining is an intimate communion of the essence of who we are as individuals yet truly interconnected with one another. It is hard to put into words, but resonance reveals the deep reality that we are part of a larger whole, that we need one another, and, in some ways, that we are created by the ongoing dance within, between, and among us. (Siegel, 2010, p. 56)
Exploring the Therapist as a Container for Spiritual Resonance and the Observed Impact on Client Transformation: A Heuristic Study

Irene R. Siegel, Ph.D.
Initial Working Definition of Spiritual Resonance

- Harmonizing and aligning with the frequency of the energy pattern of expanded consciousness
- Beyond ego identification
- In the attunement between therapist and client
- Fostering an ability to see oneself as part of a greater interconnected whole
- Perceiving a deep knowing of an inner intuitive connection to a Divine unifying force
Resonance
Explored from the fields of:

• Science
• Psychology
• Spirituality
Science and Resonance

• Biofield
  extends beyond the body and into the environment, transcending time and space, holding memory and influencing evolution (Laszlo, 2009)

• Neuroscience of Heart/Brain
  coherence leading to greater integration of all systems (McCraty & Childre, 2010)

• Interpersonal Neurobiology
  acknowledges brain coherence and integration between people (Siegel, 2007, 2010)
Psychology and Resonance

• Developmental Phases
  Both psychological and consciousness as depicted in spiritual traditions (Wilber, 2000)

• Nonlocal Healing
  Research validates its efficacy (Achterberg et al., 2005; Braud, 2003)

• Empathic and Sympathetic Resonance
  Deep embodied resonance between two people
  Bodymind's experience of a vibrational merging resonance with internal and external sources
Spirituality and Resonance

All is vibrational and interconnected within an energy field

- Sufism
- Integral Yoga
- Shamanism
- The Emissaries of Divine Light

It is through the practice of mindful awareness that this expanded experience can reveal itself.
3 Questions Explored

To discover:

• Range of psychotherapists’ spiritual resonance experiences with clients

• Techniques psychotherapists use to invite the activation of a resonant field

• Impact of spiritual resonance on client
Study Method and Design

• Method
  Heuristic Research

• Participants
  12 exemplary psychotherapists who experience fluid perceptual shifts from egoic to expanded awareness

• Procedure
  Group 1 (6 participants): 3-stage process of two group interviews and one individual interview
  Group 2 (6 participants): Single interview only
  All participants: Drawings and journal entries
Data Analysis and Report

• Data

Interview transcripts, drawings, and researcher’s journaling as related to spiritual resonance

• Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze data from each group separately to insure there were no biases due to group format, and then combined

• Report of Results

Depictions, exemplary portraits, narrative reporting of common themes, and creative synthesis
4 Theme Categories

- Participants’ Understanding of Spiritual Resonance
- Inter-Dynamic Client-Therapist Experience
- Client Transformation
- Therapist Transformation
Participants’ Understanding of Spiritual Resonance (3 Themes)

1. Attunement to the Divine

• Integrated through ongoing spiritual practice

• The experience is one of blending the outer world with the inner spiritual world, leading to personal healing and transformation

• The higher self, or soul awareness is present in the process

• The attunement is always present within the participants, and influences all that is around them
2. Vibrational Resonance

• Attunement to a Divine spiritual force causes a range of higher frequency or spiritual vibration within the energy field

• Therapist and client bring this into the shared energy field

• As one maintains a clear expanded range of spiritual frequency, then the person across the room can chose to resonate with that frequency
3. Central Core of a Philosophy of Wholeness

• Spiritual resonance is not component based
• It is the central core element to life, and not just healing
• It is enveloped in a philosophy of wholeness
• It encompasses all other subsets of resonance and healing
• It is the fabric from which all healing and life emerge
Inter-Dynamic Client Therapist Experience (10 Themes)

1. Therapists’ Attunement as a Doorway to Spiritual Resonance

- Therapist brings awareness to the attunement to a Divine force
- Imagery and meditation leads to expansion
- Focused concentration
- Blending within field creates one unified field
- The therapist and client are just being together
2. Internal Feedback Mechanism Using Skills of Alternative Knowing

- The therapist uses inner knowing, inner hearing and seeing, and kinesthetic senses
- The therapist uses internal cues to determine interventions verbally, nonverbally, and vibrationally
Inter-Dynamic Client Therapist Experience (con’t)

3. Nonlinear Process of Assessment and Healing

• Experienced simultaneously in a nonlinear fashion
• Therapist determines spiritual resonance or nonresonance on part of client
• Therapist waits for vibrational shifts to determine when to engage the egoic mind
• Within the nonlinear spaces of expanded awareness clients’ issues become resolved
• Within the spiritual resonance itself therapist and client attune to one another
4. Internal Focus of Attention

• The focus of attention is internal for both therapist and client.

