

FREE RESOURCE · NOVA COUNSELLING SERVICES

Healing at the Speed of Thought.

A Complete Guide to Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART)

How ART helps you reprogram distressing memories — rapidly, safely, and without reliving every painful detail.

SESSIONS NEEDED

1-5 Average

RECOGNITION

APA Evidence-Based

RELIVING REQUIRED

None

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THE BASICS

What Is Accelerated Resolution Therapy?

Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART) is a highly effective, directive form of psychotherapy that helps individuals reprogram how distressing memories and images are stored in the brain — often in as few as one to five sessions.

Developed by Laney Rosenzweig, LMFT in 2008, ART draws on established approaches — Gestalt Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), and Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) — and combines them into a specific, structured protocol designed for rapid, lasting results.

Unlike traditional talk therapy, ART does not require you to share the details of your trauma with your therapist. Your therapist acts as a compassionate guide — directing the process while you remain in full control of the content. What happened stays private. The healing still happens.

"Many individuals find that talking about trauma week after week can be exhausting — and sometimes even re-traumatising. ART offers a different path: rapid relief, without reliving the details."

— NOVA COUNSELLING SERVICES

By using relaxing horizontal eye movements, ART allows you to replace negative, distressing images in your mind with positive images of your own choosing. Once those images are replaced, the emotional and physical triggers connected to them are significantly reduced — or eliminated entirely.



Clinically recognized: ART is recognized as an evidence-based practice by the Society of Clinical Psychology, Division 12 of the American Psychological Association (APA), validated through multiple randomized controlled trials.

THE SCIENCE

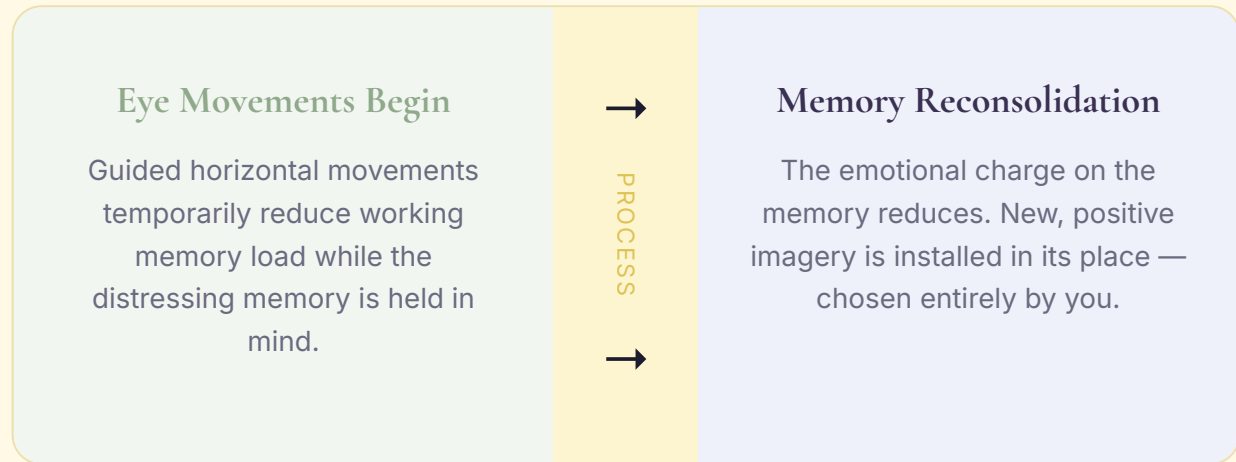
How Does *ART Actually Work?*

The core mechanism of ART involves guided horizontal eye movements — similar to the rapid eye movements (REM) that occur naturally during dreaming. These movements produce calming theta waves associated with relaxation, creativity, and meditative states.

When you perform these eye movements while holding a distressing memory in mind, your brain's working memory capacity is temporarily reduced. This makes the memory less emotionally intense and significantly easier to modify — a process neuroscientists call **memory reconsolidation**.

