

Workshop



Patricia Furer, Ph.D., C. Psych., is a clinical psychologist and the director of the Anxiety Disorders Clinic at St. Boniface Hospital. She is the Training Director for the Clinical Health Psychology Residency program at the University of Manitoba. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Clinical Health Psychology and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Manitoba. Dr. Furer specializes in the assessment and cognitive-behavioral treatment of anxiety disorders. She has written papers and book chapters on health anxiety, perinatal anxiety, and other anxiety disorders, as well as a book on treatment of health anxiety and fear of death. She has developed a brief large group anxiety disorder intervention and group CBT programs for perinatal anxiety, health anxiety and fear of death, and mixed anxiety disorders. Current areas of research interest include treatment of perinatal anxiety, evaluation of stepped-care treatment models, and web-based interventions. Dr. Furer is involved in teaching and supervision of clinical and research activities with Clinical Health Psychology residents and practicum students as well as graduate students in the Department of Psychology at the University of Manitoba.

Cognitive-Behavioural Treatment for Health Anxiety and Fear of Death

Workshop 1 | May 13, 2022 | 8:00 am - 11:30 am PST

Health anxiety refers to difficulties ranging from milder worries about somatic symptoms to full-blown somatic symptom disorder and illness anxiety disorder. Health anxiety may be a concern for individuals with a range of anxiety disorders and comorbid conditions. For many of these individuals, worry about death and dying is a central issue. This workshop will provide up-to-date information on several aspects of this problem:

- Overview of health anxiety and fear of death
- Details of a flexible cognitive behavioural intervention for health anxiety
- Interventions targeting fear of death
- COVID-19 and health anxiety

The principal focus of this workshop will be the treatment of health anxiety and fear of death. Treatment components that I emphasize include exposure to feared health problems and to themes related to death, response prevention, cognitive reappraisal, acceptance, and focusing on positive goals and enjoyment of life (Furer, Walker, & Stein, 2007). Workshop attendees will receive client handouts developed at our center to facilitate their own clinical practice. These handouts provide educational material about the problem, description of the treatment components, clinically-based examples, and detailed homework assignments. Opportunity for case discussion and troubleshooting will be provided. The goal of this workshop is to help clinicians who are familiar with cognitive-behaviour therapy to become comfortable with the range of approaches that can be helpful with fear of illness and death.

Learning outcomes:

1. Understanding health anxiety and fear of death
2. CBT skills for addressing health anxiety
3. Strategies for treating fear of death

