

## **Introducing the Client to *CELTIC ART THERAPY* and the Celtic Art Response Survey**

### **Therapist Orientation**

We highly recommend that you watch Erin Rado's Therapist Orientation training video on using Celtic Art Therapy, available here <http://youtu.be/UQipePmGT38>.

We also recommend that you visit [www.CelticArtTherapy.com](http://www.CelticArtTherapy.com) for study updates and current contact information. If possible, please email us at [CelticArtResearch@gmail.com](mailto:CelticArtResearch@gmail.com) with your feedback!

### **Introducing the CAT and the Celtic Art Response Survey**

If you are willing to help us in our research, the first step is a simple survey on the client's subjective rating of relaxation before and after using a CAT plate for the first time.

1. Use the "Celtic Curls" plate first. We find this is one of the most popular, open, and relaxing designs, and it reduces the variables in the study to start with same one each time.
2. Use the "Celtic Art Response Survey" form.
  - a. Fill out date and your name at top of page.
  - b. Read to the client the consent to the survey in the first paragraph and have them initial.
  - c. Fill out the client's demographics, and also check off at the bottom of the page their dominant hand. Put a circle around their dominant hand, and a box around the non-dominant hand.
  - d. Fill in which plate you are using above the bottom box.
3. Ask the client to rate both their physical and emotional states on a continuum of relaxation vs. tension in the upper box before they trace the plate.
4. Place the plate on their knees in front of them, using a pillow if necessary so that it is comfortable.
5. Use the following instructions, as you demonstrate briefly at the same time:

**"Holding the stick loosely in your hand, find any place on the plate, and start tracing the twisting lines with the stick, wherever they go, until I tell you to stop."**

6. Have them trace the plate with their dominant hand for 3 minutes.
7. Have them rate their physical and emotional states after tracing the plate, indicating the rating with a circle. Note the time for this first exposure.
8. Now have them try their non-dominant hand also for 3 minutes. Use the same instructions. Use the same rating scale in the lower box, but ask them to draw a box around their rating after their second tracing. Note the time for the second exposure.
9. Please fax back your Response Survey Forms to **909-752-5388**.
10. You may also use the Constant Contact online survey form located at:  
<http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07ea3e9buii26nbu20/start>

**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICPATION  
IN THE FIRST COMPONENT OF OUR RESEARCH!**

# Celtic Art Therapy (CAT) in EMDR Treatment: Uses and Provisional Research Protocols

by Cathryn Harris, Ph.D.

**(Disclaimer:** This tool and this research study has NOT yet been approved by Francine Shapiro or EMDRIA)

Celtic Art Therapy is a self-administered visual-tactile isolation tool that induces and sustains mindfulness, frequently eliciting a rapid relaxation response. This guide will suggest some protocol for using Celtic Art Therapy plates in EMDR treatment. We are also asking your aid in some preliminary research on using CAT in EMDR. We presume some familiarity with EMDR standard protocol and techniques, and with relaxation techniques training in general.

There are two ways in which CAT can be helpful in EMDR treatment:

1. CAT as a Relaxation/Mindfulness tool both in and between therapy sessions
2. CAT as a technique for bilateral stimulation in EMDR.

The guidelines below are preliminary in exploring the use of CAT specifically in the context of EMDR. It has uses throughout the EMDR treatment process. We also need help collecting data on either or both uses of CAT in your professional context. Data collection protocols are given in each section.

## I. Using CAT as a Relaxation/Mindfulness Tool

### *A. Use it in PHASE 1 EMDR PREP as a general relaxation tool in session.*

In Phase 1 Preparation for EMDR, we make sure that the client has **affect management techniques** available to modulate the stress of EMDR. CAT is a very effective tool in this context. It doesn't require remembering any instructions, and in our observations and experience the relaxation response is almost immediate for the majority of clients.

The CAT should be introduced to the client in the office to see if they have a relaxation response to it and if they like using it.

**Research Protocol #1:** The attached handout on "Introducing the Client to Celtic Art Therapy and the Celtic Art Response Survey" gives directions on first client exposure and filling out our survey form to help us in researching the use of CAT as a general relaxation tool. We ask you to do this first with each client.