In plain terms: the memory doesn't disappear. What changes is how your nervous system responds to it. The charge — the tightness in your chest, the

flash of fear, the physical dread — softens and resolves. Clients often describe old memories becoming like a distant, almost dream-like image rather than a vivid, painful replay.



INSIDE A SESSION

The ART Process:

Step by Step

ART follows a structured, compassionate protocol. You are always in control — and you never have to speak about your trauma unless you choose to.

01

Relaxation & Orientation

Your therapist guides you to identify a specific distressing memory. You notice any uncomfortable physical sensations, then move through a set of horizontal eye movements designed to promote deep relaxation and signal safety to the nervous system.

You don't need to describe the memory out loud. Simply holding it in mind is enough.

02

Imaginal Exposure

While continuing the eye movements, you visualize the experience from beginning to end — like watching a film privately in your mind. Your therapist helps you process physical and emotional sensations as they arise, staying with them until they naturally begin to diminish.

This is not re-traumatizing. The eye movements hold you in a regulated state throughout.

03

Imagery Rescripting (VIR)

This is where profound transformation happens. You choose a new, positive way to visualize the event. Your brain replaces the distressing images with your preferred ones — providing lasting relief. This is called Voluntary Image Replacement (VIR), and it is entirely directed by you.

"Clients often describe old memories becoming like a distant dream — still there, but with no emotional weight attached."

04

Assessment & Closeout

Your therapist verifies you can access the original memory without significant distress and can easily shift to the new, rescripted version. You leave the session feeling grounded, calm, and fully in control — often with a noticeable sense of relief or lightness.

No homework. No assignments. You just show up and the process does the work.

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE

ART vs. Traditional Therapy

ART isn't a replacement for every form of therapy — it's a fundamentally different tool for a specific problem. Here's how it compares to traditional approaches:

FEATURE	TRADITIONAL TALK THERAPY	ACCELERATED RESOLUTION THERAPY
Primary Focus	Talking through memories and meaning	Actively replacing distressing images
Emotional Goal	Decrease negative emotions	Decrease negative AND increase positive emotions
Approach	Often non-directive, exploratory	Directive therapist — client-controlled content
Speed	Months to years	Results often in 1–5 sessions
Homework	Common between sessions	None required
Privacy of Trauma	Details typically shared verbally	You never have to describe your trauma
Mechanism	Cognitive & emotional processing	Neural reprogramming via VIR

WHO IT HELPS

What Can ART *Help With?*

ART is a highly versatile therapy with a strong evidence base across a wide range of presentations — not just PTSD. If you're experiencing distress connected to a memory, image, or recurring intrusive thought, ART may help.

**PTSD & Trauma**

Rapidly desensitises traumatic memories and replaces them with positive imagery, eliminating triggers and intrusive thoughts at the root.

**Anxiety & Panic Attacks**

Reduces the physiological arousal and intrusive thoughts connected to anxiety triggers — often providing relief that talk therapy alone cannot reach.

**Depression**

Resolves underlying traumas or negative core beliefs that contribute to persistent low mood — addressing the root, not just the symptoms.

**Grief & Loss**

Assists in processing the pain of loss and replacing distressing final memories with peaceful, healing ones chosen by you.

**Phobias**

Desensitises the brain to the feared object or situation,

**OCD**

Helps break the cycle of intrusive thoughts and

eliminating the panic response without extended exposure therapy.

compulsive behaviours by targeting the underlying imagery that drives them.



Addiction & Substance Abuse

Addresses the underlying trauma that often drives addictive behaviours — rather than the behaviour alone.



Chronic Pain

Pilot studies show meaningful reductions in neuropathic and trauma-linked pain — the body and mind process together.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Your First *ART Session*

Your first session begins with a thorough intake and assessment. Together, you and your therapist will identify specific target memories — the ones most distressing and most influential on how you feel day to day.

