

Anxiety is not just a feeling, it is a full-body event. Heart rate jumps, breathing gets shallow, muscles brace for impact that never arrives. For many people, this pattern is not occasional but constant. It can start after a clear stressor, like a car accident or a humiliating performance review, or from countless smaller moments that add up until the nervous system begins to scan for danger everywhere. I have sat with clients who could map their days by spikes of dread, from morning emails to bedtime quiet. They were not overreacting. Their systems were doing exactly what they had learned to do to stay safe, only now the alarm was stuck.

EMDR therapy, short for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, is one of the most reliable ways I know to help the body turn that alarm down. People associate EMDR with trauma, but anxiety lives in similar neural loops: distressing cues trigger old learning, which triggers more distress, and the cycle reinforces itself. EMDR works directly with those loops, so the system can reprocess what it learned and choose a calmer response.

## What anxiety does to the nervous system

When the brain perceives threat, the sympathetic nervous system mobilizes. Adrenaline, cortisol, faster blood flow to the limbs, tunnel vision. That is useful when a dog lunges across a sidewalk. It is miserable when the threat is a calendar invite. In that case, the stress response still mobilizes, but there is nowhere for it to go. People feel keyed up, then exhausted. They avoid. Avoidance prevents corrective learning, so the fear expands. The hippocampus, which time stamps memory, does a poor job during overwhelming events. Without clear time markers, the past can feel like the present. Anxiety therapy often involves teaching skills to modulate this response, but for many clients, especially those who feel hijacked by fear, it helps to work closer to the source memory networks themselves.

## What EMDR therapy actually does

EMDR is not relaxation training or hypnosis. It is a structured psychotherapy that pairs focused attention on a memory or trigger with bilateral stimulation, such as guided eye movements, alternating taps, or tones. The method sounds simple. The effects are anything but simple. Clients bring to mind the target, notice what their body does, and track it while engaging the bilateral rhythm the therapist provides. Over sets of stimulation that last about 30 to 60 seconds, the brain does something it is built to do: integrate. New associations arise, old images change, body tension releases. A memory that once felt frozen begins to move.

We think EMDR leverages a few mechanisms. Bilateral stimulation seems to mimic elements of REM sleep, when the brain consolidates memories. It also nudges the prefrontal cortex back online, so the amygdala's threat siren does not drown out everything else. Meanwhile, the client holds the distressing target in mind in a controlled, titrated way. That allows memory reconsolidation, the process of updating a stored memory with new emotional meaning. In practical terms, the brain learns that the trigger does not equal danger now. When that sticks, the body stops bracing the way it used to.

## Why EMDR helps anxious systems settle

A client once described her worry as a smoke alarm that could not tell the difference between burnt toast and a house fire. EMDR does not unhook the alarm. It recalibrates the sensor. By returning to the source of the alarm's learning and pairing it with safety, choice, and updated context, the nervous system learns nuance. The rapid heartbeats that used to launch a spiral become sensations that pass. The meeting that used to feel like a trial starts to look like a conversation. People still register stress, but their bodies no longer treat every cue like a catastrophe.

I see three themes across cases where EMDR reduces anxiety. First, reprocessing clears out stuck pieces of old moments that still drive current reactivity. Second, the body regains the felt sense of control, which is the opposite of anxiety's helplessness. Third, the sense of self expands beyond the anxious part. Clients begin to identify as someone who can meet challenges rather than someone who barely survives them.

## What an EMDR session for anxiety looks like

EMDR has eight phases, but sessions for anxiety often fold these phases into clear, workable steps. Early sessions focus on history taking and resourcing, which means we make sure you can calm and ground before we approach hard material. Once we start active reprocessing, the structure feels consistent. People usually appreciate knowing what to expect.

- Identify a specific target, such as the knot-in-stomach feeling before presentations or a memory of freezing during a class introduction.
- Pair that target with the worst image, the negative belief about self that comes up (for example, I am going to fail), and current body sensations.
- Establish a desired belief that feels possible, like I can handle this, and measure how true it feels now.
- Begin bilateral stimulation in sets, while you notice thoughts, images, emotions, and body shifts without forcing anything.
- Periodically check in to note changes, then continue until the target no longer activates distress and the desired belief feels true in the body.