After their first introduction, they can be encouraged to use the CAT as long as they like to achieve relaxation. If other designs are available, encourage them to try some others.

**Research Protocol #2:** The Celtic Art Response Survey form can be used with other plates as well as the initial one to collect data. In similar fashion rate before and after, indicate which plate design, whether it is their 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, etc exposure (write it in if necessary), and the duration of time they used the plate as well.

### *B. Use it at home between sessions, for relaxation or grounding, at any phase of treatment.*

If the client shows a good response to the CAT, it can be suggested that they use it at home between sessions when they are agitated, tense, upset, etc. Often clients on their own will immediately ask "where can I get this?". We refer them directly to the website at [www.CelticArtTherapy.com](http://www.CelticArtTherapy.com).

We have found that this is **one of the easiest and most readily accessible ways to help a client manage their arousal between sessions**. Although butterfly hugs, progressive relaxation, safe place and deep breathing techniques are very useful, the CAT is a “no brainer” because when a client is highly aroused or panicked they don’t even have to remember any instructions to trace the CAT! Because the CAT involves multiple senses at once (tactile, proprioceptive, kynesthetic, and visual), we find it to be a highly grounding, self-administered activity. It is also portable, and can be used in the actual environments that are generating anxiety, egs. on the plane when treating flight phobias, in the classroom with test anxiety, etc

***C. Use it in PHASE 2 ASSESMENT PHASE and between sessions to enhance a visualization of “safe place”.***

In our experience, CAT enhances any auditory input by isolating visual and tactile stimulation. Similar to the original research protocol with EMDR, when we would use a short set of bilateral stimulation to **deepen the “Safe Place” relaxation response** before working on the trauma, the CAT can also be used to deepen the relaxation response to the Safe Place visualization. Just as in the original protocol, this also serves to introduce the client to the mechanics of the technique and to “demystify” it before using it with a trauma trigger, and also helps increase the client’s confidence in the technique.

**Research Protocol #3:** Have the client rate their degree of relaxation/tension using the Celtic Art Response Survey Scale before the safe place exercise. Run through your usual safe place visualization script and have them rate their relaxation again. Repeat the safe place visualization again, this time while the client traces their preferred CAT design. Repeat the relaxation rating with the same scale. Make sure to note this as a “safe place protocol” on the Survey form, noting which design was used, and the approximate duration of the visualization script/CAT exposure.

Between sessions, the client can also be encouraged to visualize their safe place while tracing their CAT design at home. The CAT will strengthen the conditioned relaxation response to the safe place visualization.

***D. Use it as an emergency “grounding” tool before introducing EMDR or after a PHASE 3 STIMULATION incomplete closure.***

The CAT can also be used as an **“emergency” grounding or decompression tool**. When there is some urgency in starting Phase 2 and 3 EMDR assessment and bilateral stimulations with a new client, we can use CAT to decompress the client if necessary. Using the CAT is a good way to show them they are capable of modulating their affect right away, that is, demonstrating efficacy in influencing their own arousal. This also helps evaluate their ability to do so (readiness for EMDR). Also for the nervous client who is afraid they might be “too stimulated” by EMDR, a good response to the CAT can demonstrate their ability to decrease their arousal immediately if necessary.

It can also be used as a quick decompression technique when an **incomplete closure** leaves someone in a high state of arousal. It can be used by itself, or additionally with safe place visualization, at the close of the session.

### ***E. Use it with collateral binaural beat auditory stimulation to additionally enhance relaxation.***

Consistent with its effect in enhancing auditory input, we have found a good combination of techniques is to pair the CAT simultaneously with binaural beat technology. Current binaural beat technology uses sound frequencies generated differentially through stereo headphones to enhance particular subsets of brain waves related to relaxation, concentration, presleep, deep sleep, etc. The software is easily and inexpensively purchased as an app for smartphone or tablet or computer – the ***Relax Melodies*** or ***iDozer app*** - and requires stereo headphones or stereo ear buds. These apps allow you to play your own music and/or your own selection of nature or white noise sounds over the top of the binaural beats. This combination results in a **completely absorbing sensory experience** to help clients who are feeling flooded or overwhelmed, especially effective when combined with visualizing their safe place as well. The binaural beats can be easily demonstrated in the office with any smartphone, tablet, or computer while the client is tracing a CAT design.