• Through modalities such as hypnotherapy, imagery, meditation, EMDR, and body movement

• Therapists and clients have a foot in both worlds, that of expanded conscious awareness and the egoic mind

• Client and therapist may have periods of time where their eyes are closed
5. Transmission of Energy

- Therapists experienced directing transmissions of energy to chakra centers in the client establishing a balance of energy flow

- Heart to heart energy connection was a common reference

- Transmission is multidirectional, mutual, and happens based on the consciousness that they have established within themselves.

- There is no intention to send energy

- Therapists as vessel, vehicle, or channel for spiritual resonance

- Ultimately, spiritual resonance is achieved, the transmission becomes multi-directional and one unified field emerges within the experience of spiritual attunement
Inter-Dynamic Client Therapist Experience (con’t)

6. Therapist Awareness of Internal Emotions, Sensations, and Cognitions

- Therapists feel inner peace and spaciousness
- Therapists may feel joy, bliss, compassion, unconditional spiritual love, kinesthetic sensations of lightness, tingling, expansion, flow, or quickening
- Often experiences occur simultaneously
- Judgments and preconceived ideas fall away
- The therapist is in a state of not knowing
7. Detaching From Ego

- Therapist steps out of the egoic mind, functioning from the consciousness of the higher self, or soul consciousness
- The therapy itself is detached from linear time and space
- Therapist teaches client to step back from their egoic perceptions
- Detachment from the ego is a necessary part of the process
8. Nonattachment to Goals, Expectations, and Outcome

- Therapist detaches from ego
- Therapist not attached to the goals, expectations, and outcome for the client
- Therapist lets go of the need to fix the client or to make the client feel better
- The client makes the choice whether or not to be in resonance with expanded spiritual consciousness
9. Transference and Countertransference

- Do not apply the same way as within a psychodynamic model.

- Therapist detaches from false ego and is nonattached to outcome, the client is taught to do the same.

- Client’s spiritual wisdom emerges and deters the projection onto the therapist.

- Therapist is taken out of the codependent role.

- Issues emerge if the therapist does not stay balanced and in a state of nonattachment.
10. Integration of the Egoic Mind and Expanded Consciousness as a Tool for Change

- Therapist senses shifts in the field through internal feedback mechanisms
- Therapist can sense when to stop the internal processing and bring the client’s awareness back to the egoic
- Egoic mind has an important role AFTER the shift
- Egoic mind helps client to ground and integrate his or her internal process
- The process leads to a leap in awareness, as well as emotional, cognitive, and behavioral changes
1. Development of Spiritual Consciousness

• Clients show developmental changes indicating that spiritual consciousness is developing

• Clients identify true parent as God, releasing anger towards their family of origin

• Clients’ frame of reference about their place in the world and their identity becomes related to their spiritual essence

• It is through this leap in consciousness that transformation unfolds
2. Emotional and Cognitive Healing

- Clients begin to feel safe and at peace within the session, and then
- Clients begin to integrate that feeling and experience outside of the session
- Other emotions may emerge: trust, faith, love, joy, forgiveness of self and others
- Anxiety, fear, and depression are alleviated
- Clients give up future thinking and the fear attached to it
- Clients’ self judgments subside as self esteem improves.
- Clients become observers of their beliefs and thought processes from a place of expanded consciousness and spiritual wisdom
3. Physical Healing and Transformation

- Subtle body changes such as relaxation, alleviation of stress and pain, posture change, and breathing pattern changes
- These changes become permanent over time
- Patient began to walk with a cane after being paraplegic
4. Improved Coping Skills

- Clients develop new tools to function more effectively in their world and improve their quality of life
5. Behavioral Changes

• Clients open their heart more to those around them and reach out differently than in the past

• Clients begin to set clearer boundaries in their world

• Old patterns and habits are replaced by spiritual practice
6. Vibrational Changes

- Therapists’ sense subtle shifts within the energy field and notice vibrational changes in the client.
- Vibrational changes accompany changes in emotions, beliefs, and evolving spiritual consciousness.
- Therapists experience their clients as being spacious, luminescent, bright, radiant, etc.
- Therapist’s observation is not necessarily accompanied by external cues.
- The client’s inner light is brighter, and noticed by others.
Spiritual resonance is a mutual process of transformation.

As the client’s inner light brightens so does that of the therapist.

Therapists feel joy and gratitude for being a vessel for this higher range of consciousness.