A full course of EMDR therapy varies. I have had clients reach their anxiety goals in 6 to 10 sessions, especially for recent events or specific triggers. Others work 20 to 30 sessions or more when anxiety sits on top of multiple traumatic experiences, attachment injuries, or long-standing patterns. The pace is not a contest. We move at the speed of safety.

## How EMDR compares to other anxiety therapies

Cognitive behavioral approaches target anxious thoughts and behaviors. Exposure therapy, a branch of CBT, asks you to face fears in a graded way until the brain learns that the feared outcome does not occur, or that you can cope if it does. These methods have strong evidence and help many people. I use them often and sometimes integrate them with EMDR.

Here is where EMDR differs. Rather than primarily challenging thoughts or constructing exposures, EMDR invites the brain to bring up whatever associations are connected to the target. That could be the time a teacher mocked you in middle school, **Marriage or relationship counselor** a parent's anxious outbursts, or a hospital trip when you were 7. You do not need to relive those events in detail or spend weeks designing exposure hierarchies. The brain follows its own breadcrumb trail. When the trail completes, the anxiety response usually drops without wrestling it into submission.



Freedom Counseling Group  
82MHCJ Vacaville, California, USA

Trade-offs exist. Clients who like clear homework and visible progress markers may prefer CBT or acceptance and commitment therapy early on. Clients who feel stuck replaying a loop they cannot think their way out of often do well with EMDR's bottom-up pathway. In practice, many therapists combine tools. For a client with panic attacks, we might use interoceptive exposure to reduce fear of body sensations and EMDR to reprocess the first panic episode and the night he thought he might die.

## Choosing good targets for EMDR when anxiety is the issue

If anxiety permeates everything, picking a single target can feel impossible. We usually start with recent triggers that reliably activate symptoms. The brain knows what those triggers connect to, and EMDR lets it unwind the chain. As reprocessing unfolds, earlier memories often surface on their own. Some clients find that a work presentation connects back to third grade when a classmate laughed at them while they read aloud. Reprocessing that third grade moment changes the presentation fear [Mental health service](#) more than any pep talk ever could.

Current body sensations also make strong anchors. Many anxious people have a signature cue, such as a tight chest or jaw clench. If we target the sensation itself and **Freedom Counseling Group PTSD therapy** ask the body where it learned to respond that way, sessions become precise. We are not chasing every worry. We are going to the training ground where the worry learned its moves.

## What to expect during and after sessions

Even when therapy goes well, EMDR can stir the pot. During sessions, people may feel waves of emotion, tingling, warmth, or a sense of heaviness that lifts. Memories and images can appear that seem random but make sense later. There should be no pressure to perform. Your job is to notice and report, not to fix.

Between sessions, expect some afterglow or some wobble. Dreams often get vivid for a few nights. Old thoughts lose their bite, or you might feel cranky as your system reorganizes. I ask clients to track changes in a simple, concrete way. Did you answer emails faster? Did you procrastinate less on the report? Did your shoulders drop before dinner? Anxiety symptoms shift in the real world before they register as a new narrative. When those shifts hold under stress, we know the work stuck.

## Safety, readiness, and when to wait

EMDR is powerful, and like any powerful tool, it requires good timing. There are times when we press pause, build more stability, or coordinate care.

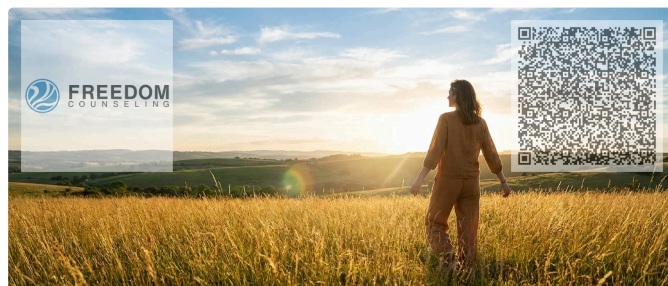
- Current substance use that regularly disrupts sleep or affects session recall.
- Active self harm or suicidality that has not been stabilized.
- Ongoing domestic violence or harassment that keeps the system in daily danger.
- Untreated psychosis, mania, or severe dissociation without grounding skills.