Your therapist will walk you through the entire process in detail, at a pace that feels safe and comfortable. There is no pressure to move faster than you're ready for. You remain in full control of your content — your therapist directs the process, not the story.

Many clients report feeling a profound sense of calm — and even unexpected joy or lightness — by the end of their very first session. It's common to leave feeling lighter than you arrived, even when you've carried something heavy for years.

"I kept waiting for it to feel hard — like therapy usually does. But it didn't. I walked out feeling like something had quietly lifted."

— ART CLIENT EXPERIENCE

THE RESEARCH

The Evidence *Behind ART*

ART is not simply a promising new approach — it is an evidence-based practice with a growing body of peer-reviewed research supporting its effectiveness across diverse populations and conditions.

Rapid Outcomes

In a randomized controlled trial of combat-related PTSD (*Military Medicine*, 2013; N=57), participants achieved large symptom reductions after a mean of just 3.7 sessions. A community-based trial (*Behavioral Sciences*, 2012; N=80) showed substantial reductions within 1–5 sessions.

Broad Symptom Relief

Across multiple peer-reviewed investigations, ART alleviates co-occurring depression, anxiety, and grief *alongside* trauma relief — not just the primary presenting condition. Full-spectrum improvement, not symptom management.

Durable Results

Follow-up studies confirm symptom reductions persist for at least six months post-

Diverse Populations

ART has demonstrated effectiveness across military veterans, civilian adults, women

intervention, with maintained gains and higher life satisfaction over time. The healing sticks.

survivors of sexual trauma, older adults with complicated grief, and cancer patients experiencing distress.

"ART is recognized as an evidence-based practice by the Society of Clinical Psychology, Division 12 of the American Psychological Association — validated through multiple randomized controlled trials."

— APA DIVISION 12

QUICK REFERENCE

ART *at a Glance*

Everything you need to know at a glance before booking your first session.

I–5SESSIONS NEEDED
(AVERAGE)**~60**MINUTES PER
SESSION**0**HOMEWORK
REQUIRED**No**MEDICATION
REQUIRED**No**MUST DISCUSS
TRAUMA DETAILS**APA**EVIDENCE-BASED
RECOGNITION

Compatible with existing medications — ART does not interfere with psychiatric medications and can be used alongside other therapeutic approaches including CBT, EMDR, and somatic work.

IS THIS RIGHT FOR YOU?

ART May Be the Right Fit *If You Recognize Any of This*

You don't need a formal PTSD diagnosis to benefit from ART. If distressing memories, images, or intrusive thoughts are affecting your daily life — ART is worth exploring.

- ☐ You've tried talk therapy and made progress — but something still feels stuck or unreachable
- ☐ Revisiting the details of what happened feels overwhelming, re-traumatizing, or simply too exhausting
- ☐ You experience intrusive memories, flashbacks, or unwanted images that disrupt your daily life
- ☐ Certain situations, sounds, smells, or images trigger a disproportionate fear or panic response
- ☐ You want results without months or years of weekly sessions
- ☐ Your privacy matters — you're not ready to share every detail, but you still want real healing
- ☐ You're dealing with grief, anxiety, phobias, or trauma that doesn't fit neatly into one category
- ☐ You're open to a structured, evidence-based approach that works with your brain — not just your thoughts

Not sure if ART is the right fit? Book a free 15-minute consultation and we'll talk it through honestly — no pressure, no commitment.

You don't have to live with the pain of the past forever.

ART offers a safe, effective, and rapid path to healing — without reliving every detail. Your first step is just a conversation.

BOOK YOUR FREE 15-MIN CONSULTATION

Or reach out directly — nadia@novacounsellingservices.com

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This guide is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical or psychological advice. Please consult a qualified mental health professional for diagnosis and treatment. If you are in crisis, please contact the Crisis Centre at 403-266-HELP.