Unlocking Trauma Through the Eyes: What Is Brainspotting?

In recent years, a fascinating therapeutic technique has been gaining momentum in the mental health world — one that taps into the deep mind-body connection and helps people heal from trauma, anxiety, and emotional pain. It's called Brainspotting, and though it might sound like something out of a sci-fi novel, it's very real — and very effective.

What Is Brainspotting?

Brainspotting is a brain-based therapy that was discovered in 2003 by Dr. David Grand, a psychotherapist and performance coach. The core idea behind it is surprisingly simple: "Where you look affects how you feel."

In practice, Brainspotting uses the positioning of your eyes to help access unprocessed trauma that's stored deep in your brain and body. During a session, a trained therapist guides your gaze to a specific "brainspot" — a point in your visual field that seems to connect with emotional or physical tension — and helps you focus there while you explore thoughts, feelings, or body sensations.

This process taps into the subcortical brain, the part responsible for emotions, trauma, and survival responses. Unlike talk therapy, which works more on a conscious level, Brainspotting dives beneath the surface, helping you bypass the thinking brain and access deeper healing.

How Does a Brainspotting Session Work?

A typical session might look something like this:

1. You sit comfortably with your therapist.
2. They may use a pointer to help guide your eye movements.
3. Together, you locate a spot in your visual field where you feel a "charge" or heightened emotional response.

4. You hold your gaze there and simply notice — thoughts, emotions, memories, body sensations — whatever arises.
5. Your therapist holds space and may offer gentle guidance, but there's no pressure to analyze or explain. The healing happens organically.

Some therapists also incorporate bilateral sound — music that alternates between the left and right ears — to enhance the brain's processing ability, similar to EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing).

Who Can Benefit from Brainspotting?

Brainspotting can be helpful for a wide range of challenges, including:

- PTSD and trauma (both "big T" and "little t" traumas)
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Depression
- Chronic pain
- Grief and loss
- Performance blocks (athletes, artists, public speakers)
- Creative expansion and emotional growth

Because it doesn't require talking through every detail of a painful memory, many people find it gentler and less re-traumatizing than traditional talk therapy.

Why It Works

What makes Brainspotting so powerful is its ability to access and process experiences that are often stored non-verbally in the body and the lower brain. Trauma isn't always stored in words — it lives in sensations, reflexes, and emotional loops. By focusing attention on specific brainspots, you're giving your brain the opportunity to reorganize and release those stuck patterns.

It’s like opening a door in the mind you didn’t even know existed — and finding the courage to walk through it.

Final Thoughts

Brainspotting may sound unconventional, but its results speak volumes. It’s not a quick fix or magic trick, but for many, it offers a profound and lasting pathway to healing.

Whether you’re struggling with past trauma, feeling stuck emotionally, or simply curious about exploring the deeper layers of your mind, Brainspotting is a tool worth considering.

If this resonates with you, Creekside Collaborative Therapy in Greenwood Village Colorado can connect you with a therapist who is trained in Brainspotting who can guide you on your journey towards a healthier, more peaceful life. Please contact our office today at 303-770-6933 to set up an appointment.