These are not permanent barriers. I have worked with many clients who addressed one of the above, then returned to EMDR and made excellent progress. We can also modify the approach. For people who dissociate quickly, we use shorter sets, lighter targets, and more explicit grounding. For those with complex trauma, we may spend a longer period in preparation before touching the hardest material. You should never feel steamrolled in EMDR. If you do, say so. A skilled therapist will adjust.

## How EMDR fits with medication and other supports

Medication can take the edge off while therapy rewires patterns more deeply. Some clients begin EMDR while on SSRIs or SNRIs, then taper with their prescriber once their system stabilizes. Others prefer to avoid medication and still do well. Good sleep, regular meals, movement, and social contact all support the neuroplastic changes EMDR initiates. I tell clients to think like an athlete in training. Nourish your brain, and it will learn more easily.

Biofeedback and mindfulness complement EMDR, as does straightforward anxiety therapy that teaches practical tools. Box breathing, urge surfing for compulsions, and time blocking for avoidance are not rivals to reprocessing. They are allies. If a therapist presents EMDR as a magic wand that makes everything else obsolete, be cautious. The weave of supports matters.



Freedom Counseling Group  
82MH+CJ Yocaville, California, USA

## EMDR with couples therapy and relationship anxiety

Anxiety often shows up most strongly in relationships. People text five times in a row when their partner is quiet, or they shut down the moment conflict arises. In couples therapy, I have seen EMDR become a bridge between understanding and change. We might pause a heated discussion, identify the moment one partner's chest tightens and their vision narrows, then do brief, targeted EMDR work on the prior experiences that wired that

reaction. Afterward, the same conversation lands differently. The partner can stay present long enough to listen and respond instead of spiraling.

This is not about fixing one person so the relationship works. It is about each partner owning their triggers and doing individual work that supports the bond. Sometimes we weave EMDR into joint sessions, sometimes into separate individual sessions that feed back into the couple's goals. If jealousy, abandonment fears, or conflict avoidance fuel your relational distress, EMDR can soften the underlying drivers so communication skills have somewhere to land.

## **EMDR for teens who live in a worry storm**

Teen therapy with EMDR needs care and flexibility. Adolescents often carry sharp, recent experiences in school and online that amplify anxiety: a cruel comment in a group chat, a public stumble in sports, a teacher's cutting feedback. They also move through developmental tasks that naturally spike uncertainty. EMDR gives teens a direct way to work with the stuck moments without spending months unpacking every thought.

I have worked with teens who stopped going to class after a panic attack in the hallway. We targeted the hallway moment and two earlier social humiliation memories. Attendance improved within weeks. Another teen froze on the basketball court after a mistake, then dreaded practice. EMDR cleared the freeze response and restored his sense that mistakes were tolerable, not dangerous. Sessions for teens are shorter, heavier on resourcing, and often integrate parents in measured ways. When a caregiver can be trained in simple co-regulation strategies, like matched breathing and paced tapping at home, gains consolidate faster.

## **Where ADHD and anxiety intersect**

Many clients seeking ADHD testing also struggle with anxiety. Sometimes the worry grows from years of missing cues and deadlines, leaving the body on alert for the next failure. Other times, an anxious mind mimics ADHD with distractibility and restlessness. Good assessment clarifies the picture. If someone meets criteria for ADHD, medication and coaching make a real difference, and EMDR can target the shame and fear that built up around performance. If anxiety drives the focus problems, EMDR that resolves core fear memories often improves concentration as a side effect.