## **II. Using CAT as a Bilateral Stimulation Tool**

This is an area that we especially need help researching. So far we have anecdotal clinical reports that it can be effective as a Bilateral Stimulation Tool with some clients instead of visual, tactile, or auditory stimulation. CAT generates visual, tactile, proprioceptive and kinesthetic stimulation simultaneously.

Our observations so far are that

(A) Some clients do appear to process effectively with CAT in similar manner to other EMDR stimulation techniques.

(B) Just as with other techniques in EMDR, it depends on the client's preference and efficacy in processing as to which technique is chosen. Sometimes the client likes the CAT for relaxation but prefers traditional methods for processing.

(C) In at least one case, CAT seemed more helpful than traditional methods in eliciting the processing. One client who had their SPECT done at the Newport clinic appeared to be exhibiting an abnormal under activity of the cerebellum. The client was having difficulty achieving any state of calm or lowering the SUDS through the usual stimulation methods of EMDR. While the client responded somewhat to a ball toss stimulation mode, they responded very well to CAT, suggesting that it is a technique that may successfully engage and stimulate the cerebellum to facilitate processing (of course we can't validate that or any other theory regarding its effect on brain activity directly without SPECT or fMRI research).

So if your client is not responding to traditional EMDR methods (they are looping or the SUDS is not lowering), you might want to give CAT a try!

### **Clinical Protocol for using CAT as bilateral stimulation:**

1. Assess client for a positive response to CAT. Assess the most beneficial design, and whether more beneficial with dominant or non-dominant hand.

*Then use the usual EMDR protocol –*

2. Assess target for picture, affect, negative cognitions, sensations, rate distress with 10 point SUDS, rate VOC etc
3. Have client focus on this target while doing stimulation set using the CAT.

*Duration of Stimulation:* Try having them do the pattern a little longer (about a minute?) than you would with tapping (about 30 seconds) or UNTIL YOU SEE EVIDENCE OF PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE (as with standard protocol). You may need to find what works best with each individual client. Remember that research shows that visual stimulation requires about 28-30 passes minimum for best processing to occur – which is about 28-30 seconds at a moderate pace.

4. Elicit feedback from client. Repeat as necessary until SUDS is lowered to 0 or 1.

## **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

We are interested in collecting your observations about using CAT as bilateral stimulation for EMDR. All clinical anecdotes are welcome after using the above suggested clinical protocol. However, we would like to start a formal study of this use of CAT. The following research protocol is proposed. Comments and feedback welcome. **Please register your contact information with us if you have any interest in helping us collect data under this research protocol so we can furnish a data collection tool to record your results.**

### **Research Protocol #4:**

We suggest the same parameters as used in the original study on EMDR. Obviously we normally use what works with the client as well as the client's preference in clinical practice in choosing the stimulation approach. For research purposes however, if the client has responded well to the CAT for safe place and likes it, then the research protocol would be to stick with just the CAT for stimulation to gauge its effectiveness lowering the SUDS.

*Subject and Target Selection:* Simple, One-event trauma with non-dissociative clients (as measured on the DES) who have responded well with a relaxation response to the CAT by itself as well as with Safe Place visualization in Phase 2 Assessment.

*Bilateral Stimulation:* Minimum 30 seconds exposure to CURLS\* CAT design or until physiological response noted, as in original EMDR protocol, with use of CAT throughout until SUDS is Zero and VOC is 7. (See clinical protocol above). \*Research protocol can also be followed if the client significantly prefers and shows better response to a different design, although we would rather reduce other variables by sticking to one design at first.

*Minimum number of sets attempted:* Attempt at least 10 sets of stimulation. If client is showing no lowering of SUDS or evidence of processing, discontinue research protocol. (Continue EMDR with another modality of stimulation).

