

Craig Strickland, PhD

1. Proposed Course Name:

Not Just Benzodiazepines: Alternative Treatments of Anxiety and Depression

2. Brief Course Description:

The primary goal of this workshop is to explore non-pharmaceutical treatment of depression and anxiety. The number of people looking for non-pharmaceutical interventions is increasing in both the psychiatric and addiction fields. One need look no further than the desire to decrease benzodiazepine (BZD) use. Treatments to be discussed include herbal and amino acid substances as well as vagal nerve stimulation.

3. Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Briefly summarize the advantages and disadvantages of BZDs
- List three herbal medications used to treat depression
- Describe the mechanism by which some amino acids work in the brain
- Summarize the effects of using vagal nerve stimulation to treat depression
- List three alternatives to benzodiazepines for treating anxiety.

4. Content Level: beginner-advanced

5. Outline:

Welcome and overview	9:30-9:40 AM
Ups and downs of BZDs	9:40-10:00 AM
Alternatives used to treat depression	
and amino acids	10:00-11:00 AM
Break	11:00-11:15 AM
Vagal Nerve Stimulation (VGS)	11:15-11:30 AM
Alternatives used to treat anxiety	11:30-12:15 PM
Wrap up/Q&A	12:15-12:30 PM

6. Reference Section:

Bian T, Corral P, Wang Y, Botello J, Kingston R, Daniels T, Salloum RG, Johnston E, Huo Z, Lu J, Liu AC, Xing C. (2020) Kava as a Clinical Nutrient: Promises and Challenges. *Nutrients*, 12(10):3044. doi: 10.3390/nu12103044.

Mihaljević S, Pavlović M, Reiner K, Čačić M. (2020) Therapeutic Mechanisms of Ketamine. *Psychiatria Danubina*, 32(3-4):325-333. doi: 10.24869/psyd.2020.325

Murphy, L. (2022) Benzodiazepine Alternatives.

<https://www.alternativetomeds.com/blog/benzodiazepine-alternatives/>

Porges SW & Dana D (2018). Clinical Applications of the Polyvagal Theory: The Emergence of Polyvagal Informed Therapies. New York: WW Norton

Yeung K, Hernandez M, Mao J, Haviland I, Gubili J. (2018) Herbal medicine for depression and anxiety: A systematic review with assessment of potential psychoncologic relevance. *Phytotherapy Research*, 32(5):865-891. doi: 10.1002/ptr.6033.

7. Biography

Dr. Strickland graduated from Bryn Mawr College in with a Doctorate in Psychology and a focus on experimental research and neuroscience. Past positions include a faculty position at the Medical College of Pennsylvania and affiliate faculty positions at Widener University and Springfield College. He currently has guest lecturer privileges at the Bryn Mawr Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research, the Rutgers School of Social Work and an affiliate professor position at Thomas Jefferson University, East Fall Campus in the Community and Trauma Counseling program. Dr. Strickland is the owner of Biobehavioral Education and Consultation, LLC.