I remember a graduate student who felt paralyzed by reading assignments. ADHD testing showed mild attentional variability but not full criteria. EMDR work on an early teacher's relentless criticism shifted his internal voice. After that, his reading speed increased by about 25 percent in timed trials he did for himself. He had not suddenly become a different person. He had removed a weight from his cognitive load.

## **What progress looks like when EMDR is working**

Clients often expect fireworks, then miss the quieter signs of change. They report that their partner's tone still bothers them, but they no longer rehearse the argument for hours. They feel nervous before a presentation, but the nausea does not come. They catch themselves opening the email they would have avoided. These are the nervous system's first whispers of recalibration.

As sessions proceed, you should see both symptom-level improvements and identity shifts. Anxiety becomes a state you enter and leave, not a trait that defines you. The brain stops defaulting to worst case. Body states recover faster. If you track your sleep, heart rate variability, or step counts, you may notice objective changes alongside subjective relief. Data is not necessary to prove progress, but it can help skeptical minds trust what they feel.

## **Finding and vetting an EMDR therapist**

Training matters. Look for therapists trained by EMDRIA or a reputable international equivalent. Ask how they apply EMDR to anxiety specifically, not just trauma. A thoughtful clinician should explain how they choose targets, how they pace work, and how they handle stuck points. Listen for flexibility. If someone insists every session must look the same, you might end up boxed into a protocol that does not fit your needs.

Fit matters too. If you feel hurried, judged, or confused after a first session, that is useful data. You are hiring a collaborator to help your nervous system relearn safety. Choose someone you can imagine telling the truth to on a hard day.

## **Edges and exceptions worth knowing**

No therapy works for everyone. A small subset of people feel little from bilateral stimulation. Others get overwhelmed despite careful preparation. Sometimes the first targets we choose are not the key nodes in the network, and progress stalls until we pivot. Medical conditions can shape outcomes as well. Severe sleep apnea compromises the brain's ability to consolidate new learning. Thyroid dysregulation, perimenopause, and iron deficiency can intensify anxiety. When progress seems slower than expected, I often suggest a medical review. It is not either therapy or physiology. It is both.

There are also people who want EMDR to erase a natural, protective fear. That is not how it works. If your boss is abusive or your relationship is unsafe, reducing anxiety without changing the context may keep you in harm's way longer. The goal is appropriate fear that mobilizes action, not a blissed-out indifference to risk. Good therapy keeps that distinction front and center.

## Practical ways to support EMDR gains between sessions

Think of the time between appointments as part of therapy, not a waiting room. A few simple practices make a difference. Keep a brief log of triggers, responses, and small wins. Practice a 4, 6, 8 breath pattern twice daily, which lengthens exhale and nudges the vagus nerve toward calm. Reduce caffeine by 25 to 50 percent while actively reprocessing, especially if you notice jittery swings. If you do exposure tasks as part of your broader anxiety therapy, schedule them after sleep and a meal so your system has the best chance to succeed. Share the target list with your therapist so EMDR can track alongside those steps.

If you are in couples therapy, tell your partner what you are targeting. Many couples develop a shorthand, like a hand to the heart signal, to mark that an old pattern is activating. When your partner sees you doing the work, they can meet you with patience instead of defensiveness. That cooperation lowers ambient stress, which helps EMDR do its job.

## A brief case vignette

A professional in her thirties came to therapy for severe anticipatory anxiety around performance reviews. Two years earlier, a new manager had blindsided her with an aggressive critique. Since then, every calendar reminder for a one on one launched her into sleeplessness, gastrointestinal upset, and thoughts of quitting. Standard anxiety therapy helped a little, but the symptoms returned near evaluation season.

We used EMDR to target the memory of the manager's critique. In the second session, an earlier image emerged of her father tossing a school project in the trash with a line about trying harder. Her body clenched the same way. Over four sessions, we reprocessed both scenes. She reported that the manager's voice sounded smaller in her mind and that she felt taller in her body. She scheduled her next review in the morning, slept, and ate beforehand. She still felt nervous, but she entered the meeting without the usual nausea and handled a pointed comment without spiraling. Two months later, she requested feedback proactively, a behavior that had been unthinkable before. The anxiety had not disappeared as a concept, but its grip on her physiology had loosened.