**We are looking forward to a mutual beneficial and stimulating exchange of ideas!  
Hoping this is a good springboard for that dialogue!**

Regards,

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# Celtic Art Response Survey

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your voluntary participation. Your answers remain anonymous in our survey. There are no negative effects psychologically or physically as a result of your participation. Results for the project as a whole may be published. You may contact us to inquire as to the results of the survey when it is completed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Initials of Participant

Required: Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Optional: Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_

Employment/ Student Status \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_

English as a second language? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

## Please rate your relaxation before trying a Celtic Art plate:

Circle the number corresponding to your level of physical and emotional well being right now.

(If you a parent, use your best guess for your child based on your observation of your child right now)

Physical	Very Relaxed	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	Very Tense
Emotional	Very Calm	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	Very Anxious

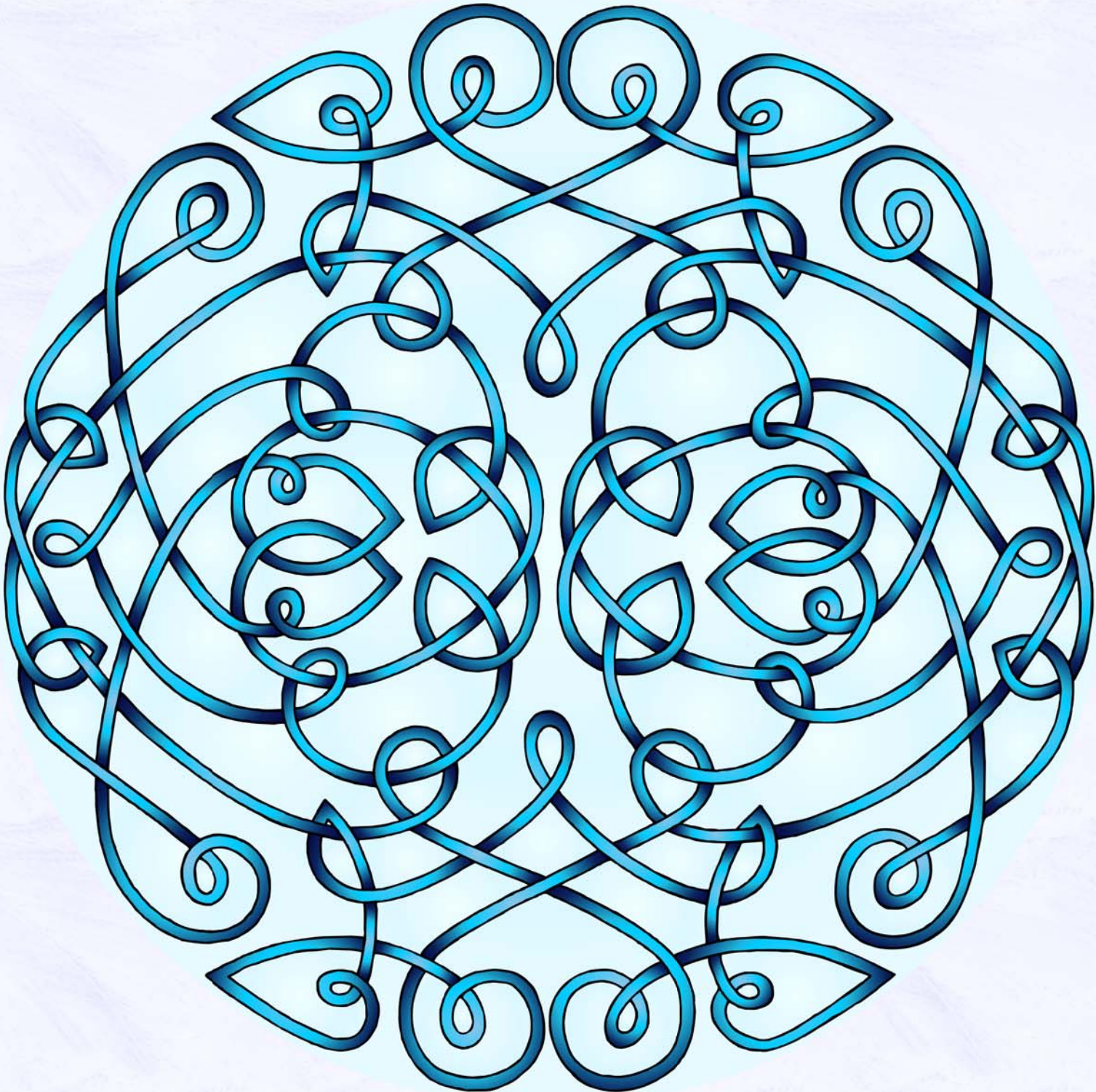
Now rate your relaxation after trying Celtic Art: Dom Hand: \_\_\_ Right \_\_\_ Left

