

# The Biology of Reward and Deficiency

The biology of reward has been well-studied and is linked to numerous mental health diagnoses. Researchers identified an anomaly in this reward cascade called Reward Deficiency Syndrome or RDS. This anomaly and its impact on psychotherapy are less evident in psychological literature, yet it provides useful knowledge in one of the most prevalent and challenging of all mental health disorders...addiction. This seminar will help you understand the cascade theory of reward and provide you with working knowledge of RDS. You will be able to talk about how RDS affects the brain, what research has found regarding the impact of RDS, as well as discuss a model of therapy that considers highly this biological aspect of mental illness. The focus of this seminar is biopsychological and psychopharmacological in nature.

## Target Audience

Psychologist      Social Workers      Counselors  
Teachers      Therapists      Case Managers  
Marriage and Family Therapists      Nurses  
This seminar is for intermediate to advanced level clinicians

## Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Name the four neurotransmitters and brain regions thought to play a significant role in the cascade theory of reward.
2. Name the primary neurotransmitter of reward and describe the two main variants of it.
3. Define/Explain Reward Deficiency Syndrome (RDS).
4. Name three disorders that associated with RDS.
5. Describe a model to enhance psychotherapy with addiction and other disorders in which the frontal lobe of brain is affected.

Our seminars are available in two formats. The first is a live, interactive webinar. You can ask questions of our presenters, either by typing them or speaking into a microphone. If the webinar time is not convenient for you, you can purchase the Home Study version. It is a recorded version of the webinar. You will have to pass a test to earn CE's for both the live webinar and the Home Study version.

# Outline

**Begin 4:30 PM ET**

**Introductions and Housekeeping**  
**Review of Neuroanatomy/Neurobiology**  
**What's Addiction**  
**Cascade Theory of Reward and Deficiency**  
**Break 6-6:15 PM ET**  
**Disorders Associated with RDS**  
**What's Attachment**  
**Treatment and Psychotherapy**  
**Wrap-Up/Review**

**End 7:45 PM ET**



## The Presenter

Sarah Shevchuk, Psy.D. earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from the Georgia School of Professional Psychology in 2011. Dr. Shevchuk received specialty training in the treatment of serious and persistent mental illness at the Cleveland VA Medical Center, and has since provided psychological services throughout New York State, including state prisons and psychiatric hospitals, and within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). She has held positions as a residential crisis treatment program coordinator, psychological evaluation coordinator, and inpatient clinical coordinator. At present she works as the Primary Care-Mental Health Integration Psychologist within the VA New Jersey Health Care System and holds an academic appointment at New York Medical College. Dr. Shevchuk has chaired numerous committees for mental health environments of care, Lean 6S projects and VHA performance improvement groups. She has been a major rotation preceptor and assessment supervisor for an APA-accredited predoctoral psychology internship training program. Dr. Shevchuk has co-facilitated a clinical restructuring of a chronic mental health unit to a mental health recovery community living center which opened in 2018. Prior to becoming a psychologist, Dr. Shevchuk studied biological science and conducted neuroscience research for several years, investigating the impact of psychoactive substances on brain cells associated with pain pathways. Dr. Shevchuk considers herself a cognitive-behavioral therapist who values recovery-oriented and patient-centered care, as well as whole-health and wellness in her work. Outside of work Dr. Shevchuk enjoys time with family and friends, making her family's pasta and cookie recipes, and running. She is a proud finisher of the 2018 Nationwide Children's Marathon in Columbus, Ohio.

## Continuing Education Credit

To earn CE's, you must attend the entire webinar. No partial credit is available. For both the webinar and the home study version, you will have to pass a post-test with 80% correct and complete a seminar evaluation to earn the certificate. You can take the test up to three times. Participants will earn 3 CE's for attending once they have completed these requirements.

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This seminar has been reviewed and approved by Keith Hannan, Ph.D., Phil Rich, LICSW, Daphne Fatter, Ph.D., and Loreen Yearick, MSN, RN. This approval expires on March 1, 2025.

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