## Where to start if you are considering EMDR

If you recognize yourself in these descriptions, the next step is simple. Schedule a consultation with a therapist trained in EMDR and ask direct questions. Describe concrete situations that trigger your anxiety. Ask how they would target those and how they judge readiness. If you are also engaged in teen therapy for a child, or in couples counseling, or pursuing ADHD testing, mention those. Well coordinated care accelerates progress. The therapist should welcome collaboration with your other providers and shape EMDR around your life, not the other way around.

The promise of EMDR therapy is not that you will never feel anxious again. It is that your nervous system can learn safety where it once learned fear. When that happens, the body stops fighting itself. The mind regains perspective. You get to use your energy for the things you care about instead of for constant management of dread. That shift is not theory. I have watched people reclaim mornings, step into hard conversations, board planes, return to school, and simply sit and read without their heart racing. If anxiety has trained your system to live on alert, EMDR offers a way back to steady ground.

## Freedom Counseling Group

**Name:** Freedom Counseling Group

**Address:** 2070 Peabody Road, Suite 710, Vacaville, CA 95687

**Phone:** (707) 975-6429

**Website:** <https://www.freedomcounseling.group/>

**Email:** [contact@freedomcounseling.group](mailto:contact@freedomcounseling.group)

### Hours:

Sunday: Closed

Monday: 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Tuesday: 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Wednesday: 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Thursday: 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Friday: 1:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Saturday: Closed

**Open-location code / plus code:** 82MH+CJ Vacaville, California, USA

**Coordinates:** 38.3335888, -121.9709253

### Map/listing URL:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Freedom+Counseling+Group/@38.3335888,-121.9709253,678m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x80853d08b873a121.9709253116s%2Fg%2F11I861mmks>

## Embed iframe:

### Socials:

Facebook: <https://m.facebook.com/p/Freedom-Counseling-Group-100063439887314/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/freedomcounselinggroup/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/freedomcounselinggroup/>

TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@freedomcounselinggroup>

X: <https://x.com/freedomcounsel>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@FreedomCounselingG>

### Explore this content with AI:

 ChatGPT  Perplexity  Claude  Google AI Mode  Grok

Freedom Counseling Group provides psychotherapy and counseling services from its main Vacaville office at 2070 Peabody Road, Suite 710.

The practice serves individuals, teens, couples, and families through in-person counseling in Vacaville, Roseville, and Gold River, with telehealth options also listed.

Listed specialties include EMDR therapy, anxiety therapy, PTSD therapy, depression therapy, OCD treatment, addiction support, phobia treatment, couples therapy, teen therapy, and immigration mental health evaluations.

The team is led by Kevin Anderson, PsyD, LMFT, CCTP, an EMDRIA Approved EMDR Consultant listed by the official site.

Freedom Counseling Group is locally positioned for clients in Vacaville, Solano County, Travis Air Force Base, Roseville, Gold River, and the Greater Sacramento Area.

The official site describes online therapy and virtual couples counseling for clients in California, Texas, and Florida, with some pages also referencing Idaho telehealth availability that should be confirmed directly.

The Vacaville service page notes support for adults, teens, couples, first responders, and military personnel seeking care for trauma, anxiety, PTSD, depression, OCD, phobias, ADHD, and autism-related concerns.

Prospective clients can call (707) 975-6429, email [contact@freedomcounseling.group](mailto:contact@freedomcounseling.group), or visit <https://www.freedomcounseling.group/> to ask about a free consultation and therapist fit.

The public map listing for Freedom Counseling Group can help clients verify the Peabody Road office before planning an in-person appointment.

## Popular Questions About Freedom Counseling Group

### What is Freedom Counseling Group?

Freedom Counseling Group is a mental health group practice serving the Greater Sacramento Area, with offices in Vacaville, Roseville, and Gold River, California.