Plate name: \_\_\_\_\_

Exposure (Time): 1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

Physical	Very Relaxed	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	Very Tense
Emotional	Very Calm	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	Very Anxious

**Thank you for your participation! It is much appreciated!**



## The Blue Celtic Curls

The Celtic Curls is an "open" design that has gentle, mesmerizing feel when traced.

The blue color scheme also gives the design a tranquil feel.

The Celtic Curls Art Therapy design is created from a single, unbroken line that moves about the complete pattern. It has a "1-2-3 tempo", which can be counted aloud or silently.

The Celtic Curls Art Therapy design is good for relaxation. It can also help manage anxiety and anger management, and can be used with tremor disorders.

## Using Celtic Art Therapy

Tracing a Celtic Art Therapy design works the brain across the midline and centers processing in the frontal cortex. This creates a state known as "mindfulness" which is both calming and decompressing.

Pick up the stylus and follow the Celtic Art Therapy design.

Ignore the fact that the knot "weaves" by crossing under and over. Weaving is proper to Celtic art, but a Celtic Art Therapy design is not a puzzle maze. It is a tracing pathway.

There is no start or end because Celtic Art Therapy designs are closed loops that allow individuals to trace the path over and over.

Simply choose a place on the Celtic Art Therapy design and follow the line of the Celtic knot.

**\$8.95**



## Switch Hands!

It is easy to trace a Celtic Art Therapy design with the non-dominant hand. This works the brain bilaterally, and may benefit individuals who have lost cognitive function due to brain injury or stroke. It may also help with later-in-life deterioration.

## Visual & Tactile Isolation

Celtic Art Therapy isolates visual and tactile stimuli, creating a state where visualization is easily introduced. This state does not feel intrusive or threatening, and facilitates an easy transition into guided imagery.

## Gifted Minds

Gifted minds respond well to "tight" Celtic Art Therapy designs such as the Celtic Cross, the Celtic Eagle, the Celtic Swords, the Celtic Dragonflies or the Celtic Hearts.

## Autism

Autistic minds respond well to Celtic Art Therapy as a decompression tool when signal processing becomes erratic.

"Medium" designs such as the Celtic Wolf, have done well with high-functioning Autism and Asperger's. "Tight" designs such as the Celtic Cross and the Celtic Swords have done well with low-functioning Autism.



The Celtic Wolf



The Celtic Cross



The Celtic Swords

## Anxiety, PTSD and Anger Management

Celtic Art Therapy allows anxiety sufferers to achieve "relaxed awareness", which can lead to a cathartic "break through" where patients feel free enough to release their stress.

Likewise, those with anger management issues find that they can better identify the triggers which lead to anger when in the passive state of "relaxed awareness".

"Open" designs such as the Celtic Trinity or the Celtic Curls are good for anxiety and anger management because of the calm feel when traced.



The Celtic Trinity Knot



The Celtic Curls

For those suffering from PTSD, Celtic Art Therapy is a simple tool that can allow them to work through different mental states.

For veterans, military-themed designs are available.



The Celtic Eagle



The Celtic Star Shield

## Attention Deficit

Those with attention deficit disorders respond well to "medium" designs such as the Celtic Wolf, the Celtic Curlz or the Celtic 5 Stars.



The Celtic 5 Stars



The Celtic Curlz