SOCIETY OF BIOLOGICAL PSYCHIATRY

2022 Annual Meeting

April 28 - 30, 2022 ♪ Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, LA

2022

BRAIN Conference Pre-Meeting

Each year, the impact of modern neuroscience on psychiatry becomes increasingly clear. While biological models of mental illness once emphasized “chemical imbalances,” modern perspectives increasingly incorporate the role of genetics and epigenetics, a more nuanced understanding of molecular pathways, the importance of neuroplasticity, functional dynamics of neural circuits, and a range of novel therapeutic approaches.

Yet most psychiatrists have relatively minimal knowledge of neuroscience. This may be due to many factors, including the difficulty of keeping pace with a rapidly advancing field or a lack of exposure to neuroscience during training. Neuroscience education in medicine has typically remained lecture-based without employing active, experiential learning approaches. It is also frequently taught in a way that seems devoid of clinical relevance, disconnected from the patient’s story and life experience, and separated from social determinants of health.

The same tensions exist at a broader, societal level: the public image of psychiatry is stigmatized and outdated. While modern neuroscience may offer a new path for how we conceptualize and treat psychiatric illness, this vision is not yet translating to patients, families, and the public as a whole.

The BRAIN Conference pre-meeting is designed to address these crucial gaps in our field: to help neuroscientists become more skilled at communicating cutting-edge content to a broad audience and to help educators learn to engage students more effectively. The conference is based on two separate faculty development programs from the National Neuroscience Curriculum Initiative.

Effective Scientific Communication **(morning activities)**

While researchers may receive training and feedback on traditional forms of scientific communication (such as giving scientific talks and writing for journals), relatively little time is devoted to honing the unique skills required to communicate to a broader audience. Making science accessible requires learning to distill complex topics down to their core concepts, to craft a narrative arc around key translational applications, to optimize the visual representation of data, and to attend to technical aspects of performance. While challenging to learn, such skills are invaluable for disseminating key findings of one’s research – and, more practically, for obtaining funding in a highly competitive market. This workshop will introduce participants to key concepts relating to scientific communication and give them the chance to practice core skills through the development of a draft talk.

Empowering Educators **(afternoon activities)**

From 2014-2020 our team ran the BRAIN Conference in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training. Each year we designed new approaches for teaching and learning contemporary neuroscience, offered participants the chance to experience these as if they were students, and then reflected on what it would be like to implement them as faculty. This was one of our favorite experiences – the chance to innovate in medical education and collaborate with a diverse team of faculty.

For the afternoon activities, we'll: highlight novel approaches to teaching and learning neuroscience (and how to adapt methods for online platforms); focus on how to implement these tools in medical student or residency education; and consider how to incorporate clinical neuroscience into a new or existing curriculum. Of note, participants will have the opportunity to define their own personal learning objectives (as both student and teacher) and to select from sessions that are designed to bring a wide range of neuroscience content to life through a diverse set of teaching methods.