



Mark Nickerson keynote-speaker at the EMDR Europe Conference 2016

# 'Using the cycle-model for different types of anger'

By Ad de Jongh and Iva Bicanic

**Mark Nickerson, LCSW, is a psychotherapist in his private practice for individual and family psychotherapy. He is an EMDR Trainer and in 2014, he was the President of the EMDR International Association. He is author of *The Wounds Within*, an expose on the challenges for war veterans and their families, and *Cultural Competence and Healing Culturally-Based Trauma with EMDR Therapy: Insights, Strategies and Protocols* (in press). Mark Nickerson is an excellent speaker who will be presenting at the EMDR Europe Conference. Below is a sneak preview into what he will teach in the Hague.**

"I am doing two different things: the pre-conference workshop and the key-note. Let me tell you more about the pre-conference. It is going to be on interventions for problematic anger. As I came up as a therapist, one of the main populations I worked with were people having trouble with anger and violence. Originally, I used a CBT approach for this group. Then, I was trained in EMDR therapy in 2001. I had two separate approaches to working with problematic anger. After a few years into it, I realized that there could be a nice integration."

"What I will be teaching is an assessment strategy for understanding the nature of the particular anger. And then a case conceptualization method as to what interventions are needed. The workshop will be about a range of things from actual domestic or physical violence to mild temper outbursts or ongoing resentments. I work a lot with separated parents who are not getting along, but need to get along for the sake of their children. So I do a lot of work around conflict management, and EMDR interventions can be built into that."

### Cycle model

"One of the things that I will use in the workshop is a cycle model, as a particular tool that I use initially as part of the assessment. As persons sit with me, I show them this diagram and it helps them understand the repetitive nature of the cycle. How they go. for instance, from an incident to a period of recovery, to thinking: "it's all over and it will not happen again", to suddenly getting triggered and then heading into a potential escalation phase."

"I use that cycle as a way that people can share their story. And then I find that there are different interventions that can be used, depending upon what the person reveals to me in terms of the cycle, where they are having the most trouble. Generally, I start by helping people by identifying commitment

to change whatever the problem is. If the anger is leading to a problem that is making their live worse, than we usually start by trying to key in on what they like to have go better and how they would better handle it. So we start with a design whereby people identify what triggers them and identify what choices they prefer to make rather than escalate. There is some initial commitment needed to get the person to see clearly what the solution for their problem would be. But then, once that is cognitively there, various strategies are needed to actually implement this."

### Working with the cycle model

"Generally, what triggers a person has a history. So, once these triggers have been identified, you can do a floatback as a way to go back to the touchstone memories and do reprocessing around that. For some people, I find it is possible to go there directly and that essentially diffuses the bomb. The way of managing, in terms of just getting angry - the need to do that - is greatly decreased. But, that said, sometimes people are not ready to do that right away. Therefore, some affect regulation is valuable. I do sometime use the DeTUR protocol or the *Feeling State Addiction Protocol* to get out of some of the compulsive components of it. So there are certain indicators I look for to determine whether that is the most important thing. And I have also used some components of the protocol for targeting compulsion, and also the worst moment. A rage-state for instance."

"By the end of the workshop I would hope that the participants will be able to look into a ray of different problems that might come up. They will by then have a case formulation strategy using the cycle model, and a bunch of specific strategies depending on the presentation of anger problems."

Mark Nickerson, Preconference Workshop 2 - *Breaking the Cycle: EMDR therapy solutions for problematic anger, acting out and addictive behaviors*, friday 17 june 2016

Keynote: *Restoring dignity: Healing the Wounds of Stigma and Prejudice with EMDR*, sunday 19 june, World Forum Theater