

# 2026 Combined Pain Care Skills & Substance Use Disorder Training Agenda

## Harnessing Neuroplasticity in Occupational Therapy and Rehabilitation: Graded Motor Imagery for Pain

**Presented by:** Lindsay Marth, MA, OTR/L, BCPR, BCB, Tonya Rich, PhD, OTR/L, TPS, LT Ruth Chase MA, OTR/L, BCPR

**Offered:** 18 August 2026; 1230-1530 PM ET

**Location:** National Union Building, Washington, DC

**Description:** This course will focus on the use of graded motor imagery (GMI) to treat complicated pain conditions. We will cover the basic physiology of central sensitization and how to identify it in your patients during your evaluation. We will also discuss how to know which patients would benefit most from GMI. The approach to using GMI techniques including pain neuroscience education, laterality/ left right discrimination, motor imagery/ visualization, sensory retraining, and mirror therapy will be described and specific techniques will be practiced in a hands-on lab session. Time will be dedicated to applying treatment interventions to a variety of diagnoses including complex regional pain syndrome, phantom limb pain, and complex upper extremity conditions where the pain persists despite traditional treatment. We will discuss strategies for adapting GMI as part of a rehabilitation plan. This content highlights the role of occupational therapy and physiotherapy as critical members of the pain rehabilitation team.

**Learning Objectives:** Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Verbalize a basic understanding of the role of pain neuroscience education and methods and resources for implementation.
2. Identify the background of graded motor imagery (GMI) in practice, indications for clinical use, and how it fits into a comprehensive pain treatment plan.
3. Verbalize awareness of the core stages of GMI including rationale and clinical applications.
4. Demonstrate through hands-on lab basic skills and tools involved in implementation in the clinic.
5. Identify ways to modify intervention to meet a variety of common complex pain conditions for both outpatient and inpatient settings.

### **18 August 2026; 1230-1530 PM ET**

1230–1300 – Overview of current state of pain science in rehabilitation

1300–1330 – Introduce graded motor imagery (GMI) and the supporting literature

1330–1345 – Questions and discussion

1345–1400 -----Break-----

1400–1500 – Lab activities on pain science and GMI

1500–1515 – Identify practical applications, adaptations, and key takeaways

1515–1530 – Questions and Discussion