

The Adaptive Information Processing Model (Review from Part I)

Corresponding Reading in Shapiro Text: Chapter 2

*The **adaptive information processing model (AIP)** is the model that EMDR Therapy founder Dr. Francine Shapiro created to explain how unhealed traumatic memories are stored in the brain and ultimately lead to maladaptive responses. Until these unhealed memories are processed, maladaptive responses are likely to continue. Originally published as the **accelerated information processing model** in the first edition of her EMDR textbook in 1995, Shapiro renamed and retooled the model in the 2001 second edition of the text. Dr. Shapiro continues to present her updated model, the AIP model, as the theoretical underpinning of EMDR Therapy, although some of the wording currently published by the EMDR International Association and later versions of her writing have changed to correspond with updates made due to research and changes in the field.*

Shapiro cites the work of Peter Lang (1977, 1979, 2000), Stanley Rachman (2000), Gordon Bower (2000), and Edna Foa & Michael Kozak (1986) as forerunners to the AIP model. The behaviorist work of Gagnè from the 1960's (for a good review, see Gagnè & Medsker, 1996) also bears many similarities to the AIP model. If you are interested in deepening your study in this area, these citations are provided in the References section.

Here are the present working tenets of the AIP Model (2014 update):

- The neurobiological information processing system is intrinsic, physical, and adaptive
- This system is geared to integrate internal and external experiences
- Memories are stored in associative memory networks and are the basis of perception, attitude, and behavior
- Experiences are translated into physically stored memories
- Stored memory experiences are contributors to pathology and to health

- Trauma causes a disruption of normal adaptive information processing, which results in unprocessed information being dysfunctionally held in memory networks
- Trauma can include DSM-5® Criterion A events and/or the experience of neglect or abuse that undermines an individual's sense of self-worth, safety, ability to assume appropriate responsibility for self or other, or limits one's sense of control or choices
- New experiences link into previously stored memories which are the basis of interpretations, feelings, and behaviors
- If high levels of disturbance accompany experiences, they may be stored in the implicit/non-declarative memory system.
- These memory networks contain the perspectives, affects, and sensations of the disturbing event and are stored in a way that does not allow them to connect with adaptive information networks
- When similar experiences occur (internally or externally), they link into the unprocessed memory networks and the negative perspective, affect, and/or sensations arise
- This expanding network reinforces the previous experiences
- Adaptive (positive) information, resources, and memories are also stored in memory networks
- Direct processing of the unprocessed information facilitates linkage to the adaptive memory networks and a transformation of all aspects of the memory
- Non-adaptive perceptions, affects, and sensations are discarded
- As processing occurs, there is a posited shift from implicit/non-declarative memory to explicit/declarative memory and from episodic to semantic memory systems (Stickgold, 2002)
- Processing of the memory causes an adaptive shift in all components of the memory, including sense of time and age, symptoms, reactive behaviors, and sense of self