

DEEP BRAIN REORIENTING (DBR)

DBR is a transformative yet gentle trauma-processing psychotherapy grounded in neuroscience, designed to heal the deep-rooted impacts of earlier experiences.

Dr. Frank Corrigan, the psychiatrist and neuroscientist who developed DBR, describes it as a process of reprogramming the deep brain structures within the brainstem.



When a person experiences a highly stressful or traumatic event at any stage of life, the brain activates protective responses designed to ensure survival. This response is automatic and deeply rooted in the brainstem — the most primitive part of the brain.

Even long after the event has passed, the brain can continue to react as if the original threat is still present. This can happen without conscious awareness and may be triggered by situations that subtly resemble the original experience, even if they seem completely unrelated. As a result, individuals may find themselves stuck in patterns of distress, including emotional reactivity, physical symptoms, and behaviours that feel out of their control.

Deep Brain Reorienting (DBR) helps resolve these patterns by working with the brain's original protective response sequence. With the support of a trained therapist, the individual is guided to track and slow down the physiological sequence that was activated at the time of the original trauma — even before conscious thoughts or emotions arise.

By accessing and gently modifying this sequence at its source in the brainstem, DBR allows the body, mind and nervous system to heal the impacts of adverse experiences and trauma, including childhood attachment experiences.



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WHAT CAN DBR HELP WITH?

Deep Brain Reorienting (DBR) can help with a variety of challenges, including:

- Anxiety and stress.
- Trauma and PTSD/C-PTSD.
- Somatic symptoms such as tension, pain, and physical symptoms that are tied to emotional distress or early adverse experiences.
- Attachment issues.
- Depression symptoms rooted in early emotional pain or unresolved trauma.
- Emotional reactivity and chronic emotional dysregulation.
- Survival response patterns: such as fight, flight, freeze, fawn, dissociation, or shutdown.
- Emotional numbing or disconnection and inability to reconnect with feelings, body sensations, and a sense of aliveness.
- Unresolved grief.
- Self-esteem and self-worth challenges.
- Relationship difficulties including difficulties with trust, betrayal, connection, feeling insecure, and fearing abandonment and rejection.



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WHAT HAPPENS IN A DBR SESSION?

1. IDENTIFYING THE ACTIVATING STIMULUS

Your therapist helps you select the focus of the session, which is often a moment when an unwanted symptom or response pattern is triggered.

2. THE WHERE-SELF & PROTOSELF

You are then guided through an exercise designed to enhance awareness of where you are located physically in relation to your surroundings. This, along with other preparatory exercises, helps ready you for accessing the deep brain sequence.

3. IDENTIFYING THE ORIENTING TENSION

The deep brain sequence emerges through the observation of somatic sensations and experiences in the body. You will be first guided to identify the orienting tension—a sensation typically felt across your forehead, around your eyes, or at the base of your skull. Neuroscientific research indicates that sensations in these areas signal the initiation of the brain's sequence and serve as an essential grounding anchor for the brain during the session.

4. TRAUMA PROCESSING AND REORIENTING

With an in-depth understanding of brain structures and their functions, your therapist will guide you in tracking these sensations in a specific way that slows down the underlying brain sequence. This process allows the sequence to be safely and gradually modified, ensuring access to the root of unwanted symptoms in a way that minimises overwhelm.

Through this approach, the brain reorients itself, releasing old survival response patterns and making space for new, healthier patterns to emerge.

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THE EVIDENCE

In 2023, a randomised controlled trial evaluated the effectiveness of DBR in treating trauma symptoms (PTSD). Participants who underwent eight DBR sessions showed significant reductions in symptoms compared to a waitlist control group.

These promising results suggest that DBR, by targeting the brain's innate processing mechanisms, offers a gentle and effective approach to trauma therapy. DBR holds the potential to become a widely adopted method for healing many psychological and even physical symptoms and issues at their roots.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/20008066.2023.2240691?um>

<https://cfas.isst-d.org/content/deep-brain-reorienting-dbr-disconnection-pain-and-dissociation%C2%A0?>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0306987719309673?via%3Dihub>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40653-024-00672-z>

This article discusses the neurobiological mechanisms of depersonalisation and presents a case study on the effectiveness of Deep Brain Reorienting (DBR) therapy in treating depersonalization-derealization disorder.

LEARN MORE: BOOKS, ARTICLES, AND VIDEOS ON DBR

Video: Dr. Frank Corrigan speaks about DBR

<https://youtu.be/wijwwMuONFg?si=FPeVbquUNIlfw4jl>

https://youtu.be/oqdK3_ojgeY?si=5riLwy9oBv6ScuCn

<https://youtu.be/BjCoIHR5sZ0?si=Sth16CNt4BwloKM->

Other:

<https://deepbrainreorienting.com/history-of-dbr/>

<https://deepbrainreorienting.com/hypothetical-basis/>

https://youtu.be/XYSpCbH2S6g?si=rRUQ5YQdC0WJn_hq

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvphbpQIHLU>

<https://trauma.blog.yorku.ca/2024/08/research-highlights-a-promising-trauma-treatment-deep-brain-reorienting>

<https://www.routledge.com/Deep-Brain-Reorienting-Understanding-the-Neuroscience-of-Trauma-Attachment-Wounding-and-DBR-Psychotherapy/Corrigan-Young-Christie-Sands/p/book/9781032556253?https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/talking-about-trauma/202411/deep-brain-reorienting-may-be-a-promising-trauma-treatment>

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