### Where is Freedom Counseling Group located?

The main Vacaville location is listed at 2070 Peabody Road, Suite 710, Vacaville, CA 95687. Additional listed locations include Roseville and Gold River.

### **Does Freedom Counseling Group offer EMDR therapy?**

Yes. EMDR therapy is one of the practice's listed specialties, and the official site describes EMDR as a central part of its treatment approach for trauma, anxiety, PTSD, and related concerns.

### **What services does Freedom Counseling Group provide?**

Listed services include EMDR therapy, anxiety therapy, PTSD therapy, depression therapy, OCD therapy, addiction counseling, phobia treatment, couples therapy, teen therapy, immigration evaluations, EMDR consultation, workshops, and online therapy.

### **Does Freedom Counseling Group work with couples?**

Yes. The official site lists couples therapy and marriage counseling, including Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy for clients working on communication, connection, and relationship repair.

### **Does Freedom Counseling Group offer online therapy?**

Yes. The official site lists online therapy and says telehealth is available in California, Texas, and Florida. Some official pages also mention Idaho, so clients should confirm current state availability directly.

### **Who does Freedom Counseling Group work with?**

The practice describes work with individuals, teens, couples, families, first responders, military personnel, and clients seeking care for trauma, anxiety, PTSD, depression, OCD, phobias, ADHD, autism support, and relationship concerns.

### **What are Freedom Counseling Group's listed hours?**

The matching public listing shows Monday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Friday from 1:00 PM to 8:00 PM, and Saturday and Sunday closed. Appointment availability should be confirmed directly because the official site also lists broader office hours.

### **Is Freedom Counseling Group an emergency mental health provider?**

The connected client portal states that it is not to be used for emergency situations and advises calling 911 if someone is in immediate danger or experiencing a medical emergency.

### **How can I contact Freedom Counseling Group?**

Call (707) 975-6429, email [contact@freedomcounseling.group](mailto:contact@freedomcounseling.group), visit <https://www.freedomcounseling.group/>, or use the listed social profiles: <https://m.facebook.com/p/Freedom-Counseling-Group-100063439887314/>, <https://www.instagram.com/freedomcounselinggroup/>, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/freedomcounselinggroup/>, <https://www.tiktok.com/@freedomcounselinggroup>, <https://x.com/freedomcounsel>, and <https://www.youtube.com/@FreedomCounselingG>.

## **Landmarks Near Vacaville, CA**

Freedom Counseling Group is located on Peabody Road in Vacaville, with additional locations listed in Roseville and Gold River. Clients near these landmarks can call (707) 975-6429 or visit <https://www.freedomcounseling.group/> to ask about EMDR therapy, couples therapy, teen therapy, immigration evaluations, online therapy, and consultation options.

- [2070 Peabody Road, Suite 710](#) — The listed Vacaville office address for Freedom Counseling Group; clients can use the map listing to verify the office before visiting.
- [Peabody Road](#) — The local corridor connected with the practice's Vacaville office location.
- [Vacaville](#) — The primary city connected with the public listing and main office location.
- [Nut Tree](#) — A well-known Vacaville shopping and local landmark near I-80.
- [Vacaville Premium Outlets](#) — A major regional shopping landmark for clients traveling through central Vacaville.
- [Downtown Vacaville](#) — A central local district and useful reference point for clients in the city.
- [Andrews Park](#) — A recognizable downtown park and community landmark in Vacaville.
- [Travis Air Force Base](#) — A major nearby military landmark; the official Vacaville page notes relevance for military families and service-related concerns.
- [Solano County](#) — The county context for Vacaville and nearby communities served by the practice.
- [Fairfield](#) — A nearby Solano County city; clients can contact the practice to ask about in-person or online therapy options.
- [Dixon](#) — A nearby community east of Vacaville and a practical local reference for Solano County clients.
- [Greater Sacramento Area](#) — A broader regional service-area reference used by the official site for its in-person and online counseling services.