Therapists' spiritual development continues to unfold.
Drawing by Robin of shared spiritual resonance between therapist and client.
Drawing by Mary of shared spiritual resonance between therapist and client.
Representation of when I first met my client is number 1. We are separate.
Finding some resonance is number 2.
As we begin to share some kind of a coming to terms with our different phases we come closer represented by number 3.
During that moment of attunement is number 4. It is like she knows exactly what I even want to express before I want to express it, and vice versa.
And then, number 5, as we then differentiate from one another.
In number 6, each one is separate but whole.
Spiritual Resonance
The Evolved Definition

A vibrational pattern accessed by soul awareness

• It is a central core of life, and not just healing
• The vibrational fabric from which healing and life emerge is not component based
• Perceived as a gift to the receiver
• The potential for realization is present in all
• Realized through an experience of expanded awareness
• Nonlinear in nature transcending time and space
• Therapist and client may become transmitters of this range of energy within the therapy session
• Within the vibrational range of spiritual resonance, the client has the choice to resonate with that range of frequency, dis-identifying with ego, changing perception, and transforming within the unified experience of cosmic wholeness
• Ultimately, the transmission of spiritual resonance is multidirectional between therapist, client, a Divine cosmic source, and Earth
8 Phases of EMDR Protocol
Therapist’s Preparation

- Therapists may use the following skills of preparation prior to the session in all phases of EMDR protocol to create an experience of mindful awareness:
  - Meditation
  - Imagery
  - Deep Breathing and Centering
  - Attunement to what may be described as a greater interconnected cosmic whole
• History taking and the development of the treatment plan is consistent with EMDR protocol.

• As client's adaptive aspects are identified and affect regulation skills are evaluated, the therapist sets a safe space within the therapeutic container by maintaining a centered and calm state as an experience of being present is internally accessed within the therapist.
The therapist maintains an experience of mindfulness and expanded awareness while engaging with the client.

The client listens to a Bio-Lateral CD with headphones.

Client is invited to close her eyes and to envision a safe space and to sit quietly.

Client is vibrationally invited to resonate with the therapist.

The shared field begins to vibrationally flow more fluidly.

Using internal skills of tracking, therapist is able to sense the shared interconnected field and the vibrational change within the client.
Client identifies the memory of greatest stress.

The negative cognition and SUD level are identified.

Body memory is identified.

The positive cognition and VOC level are identified.

The therapist continues to be aware of the energy that they share, and maintains a field filled with peace and safety, staying open to the client as she is ready to share in the resonance.
Desensitization Phase 4

- The client is invited to close her eyes while processing the scene.
- Therapist maintains a state of inner centeredness and connection, without expectation of client outcome.
- Therapist uses intuitive skills of alternative ways of knowing to internally track the flow of the shared field.
- Therapist may sense the client's energy becoming brighter and more expansive.
- This may become a very tangible pulsation within the body, or a sensation of heart opening and filling with compassion.
Within the silence, the resonance between therapist and client becomes apparent, sensed as a calmness and a flowing energy in the mutual field.

After the shift into resonance, the client is asked to share what was coming up for her.

The therapist may hear the client report a level of processing from a perspective of inner wisdom, expanded awareness, and experiences that connect her to a greater cosmic whole.

Client’s SUD level quickly shifts down to a zero initiating an immediate positive cognition.
Installation Phase 5

• The therapist takes the naturally emerging positive cognition and reinforces it in the original targeted memory.

• With closed eyes, therapist and client share an expanded field filled with the flow of compassion and wellbeing.

• The energy field as well as the client's positive belief becomes more integrated and stable.

• The VOC becomes a 7 around this positive cognition, often from a perspective of expanded awareness.
- Client scans her body with her eyes closed.
- As the client learns to use her own internal tracking skills of her process, she may report a tingling sensation, a flow of energy, and a calmness throughout.
- Therapist and client may mutually resonate within a shared experience of connecting to a greater cosmic whole.
Closure Phase 7

- The client is brought back and grounded.
- Client shares experiences, inner visions, and sensations indicating that she was learning to use alternative ways of knowing and perception.
- Some clients try to describe the experience of the shared field.
- The client learns to self soothe and regulate.
- The client is asked to keep a journal, and informed that processing may occur even outside of the session.
- She is reminded of her safe space.
Re-evaluation Phase 8

- In the next session, the client's SUD level around the original targeted memory is taken in order to determine that it is still a zero.

- Clients often report the development of alternate ways of knowing and a larger spiritual context for their trauma.
• EACH PHASE OF THE EMDR PROTOCOL allows for the therapist to open to an expanded mindful awareness, develop skills of internal tracking using alternative ways of knowing, and share a mutually resonant energy field that allows the client to do the same.

• The therapist may develop the skill of moving fluidly from egoic to expanding awareness throughout the session.

• As the client engages in an attunement to a mutually fluid field of information and energy flow, the reference point becomes the client’s inner wisdom based in an expanded awareness of an interconnected cosmic whole.

• Self love may develop within this experience as brain integration evolves to a higher level, contributing to the resolution of attachment disorders created within the child/parent relationship (Sroufe & Siegel, 2011)