

Outline

Use Neuroscience in the Treatment of Anxiety

**Positives:** We know more about anxiety-based disorders than any other disorders  
Science gives explanations, evidence, authority, destigmatizes difficulties  
**Concerns:** It can be difficult to explain, answer questions  
Clients may feel a lack of responsibility  
Oversimplification is inevitable

Enhancing Engagement in Treatment

Don't neglect the therapeutic relationship!  
Address the challenges of anxious clients  
Remember that strategies are effortful  
Guide the process using client's goals  
Maintain motivation

Neuroplasticity

Define Neuroplasticity in everyday language  
Therapy is about creating a new self  
"Rewiring" as an accessible concept for change  
Re-consolidation: the modification of emotional memories

Identify Two Neural Pathways to Anxiety

Amygdala – bottom-up triggering of emotion, physicality of anxiety  
Cortex – top-down emotion generation based in cognition  
Explain the two pathways to clients  
How anxiety is initiated in each pathway and how pathways influence each other

Client Friendly Explanations

Use illustrations to create concrete understanding  
Fight/flight/freeze responses  
The "language of the amygdala"  
Anxiety and the cortex  
Help clients recognize the two pathways to anxiety

Neuroplasticity in the Amygdala (Essential for all Anxiety Disorders, PTSD, OCD, Depression)

Sleep and the amygdala  
The influence of exercise  
Breathing techniques to reduce activation  
Relaxation, meditation, and yoga to modify responses  
Exposure as opportunities for the amygdala to learn combatting avoidance

When anxiety indicates that the amygdala can learn new responses  
Push through anxiety to change the amygdala

Neuroplasticity in the Cortex (Essential for GAD, SAD, OCD, PTSD, Depression)

"Survival of the busiest" principle—strengthen or weaken specific circuitry  
The healthy (adaptive) use of worry in the cortex  
"You can't erase: You must replace."  
Recognize and modify the impact of uncertainty  
Training correct uses of distraction  
Left hemisphere techniques- cognitive defusion, coping thoughts, fighting anticipation  
Right hemisphere techniques – imagery, music  
Mindfulness and anxiety resistances

Neuroplasticity and Medications for Anxiety Disorders, OCD, PTSD, Depression

Medication's effects in the rewiring process  
The myth of the chemical imbalance  
The danger of sedating the brain with benzodiazepines  
Promoting neuroplasticity with SSRIs, SNRIs  
The effectiveness of CBT and meds

Move Beyond Diagnostic Categories to Focus on Anxiety Pathways

Anxiety is a component of many diagnoses (depression, substance abuse, etc.)  
Amygdala- and cortex-based techniques help in other disorders  
Targeting brain-based symptoms rather than disorders  
Worry, obsessions, rumination respond to similar cortex-based techniques  
Panic, phobic responses, and compulsions respond to amygdala-based techniques

Research, Risks and Limitations

Empirical versus clinical and anecdotal evidence  
Clinical considerations for specific clients and settings  
Efficacy of particular interventions may vary

Objectives

- 1. Analyze the underlying neurological processes that impact anxious symptoms for clients.
- 2. Develop client engagement in treatment using personalized goals and attending to the therapeutic relationship.
- 3. Evaluate the differences between amygdala-based and cortex-based anxiety symptoms and identify how these symptoms inform treatment interventions.
- 4. Demonstrate strategies for calming and training the amygdala in order to alleviate symptoms of anxiety.
- 5. Develop methods for teaching clients to retrain the cortex so that anxiety is resisted rather than exacerbated.
- 6. Analyze how psychotropic medication impacts neuroplasticity in the brain; identify related treatment implications.

**Target Audience:** Social Workers ▪ Psychologists ▪ Counselors ▪ Marriage and Family Therapists ▪ Case Managers  
Addiction Counselors ▪ Speech-Language Pathologists ▪ Therapists ▪ Nurses ▪ Occupational Therapists  
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Rewire the Anxious Brain

Neuroscience-Informed Treatment of Anxiety, Panic and Worry

LIVE Interactive Webcast  
Friday, January 29, 2021

BONUS! – Registration includes FREE on-demand access for 3 months.



REGISTER NOW:  
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Join us online, for this live training!

Rewire the Anxious Brain

Neuroscience-Informed Treatment of Anxiety, Panic and Worry

Featuring neuroscience and anxiety expert,  
Catherine M. Pittman, Ph.D., HSPP

- Apply brain-based strategies for Panic, Social Anxiety, OCD, GAD and PTSD
- Understand the difference between cortex-based and amygdala-based anxiety
- Motivate clients and calm the anxious brain using the power of neuroplasticity
- Increase client engagement by focusing on changing the brain - not simply decreasing anxiety

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# Rewire the Anxious Brain

## Neuroscience-Informed Treatment of Anxiety, Panic and Worry

Join neuroscience and anxiety expert, Catherine M. Pittman, Ph.D., HSPP, and learn her keys for successful anxiety treatment. Dr. Pittman integrates brain-based strategies for calming the anxious mind with client communication techniques that motivate change in your clients. Catherine's approach promotes adherence to treatment and strengthens the therapeutic alliance - which is essential when working with anxious, worried, traumatized, or obsessive clients.

Dr. Pittman will give you proven tools and techniques to:

- Identify and treat the roots of anxiety in both the amygdala and the cortex
- Explain "the language of the amygdala" in an accessible, straight forward way
- Identify how the cortex contributes to anxiety, and empower clients with strategies to resist anxiety-igniting cognitions

Register today for this transformational workshop and put the power of neuroplasticity to work for you and your anxious clients!

## Speaker

**Catherine M. Pittman, Ph.D., HSPP**, is a professor of Psychology at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN. Dr. Pitman is the author of the popular book *Rewire Your Anxious Brain: How to Use the Neuroscience of Fear to End Anxiety, Panic, and Worry*. She has a background in cognitive behavioral therapy, neuropsychology, fear-conditioning research, and treated anxiety-based disorders in clinical practice for over 25 years. Catherine's experience makes her uniquely qualified to provide a clear understanding of neuroscience and how that informs the selection and application of successful anxiety treatment strategies. She regularly presents workshops at national conferences and national webinars on anxiety treatment, and is an active member of the Public Education Committee of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America.

Speaker Disclosures:

Financial: Catherine Pittman is an associate professor at Saint Mary's College. She is an author for New Harbinger and receives royalties. Dr. Pittman receives a speaking honorarium from PESI, Inc.

Non-financial: Catherine Pittman is a member of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America.

### Live Webcast Schedule

(Times listed in Eastern)

**8:00** Program begins

**11:50-1:00** Lunch Break

**4:00** Program ends

There will be two 15-min breaks (mid-morning & mid-afternoon).  
Actual lunch and break start times are at the discretion of the speaker.  
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**Please note that Speech-Language Pathologists must complete the post-test and evaluation within two weeks of attending the live event if they would like their participation submitted to the ASHA CE Registry. Detailed instructions will be provided the day of the program under the Handouts section of the online program.**



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