



RECADEMY™

Recognizing & Treating Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) As A Chronic Brain Disease: The Latest Research, Treatment Frameworks & Care Pathways

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Why This Topic Matters



Despite decades of neuroscience research, OUD is still widely misunderstood.



Chronic opioid exposure creates lasting changes in brain function that drive relapse risk.



These changes persist beyond detox and shape decision-making under stress.



Yet many systems still treat OUD as a short-term crisis—not a chronic condition.



This misalignment impacts how care is delivered, how relapse is interpreted, and how recovery is supported.

If OUD is a chronic brain disease, our clinical practices and system design MUST reflect that reality.

Today's Speaker & Moderator



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OPEN MINDS

Framing the Discussion



What does it truly mean to describe opioid use disorder as a chronic brain disease?

Understanding the Science



What neurobiological changes are most important for clinicians and leaders to understand?

Moving Beyond Detox



How does the brain disease model shift focus from withdrawal management to long-term stabilization?

Interpreting Relapse



How should clinicians interpret relapse within a chronic brain disease framework?

Operational Implications of Relapse



What operational consequences follow from viewing relapse as a clinical signal rather than a failure?

Treatment Duration & Medication



How should organizations think about treatment duration, particularly medication, if OUD is chronic? And what should they be thinking about in terms of ongoing medication?

Engaging Patients



How do you talk with patients about long-term treatment and resistance to staying on medication?

Inpatient Care



How does understanding OUD as a brain disease influence how inpatient teams approach stabilization, discharge planning, and continuity of care?

Co-Occurring Disorders



How does the chronic brain disease model reinforce the need for integrated medical and behavioral healthcare in addition to OUD treatment?

Stigma & Workforce



How does framing OUD as a brain disease influence workforce attitudes, patient engagement, and therapeutic relationships and programs?

Families & Support Systems



How can the brain disease framework help families support sustained recovery and reduce family conflict and friction?

System-Level Change



If leaders fully embraced OUD as a chronic illness, what would change in the care pathways, monitoring structures and follow-up models?

Leadership Perspective



If you were advising CEOs, medical directors, or public health leaders, what structural or cultural shifts are most necessary to align system design with a chronic brain disease model?

Next Webinar: May 5, 2026

Integrating Psychiatric & Substance Use Disorder Treatment:
Models, Evidence & System Transformation Opportunities

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